

POETS, HEROES, AND THEIR DRAGONS

ARMENIAN AND IRANIAN STUDIES II

Ancient Iran Series

Editor in Chief

Touraj Daryaee (*University of California, Irvine*)

Managing Editor

Sherivn Farridnejad

(*Free University of Berlin, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna*)

Editorial Board

Samra Azarnouche (*École pratique des hautes études*)

Chiara Barbati (*University of Pisa*)

Matthew Canepa (*University of California, Irvine*)

Carlo Cereti (*Sapienza University of Rome*)

Hassan Fazeli Nashil (*University of Tehran*)

Frantz Grenet (*Collège de France*)

Simcha Gross (*University of Pennsylvania*)

Almut Hintze (*SOAS University of London*)

Nasir Al-Kaabi (*University of Kufa*)

Irene Madreiter (*University of Innsbruck*)

Antonio Panaino (*University of Ravenna*)

Céline Redard (*SOAS University of London*)

Robert Rollinger (*University of Innsbruck*)

Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis (*British Museum*)

M. Rahim Shayegan (*University of California, Los Angeles*)

Mihaela Timuş (*University of Bucharest*)

Rolf Strootman (*Utrecht University*)

Giusto Traina (*University of Paris-Sorbonne*)

Yuhan S.-D. Vevaina (*University of Oxford*)

VOLUME 13

The titles published in this series are listed at brill.com/ais

Poets, Heroes, and their Dragons

James R. Russell

© James R. Russell 2020

James R. Russell is hereby identified as author of this work in accordance with Section 77 of the Copyright, Design and Patents Act 1988

Cover and Layout: Kourosh Beigpour | ISBN: 978-1-949743-24-1

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the publishers.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and condition is redundant.

Ancient Iranian Series

Editor in Chief

Touraj Daryaei (*Irvine*)

Managing Editor

Sherivn Farridnejad (*Vienna/ Berlin*)

Editorial Board

Samra Azarnouche (*Paris*)

Chiara Barbati (*Pisa*)

Matthew P. Canepa (*Irvine*)

Carlo G. Cereti (*Rome*)

Hassan Fazeli Nashli (*Tehran*)

Frantz Grenet (*Paris*)

Simcha Gross (*Pennsylvania*)

Almut Hintze (*London*)

Nasir Al-Kaabi (*Kufa*)

Irene Madreiter (*Innsbruck*)

Antonio Panaino (*Ravenna*)

Céline Redard (*London*)

Robert Rollinger (*Innsbruck*)

Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis (*London*)

M. Rahim Shayegan (*Los Angeles*)

Mihaela Timuş (*Bucharest*)

Giusto Traina (*Paris*)

Yuhan S.-D. Vevaina (*Oxford*)



POETS, HEROES, AND THEIR DRAGONS

ARMENIAN AND IRANIAN STUDIES II

VOL. 1

James R. Russell

UCI Jordan Center for
Persian Studies



— 2020 —

Table of Contents

VOL. 1

	Forward	xi
1.	“Two Roads Diverged: Ancient Cappadocia and Ancient Armenia,” in R.G. Hovannisian, ed., <i>Armenian Kesaria/Kayseri and Cappadocia</i> , UCLA Armenian History and Culture Series, Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces 12, Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2013, pp. 33-42.	1
2.	“A Note on Armenian <i>hrmštk-el</i> ,” in Uwe Bläsing, Victoria Arakelova, and Matthias Weinreich, eds., <i>Studies on Iran and the Caucasus in Honour of Garnik Asatrian</i> , Leiden: Brill, 2015, pp. 365-371.	11
3.	“An Armenian Spirit of Time and Place: The <i>Švot</i> ,” <i>Revue des Etudes Arméniennes</i> 36 (2014-2015), pp. 13-59.	19
4.	“The Epic of Sasun: Armenian Apocalypse,” in Sergio La Porta, ed., <i>The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition</i> , Leiden: Brill, 2014, pp. 41-77.	67
5.	“Language of Demons, Language of Men,” in publication, <i>Festschrift Michael Stone</i> , ed. Theo Van Lint, forthcoming	105
6.	“The Cross and the Lotus: The Armenian Miscellany <i>Patmut’iwn ptnjē k’atak’i</i> (‘History of the City of Brass’),” in Vesta Curtis and Sarah Stewart, eds., <i>The Rise of Islam</i> (The Idea of Iran, Vol. 4), London: I.B. Tauris, 2009, pp. 71-81.	131
7.	“On an Armenian Word List from the Cairo Geniza,” <i>Iran and the Caucasus</i> 17 (2013), pp. 189-214.	147

8. "The Vision of the Painting: Alexander Kondratiev's Novella *Dreams*," Alexander A. Sinitsyn and Maxim M. Kholod, eds., *Koinon Dōron: Studies and Essays in Honour of Valery P. Nikonorov on the Occasion of His Sixtieth Birthday presented by His Friends and Colleagues*, St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg State University Faculty of Philology, 2013, pp. 323-354. 173
9. "Heaven Is Here and the Emperor Is Near: A Traveler's Guide to Heaven," *Academic Forum Collected Papers: The unity of Humanity and Heaven and Civilizational Diversity*, Beijing, China: Institute for Advanced Humanistic Studies, PKU, 2014, pp. 191-222. 205
10. "The Interrupted Feast," in Bernard Outtier, Cornelia B. Horn, Basil Lourié, and Alexey Ostrovsky, eds., *Armenia between Byzantium and the Orient: Celebrating the Memory of Karen Yuzbashian (1927-2009)*, Leiden: Brill, 2019, pp. 468-529. 237
11. "Hārūt and Mārūt: The Armenian Zoroastrian Demonic Twins in the Qur'ān Who Invented Fiction," in S. Tokhtasev and P. Luria, eds., *Commentationes Iranicae: Sbornik statei k 90-letiyu V.A. Livshitsa*, St. Petersburg: Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Nestor-Historia, 2013, pp. 469-480. 261
12. "The Curving Shore of Time and Space: Notes on the Prologue to Pushkin's *Ruslan and Ludmila*," in Steven Fine and Shai Secunda, eds., *Shoshannat Yaakov: Jewish and Iranian Studies in Honor of Yaakov Elman*, Leiden: Brill, 2012, pp. 318-365. 273
13. "Early Armenian Civilization," in Edmund Herzig and Marina Kurkchian eds., *The Armenians: Past and present in the making of national identity*, London and New York: Routledge Curzon, 2005, pp. 23-40. 321
14. "Magic Mountains, Milky Seas, Dragon Slayers, and Other Zoroastrian Archetypes," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 22, Ann Arbor, MI, 2008 [2012], pp. 57-80). 339
15. "Armenian Secret and Invented Languages and Argots," *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana, Transactions of the Institute for Linguistic Studies*, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, Vol. VIII, part 3, St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2012, pp. 602-684. 361
16. "The Demon Weed," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 19, 2009, pp. 131-134. 445
17. "The Shrine Beneath the Waves," *RES* 51, Cambridge, MA, Spring 2007, pp. 136-156. 453
18. "The Memory Palace of St. Grigor Narekac'i," *Hask hayagitakan taregirk'* New Series, Year X, 2002-2006, Antelias, Lebanon, 2006, pp. 59-81. 473

19. "The Science of Parting: Eliade, Iranian Shamanism, and the View from Tomis," *Studia Asiatica* XI, Bucharest, 2010.1-2, pp. 89-97. 497
20. "The Bells: From Poe to Sardarapat," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 21 (2012), pp. 127-168. 507
21. "Misak' Medzarents': The Calm Before the Storm," lecture at Boston University, 13 Oct. 2010. 549
22. "The Book of the Way (*Girk' Chanaparhi*) of Yeghishe Charents: An Illuminated Apocalyptic Gospel for Soviet Armenia," Armenian Studies Program Occasional Paper Series, University of California, Berkeley, Stephan Astourian, ed., Spring 2012. 573
23. "Frik: The Bridge of Poetry," *Anathemata Heortika: Studies in Honor of Thomas F. Mathews*, ed. Joseph D. Alchermes, Mainz: Philipp Von Zabern, 2009, pp. 256-264. 641
24. "Sasanian Yarns: The Problem of the Centaurs Reconsidered," *La Persia e Bisanzio*, Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2004, pp. 411-438. 651
25. "Solov'i, Solov'i," *St. Nersess Theological Review* 10 (2005), pp. 77-139. 679

VOL. 2

26. "An Armenological Note on Kartir's Vision," *Dasturji Dr. Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza Birth Centenary Memorial Volume*, Udvada (Gujarat, India): Dastur Kayoji Mirza Institute, 2010, pp. 253-258. 743
27. "The Rime of the Book of the Dove (*Stikh o Golubinoi knige*): From Zoroastrian cosmology and Armenian heresiography to the Russian novel," in Christine Allison, Anke Joisten-Pruschke, and Antje Wendtland, eds., *From Daena to Din: Religion, Kultur und Sprache in der iranischen Welt*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009, pp. 141-208 (*Festschrift Prof. Dr. Philip Kreyenbroek*). 747
28. "On an Armenian Magical Manuscript (Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, MS 10558)," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities*(2002-2014), Jerusalem 2015, pp. 105-192. 809
29. "The Script of the Dove: An Armenian Hetaerogram," *Journal of Armenian Studies*, Belmont, MA, Vol. IX, Nos. 1-2, 2010, pp. 61-108. 899
30. "An Armenian magico-medical manuscript (*Bzhshkaran*) in the NAASR Collection," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 20, 2011, pp. 111-130. 947
31. "The Seh-lerai Language," *Journal of Armenian Studies* 10.1-2 (2012-2013), pp. 1-85. 967
32. "Iranians, Armenians, Prince Igor, and the Lightness of Pushkin," *Iran and the Caucasus* 18 (2014), pp. 345-381. 1051

33. "On the image of Zarathustra," in Alan Williams, Sarah Stewart, and Almut Hintze, eds., *The Zoroastrian Flame: Exploring Religion, History, and Tradition*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2016, pp. 147-178. 1089
34. "The Elephant in the Room: Dawt'ak the Rhetor's Gift List," forthcoming in *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 38, 2017. 1125
35. "Heresies: On an Armenian prayer to the sun," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 26, 2017, pp. 3-16. 1143
36. "Odysseus and a Phoenician Tale," *ВестникСПбГУ. Философия и конфликтология*, 2018. Т. 34, вып. 2, стр. 233-250. 1157
37. "The Lyre of King David and the Greeks," *Judaica Petropolitana* 8, 2017, pp. 12-33. 1175
38. "The Bible and revolution: some observations on Exodus, Psalm 37, Esther, and Philo," *Judaica Petropolitana* 7, 2017, pp. 109-134. 1197
39. "From Mashtots' to Nga'ara: The Art of Writing and Cultural Survival in Armenia and Rapa Nui," in Hebrew University Armenian Studies 15, *Armenian, Hittite, and Indo-European Studies: A Commemoration Volume for Jos J.S. Weitenberg*, ed. Uwe Bläsing, Jasmine Dum-Tragut, and Theo Maarten van Lint, Leuven: Peeters, 2019, pp. 271-318. 1223
40. "Iranian in the *Hekhalot*," in Matteo Compareti, ed., *Fabulous Creatures and Spirits in Ancient Iranian Culture*, Bologna: Casa Editrice Persiani, 2018, pp. 93-110. 1327
41. "From Parthia to Robin Hood: The Armenian Version of the Epic of the Blind Man's Son (*Köroghlu*)," *The Embroidered Bible: Studies in Biblical Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Honour of Michael E. Stone*, eds. Lorenzo DiTommaso, Matthias Henze, and William Adler, *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2017, pp. 877-898. 1345
42. "The Armenian Magical Scroll and Outsider Art," *Iran and the Caucasus* Vol. 15.1-2, Leiden and Erevan, 2011, pp. 5-47. 1371
43. "Argawan: The Indo-European Memory of the Caucasus," *Journal of Armenian Studies* VIII.2, Fall 2006 [2007], pp. 110-147. 1415
44. "The Memory Palace of St. Gregory of Narek," *Hask hayagitakan taregirk' (Hask Armenological Yearbook)*, New Series, Year X, 2002-2006, Antelias, Lebanon, 2006, pp. 59-81. 1453
45. א לִשׁוֹן פֶּאָר שפּרינצעלע (*A loshn far Shprintzele*), forthcoming in *Jewish Languages* (St. Petersburg), 2020. 1483
46. "The Black Dervish of Armenian Futurism," in Garnik Asatrian, ed., *Caucaso-Caspica IV*, Short Monograph Series, Erevan: Russian-Armenian University, 2019, pp. 245-319. 1533

FORWARD

The present volume is a collection of articles published by Professor James R. Russell of Harvard University, in various journals over the past decades. James Russell has been one of the pioneers in the field of Armenian and Iranian Studies, where he has demonstrated the importance of Iranian civilization for pre-Christian Armenia. The connection between the two civilizations has been part of the tireless work of Professor Russell, and I hope this publication shows the immense importance of his work for both Armenian and Iranian Studies. I would like to thank Professor Hourì Berberian, Director of the UC Irvine Armenian Studies Program, as well as Mr. Mamigonian and the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), for supporting the publication of this book.

Touraj Daryaei
Maseeh Chair in Persian Studies & Culture
University of California, Irvine

TWO ROADS DIVERGED: ANCIENT CAPPADOCIA AND ANCIENT ARMENIA

James R. Russell

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveler, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could...*

*Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, and I
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.*

Robert Frost

Its Achaemenian Persian conquerors named the region Katpatuka in the sixth century B.C. In Middle Persian, it appears as the *shahr*, “realm,” of Kaputakya in lists of the lands reconquered by Shapur I and evangelized by the Zoroastrian high-priest Kartir. Greek usage follows: Cappadocia. But the Armenians use an older name, Gamirkæ, a relic of the Cimmerian invasions of the place in the seventh century B.C.; this is the Gomer of the Hebrew Bible. The river Halys separated it on the west from Phrygia; the great ramparts of the Taurus and Anti-Taurus ranges bound it on the south, and the Euphrates—western frontier of Armenia and of the various Iranian empires of antiquity—marked its eastern extremity. The native population was of Hittite stock, related to the Indo-Europeans whose empire dominated central Anatolia in the second millennium B.C. until the migrations of speakers of other Indo-European languages—the linguistic ancestors of the Phrygians and Armenians. The most

ancient Cappadocians worshipped a variety of gods, such as Perwa, a warlike divinity to whom the horse was sacred (Cappadocia always was famed for its horses, even as was Armenia); Shiwats, god of the day; Karmrushipash, goddess of healing and magic, who resides in the deeps of the Great Sea; and gods of the Sun and Moon, of storms, of gateways and pestilences, and of mountains and rivers. Their word for “master” was *ishkha*, a word some linguists have suggested is the ancestor of Armenian *ishkhan*. The word *shuppiya*, meaning “holy,” is likely to be etymologically related to Armenian *surb*.¹

Much of what is known of ancient Anatolian affairs comes from the annals of the Assyrians, who had long maintained communities of merchants in Cappadocia: a number of their inscribed tablets, dating back to the twentieth century B.C., have been found at Kültepe, near the site of the ancient town of Kanish. Assyrian records call the Thracian-Phrygian newcomers Mushki, and they left their mark in Cappadocia: the city renamed Caesarea by the reign of Archelaus in Roman imperial times (Armenian: Kesaria/Gesaria; Turkish: Kayseri) originally bore a form of their name, reproduced as Mazhak by Armenians, and Mazaca (Mazaka) by the Greeks. In the biblical book of Daniel, the three Hebrew children of the fiery furnace bear the Anatolian names Shadrach, Meshech (this is the Mushki-word!), and Abednego. Since the Acts of the Apostles (2.9) in the New Testament mention Cappadocian-speaking Jews at Jerusalem, it is likely that there were local Anatolian converts to the faith. Saint Basil of Caesarea heard people he calls “Mesopotamians” speaking their own language in Cappadocia in the fourth century A.D. This was probably a dialect of Aramaic; and among its speakers were followers of pagan Semitic cults, Jews, and, later, Christians.

Although parts of the plateau are arid, Cappadocia’s mines ensured its prosperity from earliest times. The country folk ate their cheese and yogurt with porridge or bread of rough grains, saving the finer crop for sale; city dwellers, as in ancient Armenia, ate a lot of pork. The porous limestone topography that cre-

¹ See Albrecht Goetze, “The Theophorous Elements of the Anatolian Proper Names from Cappadocia,” *Language* 29 (1953): 262-77, and “Some Groups of Ancient Anatolian Proper Names,” *Language* 30:3 (1954): 349-59. I am indebted to Professor John Huehnergard for these references.

ates the region's strange landscape of cones made it practical for the Cappadocians to carve out cave dwellings and whole subterranean cities, of obvious utility in the harsh Anatolian winters. One may compare to these the subterranean city at Armenian Ani, as well as the semi-dugout Armenian *glkhatun* houses. Cities were few: the Persian satraps ruled at Gazioura, whose name suggests that it was little more than a fortified treasury; and the Greek geographer Strabo mentions Mazaca and Tyana as the main urban concentrations. Mazaca is on the main east-west trading road across Anatolia, at the foot of Mount Argaeus (Armenian: Arkeos/Argeos; Turkish: Erciyes Dag) and surrounded by fertile farm land. But, unlike western Anatolia, Cappadocia did not undergo the heavy urbanization that went hand-in-hand with Hellenism, and had no network of cities: as in Armenia, most of the inhabitants lived in villages that were part of large estates held by local dynastic noble clans. Some of these holdings were temple estates, whose priests were hereditary and of noble rank: the priest of the goddess Men, a lunar divinity, at Comana (modern Shar, near Tufan-beyli), was second to the king and the temple possessed 6,000 slaves. After the destruction of the Persian Empire by Alexander, Cappadocia was ruled by the descendants of the Achaemenian satrap, Ariarathes.² Although the Ariarathids claimed Darius the Great as an ancestor, they nonetheless happily intermarried with the Macedonian Seleucids and Pergamene Attalids and gave their children Greek schooling. Ariobarzanes, also with an Iranian name, succeeded them but ended up at odds with the local nobility because his support for Rome indicated a trend towards strong, centralized monarchy that they opposed. All of this, again, is analogous to the situation in Armenia: local, semi-independent *nakharardoms* held together by a king who was *primus inter pares*—first among equals. And the kings of Armenia, too, all had Iranian names and blood lines.

In religious matters, ancient Cappadocia experienced strongly the influence of the Iranian religion, Zoroastrianism, just as Armenia did. At Farasha, in the southeast of the country, was

² On the political history of Cappadocia in ancient times see Richard D. Sullivan, *Near Eastern Royalty and Rome, 100-30 B.C.* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 1990), and David Magie, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950).

found a bilingual inscription in Aramaic and Greek that reads: "Sa(n)garios, son of Magaphernes, *strategos*³ of Ariaramneia, sacrificed to Mithra." Sangarios is the native Anatolian name of a river in Phrygia; Magaphernes is Persian; and the verb translated as "sacrifice" derives from the Iranian word for a priest, *magu* (from which comes "magic," the Armenian *mog-pet*, "high-priest," and so on). From Tyana, there is a dedication, in Greek "to the just god, Mithra" (*the~i dikai~i Mithrai*): Mithra, known in Armenia as Mihr, and, later, as Mher, is called "the judge" in Iranian texts. As in Armenia, he was a very prominent divinity; and Franz Cumont suggested the cult of Saint George, a Cappadocian, derives many of its features from the pre-Christian devotion to Mithra. There is ample evidence of the worship of other Zoroastrian divinities. At Ortaköy (ancient Nitalis), in the northwest of the country, was found a dedication to the goddess Anaitis, that is, Anahita, Armenian Anahit, who is hailed by the Persian epithet *barzokhara*, "of high Hara," the latter being a legendary mountain in the Avesta. The Persians founded a sanctuary on a hill at Zela, where Anaitis, Omanos (perhaps Avestan Vohu Manah, "Good Mind"), and Anadatos were worshipped. In the fifteenth book of his *Geography*, Strabo speaks of the Persian *magoi*, "priests," and their rites in Cappadocia, calling them also by the Greek term *pyraithoi*, "kindlers of the [sacred] fire." A small, flat-topped altar was found at Bünyan, 21 miles/35 kilometers east of Mazaca: it shows a man in "Median" dress—a tiara, kandys, trousers, high boots—with the Zoroastrian ritual bundle of twigs, the *barsom* (Armenian: *bars-munkæ*), in his right hand.⁴

If the attire of the priests was purely Iranian, the coins of Cappadocia display temples containing cult images of the gods at Zela and Comana that are of typically Greek type, with a peristyle of columns surmounted by a triangular pediment.⁵ Such

³ The *strategos* was the military governor of a region—a Seleucid institution, but one which became hereditary within landed families in Cappadocia, as it did in Armenia.

⁴ On Iranian religion in Cappadocia, see Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 3 (Leiden: Brill, 1991). On the analogous Armenian practices and beliefs, see James R. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Iranian Series, 1987).

⁵ See Martin Jessop Price and Bluma L. Trell, *Coins and Their Cities: Architecture on the ancient coins of Greece, Rome, and Palestine* (Detroit: Wayne State

architectural styles prove nothing in themselves about Hellenization or the lack of it, since they were common throughout the Hellenistic East: one recalls that the Second Temple on Judean coins looks much the same, though of course it contains no cult image. Armenians and Parthians of the pre-Christian period built temples of a similar kind, with statues of the gods within. The Armenian texts use the Parthian term *bagin* to designate these, as distinct from *atrushans*, “[temples of] kindled fire” (Greek: *pyraitheia*) may be a translation of this word or one like it. The statues themselves were often Greek: a bronze image of Herakles, for instance, has a Parthian re-dedication to the divinity Verethraghna incised upon its thigh. Armenians equated the same divinity, Vahagn, with the same Herakles; and Movses Khorenatsi mentions Greek statues that king Artaxias (Artashes) dedicated to his own, Iranian, gods. The Aramaic element in this blending of cultures is important, also. A bas-relief in “neo-Hittite style” was found at Arebsun (ancient Arabissos, near Nevsehir). It may depict a kind of creation scene, and the accompanying Aramaic inscription describes the marriage of the pagan Semitic god Bel to the goddess Daena Mazdayasnish, that is, “the Religion of Mazda-worship,” the personification of the Iranian faith. This is syncretism—the commingling of disparate religious traditions—in the most literal sense; and it gives some sense of the complexity of belief in the pre-Christian period in a region where so many different peoples and cultures lived together. Again, this parallels the situation in Armenia, where in a pre-Christian pantheon that is largely Zoroastrian one finds paired with Aramazd (that is, Ahura Mazda, the chief Iranian divinity) the Aramaean god Barshamin, that is Baael Shamin, Lord of Heaven, who was regarded as the equivalent of the Creator-divinity of the Iranians.

But perhaps the most important religious symbol of Cappadocia was its highest mountain, the snowcapped Argaeus, whose name is a survival of that of the ancient Hittite mountain-god Kharg(ai)a, “the shimmering white mountain.” It was one of the most frequently depicted mountains of antiquity: on the reliefs of the Villa Hadriana, it personifies Cappadocia. Maximus of Tyre (*Dissertationes* 8.8) does not exaggerate in writing that it

University Press, 1977), pp. 39, 98, 195.

was for the Cappadocians *theos kai horkos kai agalma*, “a god, an oath, and an emblem.” Strabo does: with pious hyperbole, he claims (*Geography* 12.2.7) that the Black Sea and the Mediterranean were both visible from its summit.⁶ The holy mountain appears on numerous coins and sometimes in bronze statuettes in the round, topped by a sacred symbol—an anthropomorphic god, a star, or an eagle. The latter could be a survival of Hittite iconography⁷; and it is noteworthy that in Armenia, too, were found statuettes of the Hellenistic period of a stylized mountain surmounted by an eagle. In the Armenian case, perhaps the mountain was meant to be Azat Masikæ, Greater Ararat; and the divine light above Argæus may be parallel, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Christianized Armenian legend of the Lamp of the Saint Gregory the Illuminator (immortalized in Hovhannes Tumanian’s poem, *Lusavorchi kantege*) that the faithful can see shining above Mount Aragats. Argæus is shown also above a fire altar between two armed guardians, the latter a motif common on the later coins of the Sasanians.⁸ Though the worship of Argæus went back to extreme antiquity, the Zoroastrians of Cappadocia probably offered it reverence as they did to the other great mountains of Iran proper (note the dedication to Anahit “of high Hara” mentioned above): Parsi manuscripts down to comparatively recent times contain a short prayer, called in Gujarati *namaskar*, addressed to mountains generally.⁹ In Christian art,

⁶ See Peter Weiss, “Argaios/Erciyes Dagi—Heiliger Berg Kappadokiens: Monumente und Ikonographie,” *Jahrbuch für Numismatik und Geldgeschichte* 35 (1985): 21-48.

⁷ See Jutta Börger-Klahn, “Mons Argaius und Papana, ‘Die Berge’,” *Anatolia and the Ancient Near East, Studies in Honor of Tahsin Özgüç* (1989), pp. 237-55. At Yazilikaya, the Hittite king Tudhaliya IV depicts himself upon a mountain, to signify his divine status.

⁸ See the drawings of Ayça Güler accompanying the article “Kappadokia ulusları ve Erciyes kültü,” in Oghuz Güler, *Antik çağın ikonografisinde Erciyes* (Istanbul: Arkeoloji ve Sanat Yayınları, 1995).

⁹ See Dastur K.M. Jamasp-Asa and M. Nawabi, eds., *MS T3: Nirangs, Afrins, and Prayers, Pahlavi Codices and Iranian Researches*, vol. 28 (Shiraz: Asia Institute of Pahlavi University, 1976), pp. 67-68: *Azh hama gunah paitita pasha-hemanom vispao gairyo ashakhvathrao pourukhvathrao mazdadhata ashavano ashahe ratavo yaz(amaide). Ashem vohu (I), ahmai raescha*. “I repent and atone for all sins. We offer worship to all the mountains, who are abundant in the well-being of truth, created by Mazda, righteous and lords of righteousness.” This is followed by recitation of the mantric prayer “Truth is the best good” and the series of short prayer formulae beginning with “May I have abundance. . . .”

the Holy Cross is shown often on a stylized mountain: this could be, for Anatolians, both Golgotha and their own sacred mountain, whether Ararat or Argaeus. The transformation of such sacred images of the pagan past into icons of Christianity is illustrated clearly in the case of the Cappadocian figurines of the Roman period of the sacred eagle perched between the antlers of a stag: a fresco at a church in Cappadocian Mavruca, centuries later, shows Saint Eustathius on horseback, frozen, as a magnificent stag he has been hunting turns to face him, the Holy Cross between its antlers this time.¹⁰

The Urartians carved into rocky outcrops blind portals called “gates of the god:” the divinities were believed to dwell within the mountains. The gate at Tushpa, the center of the Urartian kingdom, with its encyclopedic inscription detailing the rites proper to the entire pantheon, was renamed by the Armenians *Mheri durn*, “the gate of Mithra,” and was enshrined in the national epic with the additional symbolic and narrative details that, taken together, show Armenia to have been the place of origination of the great Mithraic mystery-religion and fraternity of the Roman Imperial era. The Phrygians carved similar blind portals as well as tombs in their mountains, sometimes with the old Anatolian goddess Kybele as *potnia theron* with her two lions in relief on the “door;” and a Turkish scholar has proposed an Urartian origin for this practice.¹¹ It would have had to cross Cappadocia, where there are some rock-cut tombs but no Urartian-style “gates of the god.” Instead, the porous stone of the region allowed the Cappadocians to carve whole temples within the rock—the famous cave-churches of the country may perpetuate an Anatolian belief in the sacred space of a rock or mountain. Several Cappadocian coins, though, do depict Mount Argaeus with two grottoes: one at the base contains cult objects; the second, higher on the mountain face, sometimes contains a

¹⁰ For the fresco, see Luciano Giovannini, ed., *Arts of Cappadocia* (Geneva: Nagel, 1971), figs. 101, 103.

¹¹ See Fahri Isik, “Zur Entstehung der Phrygischen Felsdenkmäler,” *Anatolian Studies* 37 (1987):163-78. The old Anatolian myth of the birth of a god (Mithras!) or monster (Ullikummi) out of the rock seems to have traveled in the opposite direction, from west to east, through Armenia and specifically from there to the north Iranian epic of the Narts in the Caucasus. See Walter Burkert, “Von Ullikummi zum Kaukasus: Die Felsgeburt des Unholds,” *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft* 50 (1979): 253-61.

flame—suggesting perhaps a coalescing of Zoroastrian veneration for fire with the Anatolian belief in the mountain cave as the dwelling of the god. If Helios, often shown on coins standing on the summit of Argaeus with a globe in his right hand and a scepter in his left, represents Mithra, then one may see the reflection of a cult like that of the Armenian Mher in his cave.¹² As to the globe, this iconographic detail from the Greco-Roman tradition might indeed have been interpreted locally as the wheel of the Zodiac seen in Mithraic spelaea—the *charkh-e falak* “wheel of heavenly fate” Mher grasps, in his cave at Van.

Cappadocia weathered the short-lived Pontic Empire of Mithridates Eupator and the even briefer hegemony of Tigran II the Great of Armenia, who in 77 B.C. deported Mazacans to populate his new capital, Tigranakert/Tigranocerta. During the reign of Tiberius—when Jesus Christ was a teenager—Cappadocia was fully and permanently incorporated into the Roman Empire, in a way that Armenia, closer to Iran, never was. The indigenous languages of western and central Anatolia, several of which employed modified Greek alphabets, began to disappear after the second century A.D. Cappadocian still survived in the fourth: Saint Basil of Caesarea insists upon a doxology including at a certain point the conjunction “and,” which he has heard “Mesopotamians” use, apparently by grammatical necessity; and he adds, “Our Cappadocian dialect is similar; perhaps the Spirit foresaw how useful this word would be, when he gave the gift of tongues to the disciples!”¹³ In his *Letters*, from the 370’s, he de-

¹² See William E. Metcalf, *The Silver Coinage of Cappadocia, Vespasian-Commodus*, Numismatic Notes and Monographs no. 166 (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1996), pp. 9, 24, and plate 23.

¹³ Saint Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir’s Seminary Press, 1980), p. 112 (ch. 29.74). Karl Holl, “Das Fortleben der Volkssprachen in Kleinasien in Nachchristlicher Zeit,” *Hermes* 43 (1908): 240-54, connected the survival of local languages to the proliferation of heresies. But, as Speros Vryonis has pointed out, tomb inscriptions of known heretics were in Greek, and, if anything, Saint Basil’s mention of Cappadocian suggests equally that the undeveloped, unsophisticated character of the local languages might have guarded against the subtleties of some heretical doctrines for which Greek philosophical vocabulary could have served as a vector. It seems a great deal is known about heresy in Asia Minor, not because it did not exist elsewhere, but because there were so many pious pens there to record it, and so many ancient *agoras* and isolated valleys where it might be propagated or escape persecution and endure.

scribes the surviving Zoroastrian community of the Magousaioi and their beliefs and customs; he mentions also the Cappadocian name of a month, *Dathousa*—this is Avestan *Dathusho*, “of the Creator” (modern Persian *Dai*), and the names of the other months, preserved in other sources, are Zoroastrian, too.¹⁴ But there is no evidence of Cappadocian as a written language, nor did any of the Cappadocian Fathers perceive any need to read the Scriptures, preach the faith, or write theology in any language besides Greek.

Armenia, whose pre-Christian culture and institutions were so similar to Cappadocia’s, took a different road: on the other side of the Euphrates, the fractious *nakharars* and the hereditary high-priesthood of the Grigorians, a branch of the royal family (shades of Comana!), able better to balance the competing claims of the *duo imperia summa*, *Romanorum Parthorumque* (Pliny, *Natural History* 5.88), could control and limit to their advantage the Hellenization of their culture, as a counterweight to Iranian and Christian Syrian influences. But Armenia’s greater sense of isolation from the centers of Christendom also contributed to a nascent sense of unique, separate identity for which there is no evidence in Cappadocia or elsewhere in Anatolia. This nationalism expressed itself, not only in the Biblical paradigms of Daniel or the Maccabees, but also in the deliberate cultivation of such ethno-genetic myths as the tale of Hayk and Bel or the legends of the missions of the Apostles and the Illuminator, incrusting with the matter of heroic epic.

The Cappadocians, having succumbed once to Hellenization, were ripe, with the disintegration of Byzantine rule in Anatolia, for subsequent Turkification.¹⁵ Though Greek Christian communities survived in the region until 1923, they can scarcely be regarded as the bearers of an ancient Anatolian culture. The Armenians took another road, and it led to Mashtots. With the acquisition of a perfect alphabetic script, a sophisticated written language, and a critical mass of translated and original texts,

¹⁴ See Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor*, vol. 1: *The Celts in Anatolia and the Impact of Roman Rule* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), pp. 170-76, on the indigenous languages.

¹⁵ On these processes, see Speros Vryonis, Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971).

Armenia became, in the profoundest and most inviolable sense, independent and indestructible. It possessed an intellectual and spiritual identity sufficient unto itself yet subtle and flexible enough to experience infinite development without loss of self, no longer dependent on politics or place, impervious to co-optation by any imperial culture. The paths of Armenia and Cappadocia—both Anatolian, both rich in diverse cultures and beliefs, both of similar social structure, both converted to Christianity—diverged. Armenia took the road less traveled by, and that has made all the difference.

A Note on Armenian *hrmštk-el*

James R. Russell

Harvard University

Abstract

The hapax **framaštaq* in the Babylonian Talmud is a loan from a Middle Iranian slang word for the penis; from its base comes the common Armenian verb *hrmštkel*, “to shove in”, which is not attested in Classical texts and might have had an obscene connotation in ancient times that it no longer possesses.

Keywords

Slang, Babylonian Talmud, Sasanian dynasty, *Buzandaran*, *Köroghlu*, *framaštaq*, *marz-*, *mālīdan*, *hrmštkel*, *Alecander Romance*, *Bušāsf*, Paruyr Sevak

The Aramaic of the Babylonian Talmud is replete with Middle Iranian loan words, some of which reflect the same dialect variations as the Middle Iranian loans into Armenian of roughly the same period: *hraman* instead of *framān* for “command”, *navasard* instead of *nō sāl* for “new year”, and so on. The narratives in the text abound in Iranian themes, too; and in recent years a number of scholars, notably Daniel Sperber, Isaiah Gafni, Shaul Shaked, Yaakov Elman, and Geoffrey Herman have been exploring these. They are of interest to the study of ancient Armenia in both expected and unpredictable ways. For instance, we learn that in the fourth century the Sasanian monarch Šābuhr (Shapur II, r. AD 309-379) sat down to lunch with the Jewish Exilarch and the two august personages dined upon a single *ethrog*—a sort of citrus fruit used by Jews during the festival of Sukkot. This sounds rather silly on the face of it and it is probably an abbreviation: presumably they ate, and most definitely drank, a great deal more. The dessert of fruit is most likely to be understood as a kind of rhetorical shorthand for the comfortable intimacy of friendship and leisure the two men enjoyed. This was an enviable situation for the leader of a religious minority of course. In a world of swords and sabers one checked at the entrance to the

dining-tent or left with horse and groom, here they were concluding their meal, wielding a little fruit knife of peace.

Knowing that this shorthand was current and understandable to contemporary readers and listeners adds pathos to the already poignant scene of the death of the Armenian king Aršak II imprisoned by the same Šābuhr. One recalls that the epic narrative of P'awstos, the *Buzandaran*, leads one through a series of confrontations, each a set piece of oral *topoi*, at the climax of which the Armenian Arsacid was cast into the Fortress of Oblivion. There, thanks to the interventions of his faithful eunuch Drastamat, he was allowed to enjoy a last feast in the manner of kings: he reclined on pillows, watched dancing girls, and suddenly reached for a fruit knife and ended his life. Once we know the register of symbols, the little fruit knife as suicidal weapon becomes that much more tellingly poignant, that much sadder. And one might add that free men at feasts after they surrendered their heavier, longer blades were still allowed to retain in a scabbard strapped to the upper leg a sort of pocket dagger, in Armenian *nran*, which one explain from Iranian **ni-rāna*- literally "on the thigh". Aršak was lacking even this token weapon allowed any nobleman at any occasion. One mentioned pillows: in Parthian and Sasanian society, the more pillows one reclined upon at a feast, the more elevated one's rank was; and Armenian custom followed the practice, even using the standard Sasanian term for "pillow", *bališ*, to mean an honor bestowed. In the Middle Ages, the *khalat*, or robe, was to take place of the latter. So in the Talmud a Rabbi losing a disputation has one mat after another yanked away from underneath him till he dies—yet another example of how an image can be inverted to drive home a point in a standard tale.¹

Many are familiar with a cycle of epic tales about a Robin Hood-like figure called in Turkish *Köroğlu*, "Son of the Blind Man": multiple versions exist in Armenian, as well as the Turkic languages, Kurdish, and even Modern Greek.

¹ The *locus classicus* for the investigation of this technique is Professor Nina Garsoian's analysis of the transformation of Trdat the Great in the Agathangelos into a pig for his imprisonment of St. Gregory: here it is the royal *varaz*, the boar-totem of Verethraghna, that is inverted. I have proposed, in a study of the bas-reliefs on the drum of the Cathedral of the Holy Apostles, an inversion in the opposite direction in the same narrative cycle: the thirteenth "Apostle" is Gregory, beset by two serpents. These torture him as they do the imprisoned Zakhak; but the Christian saint will overcome them and emerge bringing salvation rather than apocalypse (see Russell 2004: 1165-1191).

The story begins with the father of the hero, who is master of the royal stables, being blinded. In ancient Iran, the *ākhwarrbed*, “stable master”, was part of the court hierarchy but also the lowliest courtier. Of Rabbi Yehuda I the Babylonian Talmud says, *Ahōrērē dā-Rabbī ‘atīr mi-Shābūr mālkā*, “The Rabbi’s stable-master [using a Persian loan word, the same as that found in Armenian] was richer than king Shapur”. So the office is a marked term whose meaning is best understood in its Parthian and early Sasanian context: it calls the attention of the listener to an epic or folk tale to what I would term a switching point in the narrative plot. That is, the son of the stable master can move either up or down in the social order. In this case the man is blinded for a supposed offense of *lèse majesté* and his son becomes a bandit-leader, an anti-king who dedicates his life to avenging his father’s unjust humiliation. The mention of the stable master is not so much Jewish hyperbole as Talmudic shorthand based upon the realia of Parthian and Sasanian society in Mesopotamia; and we can see how the topos, when understood in its Iranian context, serves as an anticipatory signal in the narrative from the Armenian highland from which the Kōroğlu cycle drew its core material.

Reuven Kipperwasser, a prominent Israeli Iranist and Talmudist, recently called my attention to a passage in tractate Mo’ed Qatan 18a of the Babylonian Talmud, in which Avitūl the Scribe (or maybe the Barber, there is some dispute about how to read his epithet) says in the name of Rav Papa that “the Pharaoh who lived in the time of Moses was one *amah* tall, his beard was one *amah* long, and his **framaštaq* was one *anah* and one *zereth* long”. This fulfills the prophet Daniel’s observation (Dan. 4.14) that God appoints the lowest of men over the kingdom of men, the text smugly observes. The average height of a man in the Talmud is four *amahs*; so the king of Egypt is a priapic dwarf. The text adds that he was a magus—a Zoroastrian. Prof. Martin Schwartz has proposed in correspondence for *framaštaq*, a hapax, a persuasive derivation from the base *marz-* “rub”, with preverb *fra-*. The base gives us both the Armenian loan *marzem* “exercise” and Persian *māl-īdan* “to rub” (so Persian-in-Turkish *peshtimal*, “back-rubber”, i.e., “towel”).² In the Armenian version of the Alexander Romance

² Jastrow explains Talmudic Aramaic *parmašt-aq* as *contractatus* or *extensus*, *membrum virile*, citing Pers. *parmāštak*. The latter New Persian form is not cited by Steingass, but one finds *parmās-īdan* “touch, extend” (Steingass). (The suggestion is cautiously advanced here that Turkish *parmak* “finger” may be the result of a loan from Iranian, digit and penis being typologically related.) This loan-word from Middle Iranian into the Aramaic of the Jews of Parthian or Sasanian Mesopotamia

the Egyptian Pharaoh Nectanebos is a rather pathetic figure: he dies by falling into a hole he has not noticed because he was too busy discoursing on the mysteries of the stars above, as the young Alexander observes with prim indifference. The hapless Egyptian is depicted as indecently lustful, too. When he meets the gullible Olympias, *i t'aguhiṇ macuceal karuc'aw aranc' t'ap'eloy, k'anzi ēr vawašamol i kanays* "at (the sight of) the queen he stiffened with an erection without ejaculating, for he was crazed by lust for women" (Simonyan 1989: 73).³

The Iranian term for the *membrum virile* found in the Talmud is not attested in modern Persian or Classical Armenian. But one recognized it at once as the source of the common modern Armenian denominative verb *hrmštk-el*, "to push or ram in hard". The word escaped the notice of both the great etymological lexicographers of the 20th century, Adjarian and Jahukyan; and it does not appear in the 19th century *Nor Baḡgirk'* since it is not attested in Classical Armenian texts. Yet it is self-evidently a loan into Armenian from northwestern Middle Iranian, probably in the Arsacid or early Sasanian period, a slangy term for penis that appears to have been fastidiously bypassed by Christian writers, even though its southwestern Middle Iranian form was judged suitable for the purposes of a scabrous, derogatory Talmudic yarn about the detestable, priapic

in the era of the compilation of the Babylonian Talmud may have been vocalized in fact as **framaštak*; and the Iran. form may be derived from OIr. **fra-mar-*, with a base H.W. Bailey suggested in his *Dictionary of Khotan Saka* could mean "mark, feel". Kohut proposes an etymology from the base *vaxš-* "grow, sprout" with preverb *fra-* "forth". Such a shift from *v* to *m* is normal, as is the reduction of the cluster *xš* to *š*; and the form is possible. Moreover, one notes that the base with prepositional *frā-* is indeed attested in Yašt 19.50, in a series of boastful physical threats against the man-dragon tyrant Dahāka after the latter has threatened the sacred fire: *frā θwqm zadangha uzuxšāne* "I'll mount both your buttocks!". Such a passage would have lent itself in popular tradition precisely to the kind of vulgar sexual jocularity one finds in the Talmudic passage. Prof. Martin Schwartz finds scant foundation for Bailey's understanding of the root as "feel" and argues that *mar-* cannot produce **maštak* in Parthian. (But one notes at least OIran. **fra-jar->* Arm., *via* Pth., *hra-žar-em*, "take one's leave of, reject" and *hražešt*, "farewell".) Schwartz instead proposes a derivation from the well-known base *marz-* "rub"—this is the root that produces New Persian *māl-īdan*. (One may recall the Arm. surname Peshtimaljian, from Pers.-in-Tk. "towel maker".) The latter is very well attested in Armenian of all periods, cf. *marz-em* "exercise", *marz-aran* "stadium", etc. In Pahlavi the base can have a sexual overtone, as in *kun-marz*, "anal intercourse", an activity of which the Zoroastrian books universally and sternly disapprove (unless, one supposes, one is Taxma Urupi or another Kayanian hero sticking it to Aži Dahāka).

³ Albert Wolohojian's English translation bowdlerizes the passage.

Egyptians. In this disregard for Egypt the Jews of Mesopotamia shared a sentiment with their Zoroastrian neighbors. The Pahlavi books call “Alexander the Accursed” (he is never “the Great”) *musrāyīg menišn*, “the Egypt-dweller”—clearly, the son of a fellow with endowments much like those of his ancestors. In Armenia, meanwhile, **hramaštak* would have endured down the ages in unrecorded vernacular usage, surfacing only when the latter began to be chronicled; and by then, only the derivative verb remained, its meaning having become innocuous. Such de-demonizations are fairly common, within the Iranian sphere: Asmussen long ago noted that the Avestan demoness of sloth, *Bušyqstā*, a personified optative “let it be (later)”, becomes a Judaeo-Persian common noun for sleep, *bušāsf*, which has no connotation of evil. And for the tendency to render innocuous sexually explicit expressions one might cite the Modern English example of “suck”. “This coffee sucks” means that the beverage tastes terrible, not that it has become mysteriously endowed with very unlikely erotic skills. (The lyric “where the bees suck” of the Bard in *The Tempest* has been ruined for this modern ear, which hears but a complaint about somehow inadequate insects.) Michael Adams, in his book *Slang: The People’s Poetry*, points out that the derogatory use of the verb actually had nothing to do with fellatio originally, though everybody polled wants, it seems, to think it does anyhow. *Fra-marz-*, *hrmštkel*, “shove it in”: *honi soit qui mal y pense*. We can recover something of the conversational language of ancient Armenia, and imagine some of the *topoi* of its storytelling, too, by looking at two kinds of sources: Irano-Talmudica and the modern Armenian lexicon; and by applying some of the methods of analysis of the folktale. The *hramaštak* signaled a lustful rascal of a king; an *axorāpet* minding the royal mounts was a low courtier about to get rich or rebel; one counted pillows and measured the tension of position and prestige; and a knife at table, depending on its size, was to be a symbol of amity or tragedy—Chekhov’s rifle on the wall that must be fired by the end of the play.

But the story does not end here for *hrmštk-el*. The study of Pahlavi and Talmudic Aramaic are enriched by a knowledge, not only of ancient Armenian, but of the modern language, as here. Those other tongues are dead, but Armenian is fertile and alive, and its literature evolves with old words and new imaginings; so we find forms of this verbal base, for instance, in the poem “Nightfall” (*Gišeramut*) of the great poet Paruyr Sevak (1924-1971), in his cycle *Etic’i hays*, (“Let there be light!”, (Sevak 1969: 32):

The automobiles
That seemed until now to be blind,
Blind as a cat's newborn brood
Now see one another and kindle their eyes.

And the silence already
Is thrusting all else aside
To clear itself its proper place
And from that long-drawn thrust
The mountains appear to have moved afar.

*'U lřut'yuna
Arden amen inč' hrmštorum ē,
Or iren hamar kargin teł bac'i,
Ev ayd tevakan hrmštoc'ic' ē,
Or heřac'ac en t'vum leřnera'.*

Loneliness, like Khayyam, is getting drunk,
Getting drunk and cursing God.
And now the good dogs' bark,
It seems, is not at all a barking but a prayer
Dispatched to blasphemed God
To ask Him that He pardon His abuser.

The dark becomes a wet sponge on the board
Erasing all the sky till heaven
Is slowly encrusted with hoar frost of stars.

And men begin to speak
Less, and more quietly,
Since the lights and the lamps
Tell more eloquent tales.
Every house sends forth
Its declaration to the sky
In the cry of a child,
A mother's call,
The animals',
The cars'
Telegraphic bleat and bark,
But above all else in these,
The lights that burn and blink, go out,
Unending, corresponding
To an alphabet, a new Morse code.

And then,
 When all these voices are already still—
 The lights, as well—
 It seems the time has come
 For the universe to respond:
 In sleep all men receive their answers
 In the shape of nightmares or good dreams.

 Good dreams alone to you, my darlings;
 Let your nightmares only come to me, your friend.

The verb becomes a part now of an introspective meditation on the way silence comes to a great city, Erevan, at dusk, the mountains in the darkness and the quiet seeming to recede. It is not merely de-demonized, but ennobled in its context. The poet, seemingly standing aside to perceive the esoteric language of the nightfall, emerges at the end beside us, a friend ready to shoulder even the weight of our nightmares. The scholarship of Professor Garnik Asatryan embraces all the provinces and ages touched upon in this philological note, and many more; but those who have rejoiced in his hospitality know a Parthian paradise on the plain of Ararat where good wine and conversation mingle with the magic night, and many are the burdens he has shouldered for us as a friend, like a titan on Masis or a hero of Sasun, for which our gratitude will have no end.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Russell, J. R. (2004), "A Bas-Relief on the Cathedral of the Holy Apostles, Kars, Armenia" (*UCLA Conference on Kars and Ani*, Nov. 2001), *Armenian and Iranian Studies, Armenian Heritage Press and Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies* 9, Cambridge: 1165-1191.
- Simonyan, H. (ed.) (1989), *Patmut'wn Atek'sandri Makedonac'woy*, Erevan.
- Sevak, P. (1969), *Elic'i luy*s, Erevan.

AN ARMENIAN SPIRIT OF TIME AND PLACE: THE ŠVOT

by

JAMES R. RUSSELL

Harvard University

To the memory of Dr. Nira Stone,
historian of Armenian art at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel;
beloved wife of the great Armenologist Prof. Michael Stone; and good friend.¹

Some outlaws live by the side of a lake
The minister's daughter's in love with the snake
Who lives in a well by the side of the road
Wake up, girl, we're almost home
We should see the gate by morning
We should be inside by evening

— Jim Morrison, “Not to touch the earth”.²

The *Švot*, or *švod* in Western Armenian, is a mythical creature of Armenian folk belief that lives during the colder months of the year in the walls of the house or the stable (*gom*). February is called “Švotsmoň”, *Švotamis*; and the rite of banishing the *Švot*, called “Švot-outing”, *Švotahan*, takes place the last night of February. *Švot (i) turs, Adar! Mart (i) ners!* “Out with the *Švot*; in with Adar (March)!” cries the lady of the house, banging on the wall of home or stable with a broom, her under-drawers (*vartik'*), or strips of leather. The *Švot* dislikes having to leave its cozy home for the warmer months of the year, and can be heard to complain. But it then dutifully, if perhaps grumpily, goes out into the family's fields to work. Presumably it returns the following winter to its comfortable lair in the wall.³ In Malatya (Gk. Melitēnē), Armenians

¹ This article was presented in abbreviated form as a paper at the Workshop on Armenian Folklore and Mythology (Cambridge, MA, August-September 2013) organized and hosted by the Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies, Harvard University, and co-sponsored by the AIEA, SAS, NAASR, and ALMA. The workshop was dedicated to the memory of Dr. Nira Stone.

² Sugarman 1991, p. 89.

³ See Russell 1987, pp. 333-334. This paper expands considerably upon the data presented in that book; and my conclusions are now appreciably different in some respects.

believed the *Švot* was an invisible being that deceived people by leading them away to faraway places. This kind of *Švot* — if that were all it did — would then have to be a creature wholly of barren tracts or wastelands remote from human habitation, different from the house spirit described above. But this is probably not the case, and the report focuses on only one aspect of the spirit's activity. For according to beliefs recorded in various places, after being driven out of the house the *Švot* might try to sneak back in, in the form of a cat, or in the guise of a relative returning after a long absence. Then, in a mischievous or vindictive mood it might invite people out for a long walk, lead them astray, and abandon them.

As to its appearance, in Xarberd (Tk. Harput) the word *švot* was also used as a pejorative epithet for people with hideous (*aylandak*) faces; and in some places it was thought to be a demon or evil spirit as tall as a tree. As we shall see presently, the word might be applied to supernatural beings who were not house spirits at all and were very gruesome and terrifying indeed. Belief in the spirit was widespread over historical Armenia; and variants of the word in Armenian dialects include *šhod*, *šivod*, *šuvēd*, and *šuēt*. Armenians of Kesaria (Tk. Kayseri, i.e., Caesarea of Cappadocia where St. Basil lived) spoke of the *švot* as a spirit that appeared on the night of the Feast of the Presentation of Our Lord to the Temple (Arm. *Teaṛnəndaṛaṣ*).

The latter, celebrated on 13th February, is the Christian Armenian winter festival of fire equivalent to Western Candlemas, and comes in the month Ahekan of the ancient Armenian calendar, a name derived from from the Old Iranian **Āthrakāna*- "Fire festival". The late Professor Zaven Xaṛatyan of Erevan wrote an important essay on the *Švot* that I have offered in translation in full from the original Armenian as Appendix 1 of this study, providing additional data and important insights. He concluded that the *Švot* was a house spirit who lived indoors in the cold months, stimulated thoughts of love and procreation as springtime approached, and then went to the fields to help the family's crops grow. The great ethnographer Prof. Hranuš Xaṛatyan, kindly provided his publication to me and added one of her own on *Teaṛnəndaṛaṣ*, with data on the *Švot*. She reports: "The smoke and fire of *Teaṛnəndaṛaṣ* burned the spirits called *švot* and *xonjolo*z — demons that supposedly manifested themselves at the beginning of the new year and remained till this feast. After the evening meal the woman of the house would sprinkle a few drops of wax on her children's hats and other head-coverings from a candle kindled in church so that the spirit called *švot* might be unable to enter the house and take them away. In order to prevent the entry of the

švot the boards used to close the smoke-hole and window were smeared with ash from the bonfire. It was thought that a child born on the eve of *Teaṛnəndaraġ* would turn out very wicked and fiery since he had been ‘born with the fire’. Children born on that day or on Easter were called *lus-paron* (for a boy) [i.e., “Mister Light” — JRR] or *lus-tatun* (for a girl) [i.e., “Lady Light, with Tk. l-w *khatun* — JRR].”⁴ The custom seems to derive from the belief that in February the spirit acted lasciviously itself and put mischievous notions about love into the heads of the young; so the latter must be protected, though February’s child was evidently fated to be imbued with the proclivities of the house spirit in that transitional season. And as we shall see presently from the data from the village of Datem, the *Švot*, rather like Goethe’s Erbkönig, might entice or kidnap children. This would be of the same character as its propensity to lure people out of their houses, take long walks, and then abandon them.

The detail of the strips of leather used to drive the *Švot* outdoors in February is particularly telling, with respect to the association of the spirit with fertility. It ought to remind one of the *februa* and other rites of Lupercalia, when young, half-naked Roman youths ran through the streets flogging women with strips of the hide of a sacrificed goat to encourage procreation. Such riotous, lewd festivities involving flagellation have survived in various forms, notably in the Western Mardi Gras or Carnival; and there seem to be echoes also of these rites in its Armenian equivalent, *Bun Barekendan*, whose name might be translated as the Main (day) of Good Living, just before the Lenten fast.⁵ It is a feature that highlights the importance of the *Švot* to the physical wellbeing of the traditional agricultural household, with its livestock and its reliance on the fecundative renewal of nature at winter’s end. As one might expect with any seasonal observance, a coinciding date in the Christian calendar and a suitable etiology can be superimposed on a pre-existing feast; so accordingly some the Armenian rites are closest to those of their Zoroastrian substrates, and the fire festival of February bears an obvious affinity to the holiday that survives as the modern Iranian *jašn-e šadeh*, or “Feast of the hundred days” before the vernal New Year. Indeed, the Classical Armenian name of the holiday, *Teaṛnəndaraġ*, is shortened in some dialects to *Terəntez* and the like, perhaps partly under the influence of the

⁴ Hranuš Xaṛatyan-Aṛak’elyan 2005, pp. 53-62.

⁵ Cf. in particular the ritual cry, *Mort’ē zt’ot’ovn*, “*Flay the mumblor (goat)?”: on the rite in general and testimonia from the late medieval Armenian community of L’vov in Galicia (Poland/Ukraine), see Russell 2003.

unrelated but similar-sounding Iranian *Tirandāz*. People light a bonfire outdoors from tapers brought from within the church and leap over it, crying out *meṛelēd*, “from your dying”. (The name of the fire itself in various places has taken on various deformations of this word, such as *melemet*.) That is, the celebrants hope the fire will transfer its warmth and strength to them, even as by kindling it they warm the earth itself in mid-winter and look forward to spring. But the ritual word may also have had reference at one time to the spirits of the departed, Clas. Arm. *meṛeloc*’. This is significant if in fact the *Švot* was the spirit of a great, departed ancestor, as is the case with the similar Russian house spirit, the *domovoi*. And in pre-Christian Armenia spirits that received the honorific *šahapet*, “ruler of a realm”, had a particular chthonian connection — relevant to the otherworld and to the fertility of the earth.

But to return to the bonfire, as it begins to smolder, people take embers from the fire (or, as we have seen, candles kindled in church) and carry them home to their own hearths. Village Armenians believed that if they brought home the half-burned logs of the *Melemet* [fire], those would expel the *švot* from their homes — a process evidently completed with the *Švotahan*. In one Armenian village the night of the *Melemet* of *Tearnāndaraj* was itself called *Švot*’s night (*Švoti gišera*), and *švots* were believed then to enter the bellies of cats.⁶

One may add here to the dossier some interesting data on the *Švot* that have hitherto not been adequately considered by scholars: we travel first to a little Armenian hamlet. The Western Armenian village of Datem

⁶ *Hayoc’ lezvi barbaṭayin baṭaran* [“Dialect dictionary of the Armenian language”], Vol. 4, Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 2007, p. 283 et seq., s.v. *švod*, *švotahan*, *švotamis*. Nowadays no study of folkloric belief is complete without a foray into the dark forests of the Internet; so, my virtual horse snorting nervously, my knuckles white on my digital lance, I rode into Google and found this entry at Mythbeasts.com: “Shvod, Mythical Number: #2991, Culture: Eastern European, Attribute: Humanoid, Attribute: Domestic, Attribute: Rural, Behaviour: Friendly. A household creature from old Armenian beliefs. They choose a family and inhabit their house over the Winter period. They protect the home and its property. However their real work is outdoors where during the summer they help tend the animals and crops. The Shvod tend to get very used to the warmth of the house during Winter, and so on the last day of February it is customary to use sticks and other soft tools to beat the interior walls of the house to disturb the Shvod. The frustrated creature then leaves the house to start work on the farm.

Shvod has been viewed 31 times.

Give Shvod a rating. [I gave it a positive rating — JRR]

Vote Recorded! [replied Mythbeasts.com to JRR]

(Shvod has been rated 0 stars) 5 Stars = I want Shvod as my pet! 4 Stars = Awesome. 3 Stars = Interesting. 2 Stars = Nothing special. 1 Star = Best left as a forgotten myth. [Poor Shvod! What is it with those other thirty viewers? — JRR]”

(pronounced /Tadem/ by its people, whose descendants still call themselves Tademts'is) belonged in antiquity to the Lesser Armenian principality of Sophene (Arm. Cop'k') and the region of Anzitēnē (Arm. Hanjit').⁷ Contiguous to Cappadocia, and, later, the Byzantine frontier regions, it was a place where Armenians rubbed shoulders with Greeks and with speakers of Aramaic, the Christian Assyrians. The genocidal murder of the Armenians in their ancient homeland by Ottoman Turkey in the First World War and the subsequent ethnic cleansing of Anatolia by the successor state, the Republic of Turkey, entirely obliterated Datem and the hundreds of other Armenian cities and towns of the region. Many of the Tademts'i refugees and survivors settled, like those of nearby Xarberd (Tk. Harput) and its environs, in the industrial centers of New England, particularly in and around Boston, Massachusetts. But in the early 20th century there had been over 1450 Armenian inhabitants of Datem; attached to the church of St. Astuacacin (i.e., Theotokos, the Holy Mother of God) was a school where about a hundred pupils were enrolled. Nearby stood the principal monastery, Datemavank' (Arm. *vank'*, "monastery"), which is reputed by local tradition to have been built by St. Thaddeus the Apostle (Thierry dates the present ruins to the 16th century); the church of St. Astuacacin has been dated to the seventh century or earlier.⁸

Though the still-flourishing village in the early years of the last century was fairly obscure, it had evidently been a place of greater importance in antiquity. The monastery was at one time the seat of a bishop; and the memorial volume (Arm. *yušamatean*) of the village asserts that Datemu [*vank'*] was one of the four great historical monasteries of Sophene, the other three being Zardarič'(), Sorsəray, and Xulay.⁹ George of Cyprus

⁷ *Hayastani ev harakic' šrjanneri telanunneri baġaran* ["Dictionary of the toponyms of Armenia and adjacent regions"], Erevan, 1988, vol. 2, p. 47 gives the variants Datem, Dadim, Dadima, Datemaberđ, Datim, Datma, T'adem, and T'atem.

⁸ Thierry 1993, p. 24 no. 116, Datemavank' (variant T'ikativank, Greek Dadima): there is a photograph in Parsegian, *Armenian Architecture* (photoarchive), vol. 6, no. 106.

⁹ Mxit'arean 1958, p. 24. Some two hundred *yušamateanner* ("memorial books") of the martyred provinces, cities, towns, and small villages of Western Armenia exist in print. Although the Armenian Genocide of 1895-1896 and 1915-1922 was unprecedented in the history of the ancient nation, indeed in human affairs, medieval Armenian literature, from long chronologies and histories to shorter colophons, is replete with narratives of loss and disaster. The genre of the *olb*, or historical lament, is very old; and in the nineteenth century ethnographers developed methods, and founded numerous journals and monograph series, to record the many facets of a way of life already disappearing. So, like the Jewish *yizkōr bikher* "memorial books" (Yiddish) compiled in the wake of the pogroms after the First World War and the wholesale slaughter of the Second, which draw upon the existing genres of lamentation, of ethnographic writing, and, not least, on *pinkasim* — community ledgers — the Armenian books such as Mxit'arean's are both old and new. At my suggestion

mentions, moreover, that Dadima, as the village was called in Greek, was the seat of a Metropolitan of the Greek church.¹⁰ Though the site has not been excavated, Byzantine pottery and coins have been found at the fortress, Datemaberd, which towered over the village. To the west of it flowed the spring of St. Yovhannēs; and Greek inscriptions cover the ruined church of the same name. The church was a place of local pilgrimage; and Armenians, Turks, and Kurds believed the spring to possess curative powers. A six-to-seven-hundred-meter-high hill crowned by the ruins of the aforementioned Datemaberd (Arm. *berd*, “fortress”) rose over the new town, which lay east of older ruins. The fortress itself was square in plan, with thirty-foot towers.¹¹

Datem is of particular interest to students of Armenian ethnography and religion because of its traditions concerning the *Švot*, which the Tademts’is themselves would pronounce as /shəvód/. South of the small, domed shrine of the Forty Martyrs near the village, writes G. Mxit’arean (Mkhitarian), the compiler of the memorial volume of Datem, “was the so-called *Švot* hillock (*blak*), about which innumerable tales are told. There is a small spring there, about which it is said that if little children wish to bathe in its waters, they are pulled into the spring and cannot return. To the west of the *Švot* stone (*k’ar*) is the little expanse called Haramik, which is ringed by mountains. There are two springs there, and hillside lands that belonged in our day to P’ehlivān [i.e., “brave or strong man”, from Persian *pahlavān*] Gōgo and to the priest, Fr. Gurgēn.”¹² Another spring near Datem was Šōš, whose bitter, salty waters were used in medicine. Haramik is remembered as the name of a *marzpan* [i.e., MPers. *marzbān*, a provincial governor of Armenia in the mid-Sasanian period].¹³ From the above references to bishops, metropolitans, and Sasanian satraps, as well as from the physical evidence of the fortress and the monastery and churches, it would seem Datem was a town of considerable importance in antiquity.

my doctoral pupil Christian Millian has begun work on a thesis on the *yušamatean* genre: this has not, to the best of my knowledge, been undertaken before, though at least one fully catalogued Massachusetts collection of the memorial books exists, and there is now a research website on Armenian memorial books as well.

¹⁰ Mxit’arean 1958, p. 25.

¹¹ Mxit’arean 1958, pp. 21–22.

¹² Mxit’arean 1958, p. 23. *Hayastani ev harakic’ šrjanneri telanunneri baġaran* [“Dictionary of toponyms of Armenia and contiguous regions”], *op. cit.*, Vol. 4, p. 154, describes as abundant the spring that flowed from *Švot*, a hill (*blur*) below Datem.

¹³ Mxit’arean 1958, p. 27. The name Haramik is not recorded in the dictionary of Armenian proper names of H. Ačaġean. It would seem to be the common Arabic term for a sacred or forbidden enclosure, with Arm. diminutive suffix *-ik*, perhaps referring to the feared and respected *Švot* whose hillock stood nearby.

As to the name of Datem, the native Armenian folk etymological tradition derives it from a law court, *datastan*, reputed to have been there in olden days. The latter word is an Iranian loan and the tradition may be not far off the mark, if one considers a possible derivation from the fairly important and widespread Old Persian personal name *Dātama. There was an Achaemenid satrap of Cappadocia, known in Greek as Datamēs, in the early fourth century BC, who rebelled against the king and captured cities in Pontus on the Black Sea coast.¹⁴ The pioneering scholar of Iranian onomastics Prof. Ferdinand Justi, writing in the late 19th century, mentioned another person with the same name (and a different Greek nominative ending), Datamas, who appears in the *Cyropaideia* of Xenophon (which also mentions an Armenian, Tigranes, as the bosom friend of Cyrus), and as an abbreviated attestation of the form cited the form DATAM in Greek on coins. He considered the name a possible abbreviation of *Dātamithra-, with OP. *dāta-*, “created, given” or “law, judgment” and Mithra. The much more frequently and widely attested compound with these two elements in reverse order is of course Mithradāta- “created by Mithra”, Gk. Mithridatēs, New Persian Mihrdād, Milād. Mithradates VI Eupator of Pontus, indisputably the most famous bearer of this very popular name, was the father-in-law of the Armenian Artaxiad king Tigran II the Great (95-56 BC). The name *Dātamithra- can be interpreted as “Mithra the Judge” or “Judged by Mithra”.¹⁵ Writing more recently, Prof. Manfred Mayrhofer, in agreement with Justi’s analysis, considers OP. *Dātama, attested as Elamite Daddama, a shortening of Dātamithra and one of a number of such “zweistämmige Kosenamen”.¹⁶ If the name of Datem is not Iranian in origin, but still comes from a human proper name, it might be derived in part from an old Anatolian form containing the element Dada-: Zgusta cites, for instance, the personal names Dadas, Daddos, Dadeas, Dadeis, Dadē, Dadēs, and Dadōn. He notes also a Greek inscription from Athens that mentions one Dadatēs *Kappadōx* (i.e., the Cappadocian), which “est plutôt un nom indigène de la Cappadoce, avec peut-être l’adaptation à la terminaison des composés iraniens”.¹⁷ This is possible; but the name Dadatēs might also be an Iranian theophoric form with the element *dāta-* with a hypocoristic or haplological abbreviated form of the divine name *Dathusa*. In his *Letters*, from the 370’s, St. Basil

¹⁴ Magie 1950, p. 183.

¹⁵ Justi 1895, p. 81.

¹⁶ Mayrhofer 1973, pp. 146, 284.

¹⁷ Zgusta 1964, s.v., and p. 683.

of Caesarea of Cappadocia describes the surviving Zoroastrian community of the *Magousaioi* and their beliefs and customs in his native land; and he mentions also the Cappadocian name of a month, *Dathousa* — this is Avestan *Dāθušō* “of the Creator (Ahura Mazda)” (modern Persian *Dai*). The names of the other old Cappadocian months, preserved in other sources, including several Armenian lists, are Zoroastrian, too. An Iranian derivation for *Datem*, with its element *dat-*, is more likely than the Old Anatolian forms, all of which have *dad-*, unless the Armenian is itself a deformation of another form, such as the name of the place as attested in Greek, *Dadima*. Without a telltale suffix that clearly indicates the name of a city’s builder or ruler, such as the Middle Iranian *-kert* “built by” (the Parthians indeed had a *Mithradātkart*; and there was Armenian *Tigranakert*) or *-āpāt* “idem” (cf. Arm. *Vaṭaršapat*, “built by Vologases”) or *-šat* “joy of” (cf. Arm. *Artašat*, “Joy of Artaxias”), one’s proposed derivation of the name of the place from that of a man remains hypothetical. *Datem* was more than an obscure village in antiquity; so if it did bear a man’s name, then he might have been a person of some wealth and importance, belonging to the local Iranian or iranized nobility. If that man was one of the several Achaemenid individuals named *Dātama* — a name that, as I suggest, means something like “Mithra the Judge” — then the local legend about a court, *datastan* (again locally pronounced, of course, *tadastan*), might be more than a mixture of creative *Volksetymologie* and memory of *Datem*’s past greatness. It might preserve a grain of historical truth.

In *Datem*, reports *Mxit’arean*, “*Melemēt* caused people great concern. They believed that during the days of Lent, the Evil spirit harassed people. All waited impatiently for this day. On the day of *Melemēt*, every woman, young bride, and girl threw the *Švot*’s Hat (*švoti gtakə*) they had knitted into the fire to defeat (*xap’anelu*) evil. The women and brides, or girls who had attained adulthood, would stitch together multi-colored canvas bags they filled with a pinch of salt, a few grains of wheat, a little piece of garlic, and a pinch of mustard (*anux*, for standard Arm. *ananux*). They took this bag to the church and prayed there. The newly-wed couples, numbering ten or fifteen every year, also took to the church a bundle of kindling and piled it in a broad space. They all waited for the service to end. At its conclusion the priest came out in his robe (*šurjaṛ*) surrounded by deacons and unordained ministers (*tirac’u*) with candles. They assembled on the steps of the church and then descended, candles lit, approaching the pile of kindling. A young man (*eritasard*), candle in hand, approached the priest, kissed his hand, lit his candle from the one

the priest held, and waited near him. The priest recited a prayer of protection (*Pahpanič'*)¹⁸ over the youth, who, kissing the Cross, went over to the pile of kindling and set fire to it. The priest then circled the bonfire thrice with the clerks, other followers, and the people. After this rite came the turn of the newly-weds. Each couple in turn, hand in hand, would circle the bonfire thrice. Before the performance of the circuit our grandmas waited with the Švot's Hats in hand — and when the priest upon recitation of his prayer of protection ordered the newly-weds to begin their perambulation about the bonfire, they all cast the hats into it, crying out and praying, 'Lord God, take away the Evil and bring the Good!' (*Tēr Astuac, Č'arə tanes ew Barin beres*). After this ritual a fearless youth kicked out the fire, wading right into it and scattering the embers about with his feet to break its power. Then all present began to kick at and scatter the burning sticks from all four sides and to pile into each other. Everyone tried to secure an ember to take home, in order to kindle a fire under his own roof to protect his home from the Evil one and from scorpions, and so that his chickens would lay eggs — in a word, so that Evil might be conquered and good things rain down on the home."¹⁹

Children playing too close to the spring that issued from Švot Hill were in danger of being kidnapped by the spirit; and adult Tademts'is, too, feared to look behind them on processions to the sacred shrines and springs on the edge of town, lest the Švot take them: "On the afternoon of Easter Saturday, people came out of church bearing candles: many wanted to go to S. Ōhannēs. The older women, taking the brides and girls with them, walked in pairs. The young men, also two by two, walked fifteen to twenty paces ahead, on condition that they not turn around. If anyone happened to look back, everybody to a man would cry out 'I have sinned, I have sinned' (*Melay, melay*), since they thought that the Evil one, the Švot, had nested in the boy's heart (*švotə ayd tūn srtin mēj t'arac ēr*). They believed that the Švot was even worse than Lot's wife and the person who turned back would be transformed into stone, like

¹⁸ This prayer was most likely the fifteenth stanza of the *Hawatov xostovanim* "I confess in faith" of St. Nersēs Šnorhali (d. 1173), which was also employed in talismans: "Christ, protector of all, my your sheltering right hand be over me, by day and by night, when I sit at home, when I walk in the road, when I sleep and when I wake, that I may never be swayed. And have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, of multitudinous sins." See Russell 2005. For the prayers by St. Grigor Narekac'i employed to protect the home against nocturnal assault by natural and supernatural creatures, see Appendix 7.

¹⁹ Mxit'arean 1958, p. 34.

the mountain Mnkalenc'.²⁰ When they reached the church of S. Ōhannēs, the boys still remained twenty paces away. The women entered the church, prayed, and piously lit candles, taking flat stones in the meantime from the ground and securing the candles to them. If it happened that the flat stone adhered to another on which many candles had left drops of wax before, it was considered a sign that the pilgrimage had been acceptable and the desire of the candle's owner would be fulfilled. The mother of a girl would immediately take a kerchief out of her pocket, cover the girl's head with it, and all would proceed to the stream, saying 'St. John, let the hair of your horse's tail shake two drops of water into my ears and fill them' (*Surb Ōhannēs, jiud poč'in mazovə erku kat'il jur lec'ur akanjīs*). The lucky girl would then make the sign of the Cross over her face. Wetting the little finger (*čkoyt'*) of her right hand she would sprinkle water on all the women and girls, conferring thanks...²¹ So at Datem the *Švot* was not only a house spirit, addressed with rites similar to those described by Hranuš Xaratian, but the powerful, chthonic, tutelary spirit of a hillock with a spring disappearing deep within the earth. And there, at the onset of spring, it put the young in mind of love — a true nature spirit of fertility.

And one may add to the material from Datem similar and striking testimony from the province of Dersim (Tk. Tunceli). Near the Armenian village of Artaber²² was *Švoti k'ar*, "Švot's Rock", a great, isolated

²⁰ one recalls here the nymphs of Leto or daughters of Goethe's *Erlkönig*! — enticed little children to their doom. And youths passing by in procession dared not look back at girls, lest the Švot entice and possess them. One recalls the lines of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge: "Like one, that on a lonesome road/ Doth walk in fear and dread,/ And having once turned round walks on,/ And turns no more his head;/ Because he knows, a frightful fiend/ Doth close behind him tread." (On the exorcism of an Armenian-speaking spirit in Coleridge's poem see J.R. Russell (1998,1999 [2000])).

²¹ Mxit'arean 1958, p. 36. St. John the Forerunner (Arm. *Surb Yovhannēs Karapet*) is here envisioned as a mounted warrior saint, like Sts. George, Sergius, and Theodore. The popularity and tenacity of this image in Armenian popular Christianity cannot be over-emphasized. The three traditional mounted warrior saints appear together, each spearing with a lance a prostrate enemy underfoot, in bas relief on the royal Arcrunid church of the Holy Cross on Ałt'amar island in lake Van; and in June 2011, at a rare book shop in Erevan, Armenia, just below the Matenadaran on Maštoc' Avenue, this writer purchased holy images of the three mounted saints, with printed prayers on the back to two, Georg and Sargis, featured in a rack of postcards for tourists. On the Armenian talismanic scrolls employed to protect women in childbirth from the attacks of Lilith, called *Al* or *T'pła(y)*, three mounted saints are shown pursuing the demoness. As for *Surb Karapet*, he is an extremely popular figure in Armenian folk belief as the successor to the warlike champion of the pre-Christian pantheon, Vahagn (Avestan *Vərəθraγna-*, Persian *Bahrām*).

²² Clearly an ancient name, with the suffix *-berd*, "fortress", appended to the truncated form of what could once have been a noble proper name of the Arsacid era or earlier such as *Artašēs*, *Artawazd*, *Artawan*, etc. with *Olr. Arta-* "Truth, Righteousness".

boulder about 50 meters high. People believed the *Švot* would kidnap a child, hurl it from the top of its rock to die, descend to drink its blood, bury the body, let the flesh rot, and then dig it up again and eat it. In the village of Parti in the same region it was believed that the *p'ir* (lit. “elder”, Pers. *pīr*; here an honorific for a revered tutelary spirit) of a sacred forest nearby had chased the *alk*'s and *Švots* into a subterranean tunnel. The warm mineral waters gushing from thence were believed to have been warmed and flavored by the fires the confined spirits kindled for themselves.²³

The origin of the word *Švot* itself is beyond reasonable dispute. Mardiros Ananikian and subsequent scholars accepted a derivation from Classical Armenian *šahapet*, a *genius loci* — spirit of place — whose name is of obvious, standard Middle Iranian derivation from the Mlr. of the Arsacid era, **šahrpet*, i.e., “ruler of a realm”. In the *Agathangelos*, fifth century, Tiridates the Great when interrogating St. Gregory the Illuminator asks ironically whether this Christ he preaches is some *šahapet geretzmanac'*, a tutelary ruling spirit of tombs. Eznik Kołbac'i, *Ełc ałandoc'* (“Refutation of sects”, 5th cent.; recent Western students of the text prefer *De Deo* to this traditional title assigned to the work), para. 137, suggests that Satan makes the *šahapet*, among other phenomena, look very large in order that people may worship it: *Ew aynpēs janay satanay zi zame-nayn ok' i barwok' aknkalut'enē vripec'usc'ē, ew i snoti yoys kapič'ē. Mecac'uc'anē yač's mardkan zvišaps, zi yoržam ahagink' erewesc'in omanc', ařnuc'un znosa i paštawn. Karcec'uc'anē t'e ew nhangk' inč' ic'en getoc', ew šahapetk' vayrac'. Ew yet karcec'uc'aneloy ink'n kerparani kam i višapi kerparans kam i nhangi imm ew i šahapeti, zi aynu zmardn yiwmē t'iwresc'ē.* “And in this manner Satan strives to make every one stray from expectation that is of good, and to bind them to vain hopes. He magnifies dragons in the eyes of men, so that when they may appear awesomely huge to some, they will make them an object of worship. He makes people think there are some sort of crocodiles²⁴ of rivers, and *šahapets* of the fields. And after making them think this, he himself takes the shape of a dragon, crocodile, or *šahapet*, so that he may cause man to err after him.”

²³ See Halačyan 1973, pp. 43, 66.

²⁴ NP. *nahang* or *nihang*, “crocodile” (from OIr. **ni-θanj-* “pull down”), whose existence in Mlr. as an Arm. l-w the text of Eznik here proves. One Arm. MS has *nahangi*; so the word is a homonym of the well-known Mlr. and Arm. *nahang* “province”.

In the high medieval period are mentioned *šahapetk' vayrac'*, that is, *šahapets* of outdoor places — tilled field, vineyards, and the like. And Step'an Malxaseanc' lists the additional, more recent forms *šaharik*, *šaharuni*, *šaharac'i* as “forest dweller, a spirit of the forests, a *šahapet* *vayrac'*”, recognizing that the term is a synonym of *šahapet* though unmarked by the element *-pet*, “lord, ruler” and cites (from Ačārean's entry on the term in the *Armenian Etymological Dictionary*, it would seem) a late mythological usage, *Koč'ec'aw siluanos, or ē šaharac'i, vasn' zi i šahar ew i mayris snaw*, “He was called Silvanus, that is, *šaharac'i*, since he was nurtured in the field (*šahar*) and in the forests.” The various citations of Ačārean in his discussion of *šahapet* make it plain that the term meant “ruler of a place”, whether of the fields (*vayrac'*), orchards (*aygeac'*), or — in the earliest attestation, from Agathangelos — of tombs (*gerezmanac'*). He cites approvingly an Indic parallel adduced by Hübschmann, *kshetrapāla-*, “guardian of a field”. But a derivation from OIr. **xšaθrapati-* is secure. As for *šaharik*, it would appear to derive from Mlr. *šahrig*, with the basic meaning “belonging/appertaining to the realm”. T'ovma Arcruni, 10th century, in his *Patmut'iwn tann Arcruneac'* (“History of the house of Arcrunik'”), reports that he met travellers from Aḫastan (possibly Zābolestān in Eastern Iran/Afghanistan) called *šaxrik'* (nom. pl.) who were *hamakdēn*, that is, sages who knew “all the (Zoroastrian) religion”. It is clear theirs was a noble title; and Mas'ūdī defines *al-šahārija*, the Arabic broken plural of sg. *šaharij*, from Mlr. **šah(a)rīg*, as a class of Sasnian officials chosen from amongst the landowners (*dehqān*).²⁵ It is possible then that the term *šahapet* was replaced at some point in the medieval period by two terms: the etymologically related and equally honorific *šaharik*, used of the supernatural creature as a tutelary spirit of outdoor regions; and *švot*, used of the creature — perhaps the very same one — when it lived in the house and was chased outdoors from there in the month of February, whose serendipitously coincident Aramaic name sounded like a truncated version of the Iranian titles.

It might be noted that terms such as *šaharik* and *švot* are not confined to ethnographical works but find their way into Armenian literature of the early 20th century: Armenians of this period were not the passive subjects of anthropological research but creators of high literary culture who reflected actively and creatively on their folk traditions and antiquities, fully possessing and assimilating them. The Western Armenian Symbolist poet Misak' Mecarenc' (Medzarents) was born in 1886 in

²⁵ See Russell 1987(a), p. 6.

the remote village of Bingeon on the Euphrates near Akn, a place where Armenians lived a life steeped in ancient tradition, almost untouched by Islam or Ottoman rule; he died at Constantinople in 1908 of consumption. A connoisseur of his people's antiquities, he uses *šaharik* to striking effect in two poems, perhaps the last breath, then, of the Classical *šahapet* in texts. (See Appendix 7.) The *švot* has a kind of literary afterlife-after-the-afterlife, too: Hmayeak Arameanc', a leader of the Hnč'ak party and author of *Veracnundi erkunk'ə* ("The birth pangs of renaissance"), wrote under the *nom de plume* M.T. Šwōt, as in *Krderə Tačkak'-Hayastanum (Azgagrakan niwt'er)* ("The Kurds in Turkish Armenia, Ethnographical Materials"), St. Petersburg: *Puškinian tparan* (Pushkin Publishing House), 1905.

The earliest (and sole) attestation of the Iranian form from which Armenian *šahapet* was to derive comes from a trilingual inscription of the Achaemenian period from Xanthos in Asia Minor. In the Aramaic text Iranian-in-Aramaic *ḥštrpty*, that is, Iranian **xšathrapati-*, "ruler of a realm", is given as the equivalent of the divinity named Apollo in the Greek and Lycian parallel versions. The Greek inscription also mentions prominently Leto and her progeny. The latter has an association with graves and her children are nymphs who live in springs; so the Iranian word might have been employed to focus on the chthonic associations of Apollo.

In an article on the inscription Prof. Martin Schwartz of Berkeley cites the discussion in my *Zoroastrianism in Armenia* of Arm. *šahapet* and makes a case for the Iranian word as an identification of a Median Nergal.²⁶ Even if *ḥštrpty* is to be considered pure Median, rather than a loan into Old Persian, which latter possibility is far more likely — not least when one considers that no documentary attestation of Median, not one inscription, is known to exist — there is no particular reason to suppose that this "*gemeiniranisch*" form, adopted like some other terms of rank by the Achaemenian Persians, either reflected or was intended to convey a specifically Median religious belief. Nor, indeed, would one expect an identifiably distinct Median presence to be asserted by the middle Achaemenian era amongst the Iranian nobility of Xanthos or elsewhere in central and western Anatolia, who hailed from diverse satrapies but served a Persian king. There is almost as little evidence of the religious beliefs and practices of the Medes as there is of their language: it is impossible for the time being to reconstruct these in any but the most hypothetical way.

²⁶ Schwartz 2005.

Though the Medes dwelt in continuous proximity to the older, greater civilizations of Assyria and central Mesopotamia, the few sources we have are silent about any Mesopotamian presence in the Median pantheon, whatever other stars there might have been in that mysterious constellation.

All this is not to say there cannot have been a Median Nergal; and Prof. Schwartz's surmise, steeped in both deep learning and an ingenious, intuitive grasp of all matters relating to Iranian and Near Eastern religious traditions, may well be right. But in his otherwise meticulous survey of the data he neglects to mention that there is, however, a very prominent *Armenian* Nergal. This is Tork' Angel, i.e. Tarhundas-Nergal.²⁷ In the fourth century AD, Shapur II sacked Armenian Arsacid tombs in the region of Angel Tun (Gk. Ingilēnē), which bore the name of this being. He seems to have had chthonic associations, then, but Armenians did not identify him with Apollo. They saved that syncretistic association for Mithra, probably because of the common and prominent solar aspect of the Greek and Iranian divinities; and the Greek inscription identifying the cyclopean statue of Mithras on the great platform before the *hierothēsis* of Antiochus of Commagene on the heights of Nemrut Dagħ calls the god Mithras-Apollo-Helios-Hermes. The Armenian Nergal is not referred to anywhere as a *šahapet*. Tork' Angel is discussed by this writer at length in both *Zoroastrianism in Armenia* (which Schwartz cites in connection with the word *šahapet*, as noted above) and in a few subsequent articles, particularly "Polyphemos Armenios". But, like the *Švot*, he is imagined as a powerful giant with frightful features, hence Movsēs Xorenac'i's *Volksetymologie* from Arm. *an-geł*, "not beautiful" — and the Armenian *Patmahayr*, "Father of history", adds that Tork' was known to heave, Cyclops-like, huge boulders at the ships of invaders. So in a way he was, also like the *Švot*, a protector of the home writ large.²⁸

The prominent Iranist Prof. Garnik Asatrian of Erevan University, an authority also on Armenian and Kurdish folklore, rightly accepts the derivation of Arm. *švot* and Cappadocian Greek *sifōtēs*, which he defines as "a class of house spirits", as well as Pers. *šifūt*, "a human-like demon; desert demon; mad, insane, maniac", as loans from Syriac *šəbat*, the name of the month of February, "traditionally considered to be the

²⁷ See Russell 1996-97, pp. 25-38.

²⁸ Russell 1996-1997 (continuing arguments advanced in J.R. Russell, "Tork' and Tarhu," *Proceedings of the Third International Conference on Armenian Linguistics*, Erevan, 1987, published Erevan, 1993).

period of the highest activity of evil beings.” But Asatrian derives from **xšathrapati-*, with the semantic influence of the word for “night”, the second element of Kurdish *mêrê şavê*, literally “the man of the night”, a naked giant who wanders the fields inflicting cattle-plague, who must be placated with sacrifices. He regards the latter as a demonized emanation of Mithra.²⁹ Armenian contains forms such as /*shəhót*/, /*shəvét*/ and /*shwét*/, preserving both an unstressed form of /*shah*/ in the first half of the compound and the -e- of /*pet*/ in the second half: a direct derivation from /*shahapet*/ is admittedly difficult, but possible. Armenian compounds in -*pet* “ruler, master” are, as one might expect, a rather dignified assemblage in which the sacerdotal Grigori *k’ahanayapet*, “chief priest”, rubs shoulders with the aristocratic Mamikonean *sparapet* “commander in chief” under the benevolent gaze of St. John the Forerunner, Yovhannēs *Karapet* — who, as we have seen, is both a sacred and a martial figure in Armenian folk belief.

Radical abbreviation and deformation of divine names subjected in folk belief to demonization is a very common phenomenon generally. Arm. *sandaramet*, for instance, is one of two loaned forms of the name Spēntā Ārmaitī, “Holy Devotion”, the one of the heptad of Aməša Spēntas, “Holy Immortals”, who presides over Mother Earth: *sandarametk’*, used only as a plural, becomes “the subterranean regions”, then hell; and *sond-ark’*, a class of demons bearing the truncated name of the former goddess, swarm out of the demonic hollows of her realm. The Cappadocian month-name *sondara* echoes the Armenian abbreviation; while in modern Persian the same month is now *Esfand*, with poor Ārmaitī gone altogether. The imprisoned king Artawazd was likened to another Ašxadar, whose name sounded perhaps similar, then becoming *šidar*, a class of chthonian

²⁹ G. Asatrian, “Šifūt,” *Etymological Dictionary of Persian*, Leiden: Brill, forthcoming. In conversation at Erevan, Armenia, June 2011, Prof. Asatrian ventured an alternative derivation from *čufūt*, a word for Jew often used pejoratively in Persian and Turkish, on analogy with Modern Greek *armenida*, a kind of demonic nymph, literally, and Armenian woman or girl. On the latter, and on Greek attitudes to Armenians in the Byzantine period, see Russell (1998, 1999 [2000]). But the connection with Jews was considered and rejected long ago by Ačaṙean and is not original. The most recent writer on the linguistic aspect of the question is Martirosyan 2010, pp. 778–779, who cites H. Ačaṙean’s mention of the dialect of Hačən (Hajin) in which Candlemas is called *šved*, i.e., *švor*; and he accepts Ačaṙean’s derivation of the latter from “February, the month of freedom from devils, the demon of February”, while rejecting folk Terdzas as a corruption or reinterpretation of [the canonical name of Candlemas,] *Teainəndarəj* [i.e., “before the Lord”, i.e., the Presentation of Our Lord to the Temple—JRR], and accepting instead a connection to Iranian Tīrandāz. [The latter term means “Shooting an arrow” and would thus refer, in Martirosyan’s view, to the hunter Orion—JRR.]

demons — the process of the shortening of the form assisted by analogy to — and contamination by — a Syriac word meaning “insane”. As we shall see presently, both *šidar* and *sandaramet* appear together, indeed, in a passage from the *Letters* of Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni, an erudite and prolix writer with a taste for rare and antique words and names, with a word containing *šuyt*, which may it turn derive from *švot*.

It is likely that the month-name *šəbaṭ* among the Aramaic-speaking neighbors of northwestern Iranians and Armenians colored the transformation of *šahapet* to both the Armenian *švot* with its variant forms and northwestern Iranian *šifūt*. The word *švot*, by which the house spirit was renamed — after February, because of the rites associated with it in that month — might have seemed acceptable to the Armenian ear as an abbreviated form of the old and honorific term *šahapet*, irrespective of its etymological and semantic difference; and certainly it was a being that inspired both respect and, sometimes, fearful unease. And the name is associated with the titanic, dangerous tutelary demons of both desolate rocky heights and murky chthonic depths. It surely meant much more than a house spirit who became frisky with the onset of spring and had to be driven out to work off his energy on the farm. The name evidently embraced whatever numina the *šahapet* once had described, benevolent and demonic, disturbingly violent and erotically fecundative.

There is another lexical item in Armenian of relevance to this investigation, particularly since it highlights the association of the *švot* — or at least the most prominent type of spirit so designated — with the rites of spring and their passions, so prominent to its role and its very name. Zaven Xaṛatyan (see App. 1) suggested on ethnographic grounds a connection of *švot* to Arm. *švayt* (Clas. Arm. *šuyt*), “*lascivius*, rowdy, lewd” — a word that well describes the revels of *Barekendan* in Armenia, *šbāṭ al-labbāṭ* “February the kicker” in the Lebanon (an idiom for which I am indebted to Prof. K. el-Rouayheb of Harvard), the madness of England’s March hares a few weeks later and farther north, or, as we shall see presently, the misbehavior of Russian *domovye* on the feast of St. John Climacus in April, northwards still. The word *švayt*, with its various derivatives (an inchoative verb in *-anam* for gluttony, an adjective in *-akan*), is of medieval attestation, found earliest in the sermons attributed to Catholicos Yovhannēs Mandakuni (5th cent.) but more likely three centuries newer; and Yovhannēs Catholicos uses it of the notorious Semiramis, Arm. *Šamiram*, whose lust brought the death of the Armenian king Ara the Beautiful.³⁰ I would

³⁰ See Russell 1984.

propose a linguistic approach: the word could, given its relatively late appearance in the Clas. Arm. lexicon, conceivably be an Arabic loan, a diminutive of the month-name pronounced /šəwaf/, so *šuyaf, hence late Clas. Arm. *šuyaf*, Mod. Arm. *švayt*, though the Arabic dictionaries make no mention of such a word, which could have been wholly colloquial or localized to the Syro-Armenian regions.³¹ But the formation of such a diminutive form is universal in Arabic, cf. the common name Ḥusayn, lit. “little Ḥasan”, or *umaylah* “cutie” (from *malih*, “salty”, cf., Arm. *alēk* “nice, cute”, lit. “little salty”).³² Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni, in his *T’ut’k’* (*Letters*), No. 22, p. 67, uses the word in a passage brimming with darkly sonorous demonological and chthonian imagery: ... *Asem ziard krkin matneac’ Tēr ztuns Mamikonean i jeṛs nora? Ew aha karcis kaskacanac’ mez eleal yaštišatay dic’ diwc’aznakan diwakan yarjakman, guc’ē sandarametakanin xzeal kapanac’, kam et’ē ijk’ kiwsoy hmayic’ diwt’ut’ean: ibrew aṛ i šawlovn yaruc’anen zSamuēl, kam šuyatakan šidarac’n šars šamandateal šohanan i veray mer.* “... Shall I relate how once more the Lord handed over to him again this Mamikonean house? And here you might think us to have suspected a demonic assault of the hero gods of Aštišat, as though they had severed the bonds of the infernal one,³³ or perhaps the witchcraft of magic sorceries, as when in the days of Saul they raise up Samuel,³⁴ or shadowy ranks of lascivious imprisoned demons³⁵ imperiously advancing upon us.”

³¹ One recalls that users and speakers of Syriac lived in proximity to — and often shared households with — Armenians down to modern times at Xarberd, Diyarbekir (Tigranakert), and many other centers of Armenian population. See Russell 1994(a), p. 235 n. 1 on the WArm. name Xač’ig attested in medieval Syriac script; and Russell 2004. From the time of the conquests of the seventh century Armenians were in constant contact also with speakers of Arabic.

³² For the second Arabic example I am indebted to my colleague, Prof. Khaled el-Rouayheb (in conversation, June 2013; his own surname is a diminutive of the same form of a word for a Christian priest). For Arm. *alēay* “salty” in the sense of “cute” translated with corresponding Arabic *malih*, see Russell 2013(a), pp. 195, 197.

³³ Arm. *sandarametakan*, “belonging to *sandaramet*”, i.e., Hades. The term derives from a SWMlr. form of the name of the Zoroastrian *Amaša Spanta*, or Holy Immortal creative divinity of the earth, Avestan *Spəntā Ārmaitī*, “Holy Devotion”, MPers. Spandārmad, NPers. Esfand. When the army of Trdat, following St. Gregory, attacked the temple of Vahagn at Aštišat, the “demons” fought back to preserve their sanctuary. After the sacking of the place and the consecration of a church dedicated to St. John the Baptist, some demons were sealed up beneath a chapel called the *diwtun*, “house of the demons”; and the *kaṭ dew*, “lame demon”, was condemned, Sisyphus-like, to empty ash daily into the river Aracani till his efforts dam its flow.

³⁴ The episode in which the king of Israel consulted the witch of Endor: 1 Samuel 28.3–25.

³⁵ The class of demons called *šidar(k’)* is associated with the imprisoned king Artawazd, who is to burst his bonds at the end of days: see discussion *supra*. Grigor Magistros,

Let us descend into these infernal regions to visit a pair of demonized Iranian gods with rhyming names whose myth is related to that of another pair, also rhyming, this time of Egyptian magicians with another well — and Armenian Christian exegesis was to associate the Pharaonic pair with the *Švot*. Wells are a way into the subterranean realm of Hades/*Sandaramet* and the submarine lair of the dragon, the *višap* — they, deep, dark, and dangerous, with a tinge of the magical and the apocalyptic. For Zoroastrians, though, the well represents the power of the Waters (Pers. *Ābān*, Parsi Zoroastrian *Ava*), whose creator-guardian is the *Aməša Spənta* (“Holy Immortal”) *Haurvatāt* (“Wholeness, Health”). This being is paired with the related (and rhyming) *Aməša Spənta* of the plants, *Amərətāt* (“Immortality”); so Pers. *Xordād/Amurdād* and Arm. *xorot-morot*. In Arm. the latter is the name of a flower that is placed in a pot of water on the eve of the Christian festival of the Ascension and is used magically, for divination about love and marriage. In Mumbai (Bombay) many Parsis visit the sacred Bhikha Behram well and offer a net made of flowers to the waters. Each of the thirty days of the Zoroastrian month bears the name of a divinity, as do the twelve months — the Mazdean calendar has no division of the month into weeks — and the sea shore and well are favored sites of pilgrimage on the day whose name coincides with the name of the month of the waters (Parsi Guj. *Avanu parab*: i.e., *Ava mahino Ava roj*). It is customary there to recite either the long hymn to the goddess *Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā* (“The Damp, Powerful, Unblemished one”, who is associated with the waters, childbirth, and fertility; in Armenian, *Anahit*), the *Ābān yašt*, or the *Ābān niyāyišn*, a litany to the same divinity (Parsi Guj. *Ava yasht*, *Ava niyayesh*).³⁶ According to Qazvīnī (*Athār al-bilād* 2.202), the Jews and Christians at Babil (Babylon, i.e., Seleucia-Ctesiphon) held festivals during the year at a well named after the prophet Daniel. (This was perhaps an association with his confinement in the lions’ den; cf. the association of the latter with the well-like pit at Artašat, Xor Virap, where the patron saint of the Armenians, Gregory the Illuminator, languished for fifteen years.) The Muslim historian adds that this was called also the well of *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*.³⁷

in addition to choosing just the right demons — the confined sort — also constructs a series of alliterations in *š-*, employing a conceit of ancient Armenian poetry and later folk poetry that was appropriated also by Christian hymnographers; see Appendix 7.

³⁶ See Kreyenbroek and Munshi 2001, pp. 23, 73, 296.

³⁷ Cited by Morony 1984, p. 432 n. 3. Frescoes depicting a pair of magi or magicians bearing staffs flank the central niche for the cult statue of the tauroctony in the third-century Mithraeum of Dura Europos. They are not named in inscriptions; and for no

The *Qur'ān* mentions the two as demons, imprisoned in a well in Babel. They are permitted to teach magic to interested visitors, but only after warning the latter that what they are about to hear is untrue. Zoroastrianism was associated in the minds of ancient Greeks and Muslims alike with magic; so perhaps the Koranic passages merely demonize a well that was sacred to the two divinities.³⁸ However there is also a Jewish tradition, older in its origin than the Islamic one but developed through the medieval period, that has two fallen angels, Šemhazai or 'Azza, and 'Azzael (note again their rhyming names), confined and chained in a (presumably dry) well in the Mountains of Darkness beyond the river Sambatyon, the latter so named because it rests from casting up stones only on the Sabbath (Heb. and Arm. *šab(b)at* ('), Aram. *šambar*). A traveler desirous of meeting the two fallen angels is to agitate the chain, at which point a cat-like monster, the *unimata*, comes to inquire as to the purpose of his visit. If he replies that he wishes to learn magic, he is admitted and instructed for fifty days.³⁹ Magicians, enchanted lairs, clanking chains: it is an entrancing *topos*, and we find an echo in the evocation by Edmund Spenser (1552-1599) of the British mage Merlin in *The Faerie Queene*.⁴⁰

particularly convincing reason previous scholars have identified them as Zoroaster and Ostanes. It is interesting and suggestive in the present context, at least, that they are an identical pair. Perhaps their names rhymed, like those of Cautes and Cautopates.

³⁸ In the spirit of oppositionalism that structures the Zoroastrian world view, *Haurvatāt* and *Amərətāt* already seem to have rhyming demonic opponents in the villains Teresh and Zeres (personifications, in Iranian, of *Tairičā* and *Zairičā*, Drought and Jaundice), who appear in the Biblical Book of Esther, a text steeped in Iranian lore and associated with the rowdy early spring feast of Purim (see Russell 1990).

³⁹ See Russell 2013.

⁴⁰ *The Faerie Queene*, Book 3, Canto 3.8-9: Merlin entered the Glass House of Bardsey with the Nine Bards and the thirteen treasures of Britain; or went to the edifice Esplumear he had built, and vanished. Or the water-fairy Nimiane or Viviane lured him to imprisonment for eternity in a tomb of rock, where he forces demons to build for him a brazen wall. "And if thou euer happen that same way/ to travell, goe to see that dreadfull place: it is an hideous hollow caue (they say)/ Vnder a rocke that lyes a little space/ From the swift Barry, tumbling downe apace,/ Emongst the woodie hilles of Dyneuowre:/ but dare thou not, I charge, in any case,/ to enter into that same balefull Bowre,/ for fear the cruell Feends should the vnawares deouwre./ But standing high aloft, low lay thine care,/ and there such ghastly noise of yron chaines,/ and brasen Cauldrons thou shalt rombling heare,/ which thousand Sprights with long enduring paines/ doe tosse, that it will stoune thy feeble braines,/ and oftentimes great groves, and grievous stounds,/ when too huge toile and labour them constraines:/ and oftentimes loud strokes, and ringing sounds/ from vnder that deepe Rocke most horribly rebounds." See also Butler 1948, pp. 107-109. This passage is certainly a foreshadowing of the poetic vision of *Kubla Khan* by Coleridge.

There is a second rhyming pair of magicians in Jewish and Christian tradition, Jannes and Jambres: Egyptian brothers, invented as a kind of double foil to Moses and Aaron (since Exodus does not name the rival magicians at court). It was they who instructed Moses himself in the black art at the behest of the princess who had adopted him, yet he defeated his tutors in a contest at the court of Pharaoh. The latter legend is known in Armenian tradition (see Appendix 2). The *Penitence* of Cyprian of Antioch mentions Jannes and Jambres as well. The third-century Antiochene wizard ruefully acknowledges that the two Egyptians respected at least the finger of God; but he, who has not acknowledged it, deserves a fate worse than theirs. This text is the core of a small book of prayers, the *Kiprianos*, employed talismanically by Armenians; in Western magic it was employed till recent times as a manual of the black art.⁴¹ The two magicians are extra-Biblical, but the story is old; for the Damascus Document reflects an early stratum of the tradition, and it is often suggested that Artapanus, a Jewish author of the Hellenistic period (and the bearer of an Iranian name prominent in the Arsacid house), is the ultimate source of it.

The story of Jannes and Jambres entered Christian lore: the fourth-century *Lausiac History* of Palladius and the *Life* of the Egyptian saint Macarius contain somewhat different versions of the Christian hermit's journey to the *kēpotaphion* "garden-tomb" or *paradeisos* "paradise, enclosed garden" constructed by the two. It is an antitype of Eden, watered by three springs, with huge fruit-bearing trees, its gates guarded not by an angel but by a throng of lewd demons. Eden was where Adam and Eve married; in their *herkos ponēron*, or "evil enclosure", Jannes and Jambres in suitable contrast pondered the benefits of adultery. But to return to Macarius, the monk after gaining admittance to the place finds the magicians are long dead. He sees there a wilted pomegranate, a well, and a rusted chain (see Appendix 3; for the Armenian version, which mentions neither well nor chain, see Appendix 4). Though the Egyptian sorcerers are not confined but dead, the latter two details still recall the developed myth of Hārūt and Mārūt, or of 'Azza and 'Azrael in their pit with their chain and feline familiar; and Albert Pietersma has suggested that the Koranic myth might have developed on the basis of the story of Jannes and Jambres. The pomegranate recalls a passage in a commentary on the Qur'ān where Hārūt and Mārūt give a magic kernel to a woman wishing to learn magic, and a plant sprouts swiftly when she casts it to

⁴¹ See Davies 2009, p. 114 f.

earth. This legend, or a variant of it, may be a source of the curious Armenian belief that Jannes and Jambres brought the evil tobacco plant to mankind.⁴²

Two variants of the *Universal History* of Vardan, 13th century (see Appendix 5), and the strongly derivative *History* of Mxit'ar of Ayrivank' expand upon the tradition, adding the significant local, Armenian, detail of interest to our study: Jannes and Jambres drove the children of Israel into the desert, where over fifteen years they built the *draxt* (*paradeisos*). The two then sacrificed hundreds of boys to the demons (*dewk'*), most of whom then became obedient to sorcerers (*kaxardk'*). More boys were sacrificed to propitiate the rest; and the demons were then appointed to guard the place. However, the text adds, the demons are still disobedient in the month whose name is variously rendered as *šuat*, *šabat'*, and *šwōt* (no equivalent Armenian or Latin month name is given). The first form is a faithful rendering of February as it was pronounced in Aramaic. The second, Mxit'ar's, seems a *lectio facilior*;⁴³ but the third reproduces the

⁴² Pietersma 1994, p. 35. See also Pietersma and Lutz 1985, pp. 427-442. The passage from the Persian-language Lahore *Tafsīr* reads: "Khwāja Imām, may God be pleased with him, said: We heard it said in some commentaries, There came to 'Ā'īša, may God be pleased with her, a certain woman and said, My husband took another woman to wife and I am tormented by jealousy. A woman told me, I'll take you to a place where they will teach you something. You pronounce it over your husband and he will not even touch that other woman. At night she arrived, leading two of what could have been either cats or dogs, God knows. She mounted one and seated me on the other and off we went. We traveled till we reached a place where we saw two people suspended upside-down. She led me to them and left me there. They said: Do not learn what we say, or else you will become an unbeliever. But I said, I must learn it. If you have to, they said, then go to that furnace. And I saw a place like a furnace. When I went there I was frightened, turned around, and said, I went to the furnace. They replied, What, then, did you see? I said, I didn't see anything. They retorted, That means you didn't go there. So, go back! Don't learn or you'll become an unbeliever. I did not obey. So they said, Go on then, go right up to the furnace, to see. I didn't go all the way that second time either. I went up to the furnace only the third time, looked, and saw something like a horseman clothed in white. White cloth covered his head. He rose out of the furnace and flew up to the sky. I returned and related what I had seen. They said, That was your faith, and it flew up and away. Now learn. And they pronounced those words. I committed them to memory and returned home. As they taught me, I cast a kernel into the earth and pronounced those words. In the same instant a stalk grew, became green, rose, and started to sprout leaves. As soon as that plant appeared, I immediately repented." See Abdullaeva 2001, p. 84 and discussion in Russell 2013, pp. 471-472.

⁴³ This author used Vardan Arewelc'i as the principal source here: see Harut'yunyan 1985, p. 9. His additions seem attempts to rationalize the text in front of him, so a reading of an obscure Aramaic month-name as a commoner word, though the name of a day of the week, seems the sober suggestion. Mxit'ar wrote a *Ganj būn barekendānin*, a hymn for the eve of the great Lenten fast, though (L. Ališan, *Ayrarat*, Venice, 1890, pp. 350-351) and so must have known of the folk rites of this Armenian Mardi Gras, including perhaps

name exactly as we find it as the modern name of the Armenian spirit. The remark concluding the pericope suggests Vardan was perhaps attempting on the basis of learned apocryphal tradition to explain why the spirit or demon of Armenian folk belief misbehaves during one month of the year but is obedient for the rest: maybe the demons required still more sacrifices but did not get them! The problem of theodicy, after all, is that evil exists; but for the wicked the parallel (and practical) problem of theology, one might suggest, is that the forces of evil are not wholly under their control.

Armenians retained a lively and creative interest in the two Egyptian magicians: a poem, the earliest known manuscript of which is dated to the beginning of the 18th century, makes the claim that they planted tobacco in the Garden — though it is not clear which one, Eden or their antitype of it (see Appendix 6). The deadly weed is American in origin, but that did not deter the bold latter-day mythographer. The reason for this identification may be rooted in a detail of the legend that is not, however, attested to my knowledge in a known Armenian source: Jannes summoned the wise men of Egypt to see the quick-growing and abundant foliage of his “paradise”.⁴⁴ One thinks of the huge leaves and rapid growth of the tobacco plant, as well as, of course, its addictive and other deleterious properties. Or Armenians perhaps imagined the anti-*draxt* rather as the garden of Attalus, a luxuriant place of poisonous weeds, that was in later centuries and an ocean away to inspire the tale about Rapaccini’s daughter. And one of the demons interrogated in the *Testament of Solomon* (25.2-4) boasts, “I, king Solomon, am called Abezethibou... I was present at the time when Moses appeared before Pharaoh, king of Egypt, hardening his heart. I am the one whom Jannes and Jambres, those who opposed Moses in Egypt, called to their aid. I am the adversary of Moses in [performing]

those involving the expulsion of the *Švor*. A possible known and intended connection to the river Sambatyon, in the myth of ‘Azza and ‘Azrael, is still, then, enticing; and one recalls that Armenians knew well the Aramaic form, *Šambat*, of the name they used for Saturday, *Šabat* (Sunday is *Kiraki*, from Gk. *Kyriakē* (*hēmera*), “the Lord’s (day)”). In the West, witches are said to celebrate a Sabbath or Esbat — but unless Crusaders passing through Cilicia mentioned the superstition, which developed as a demonization of Jewish observance, it is unlikely Armenians knew of it. One tradition cited by Pietersma, p. 18, makes Jannes and Jambres the sons of Balaam and the princes of Midian. It will be of interest to some readers that in Clive Barker’s novel *Cabal*, Midian is the name given to a subterranean realm of outcasts, witches, and monsters ruled by Baphomet, the idol of medieval legend. But this Midian is in the New World, just outside Calgary. And the perspective is correspondingly enlightened, too, for its denizens are the heroes and the police, clergymen, and psychiatrists of the upper world are the true monsters.

⁴⁴ See Pietersma 1994, p. 52.

wonders and signs.” This text, with its helpful list of all seventy demons, their purposes, and their conjurations, has served as the basis for illustrated Armenian magical books — another source, then, for continuing interest in the Egyptian sorcerers.⁴⁵ One should add that Paradise was of enduring interest to Armenians since it was somewhere in (or above) the country: we have seen how Macarius visited the anti-*draxt*, but Armenian monks saw Eden from a distance and described it to St. Nersēs Šnorhali (“the Graceful”, d. 1173). MS 285 of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem, 15th century, a richly illuminated Armenian text of the *Lives* of the desert fathers, includes a picture of the scene, as well as legends of St. Macarius.⁴⁶ Armenian MSS of the Baptism of Christ often depict the shattering tablet of the Cheirograph of Adam and a little demon in the Jordan beneath the feet of our Lord — perhaps the former is none other than the helper of Jannes and Jambres!⁴⁷ In an eleventh-century English miniature, Mambres (i.e., Jambres) is shown conjuring his brother up from Hell: Jannes appears covered with tufted, shaggy hair: this is the mark of the Wild Man (Arm., *vayri mard*), and signifies the demonic properties of that monster of the open country in medieval European myth, who, quite like Armenian Švots, also both wickedly kidnaps children and benevolently tills the soil.⁴⁸

The essay by Xaratyán cited and translated here provides very wide comparativist data, whereas much of my own research has been limited to the specific dossier of Armenia and the Iranian and Biblical material of relevance to Armenian Christian origins. But since all happy families are happy in the same way, as a certain writer observed in another context, I would offer finally a few points of reflection on the Russian *domovoi* or

⁴⁵ Cit. by Kugel 1998, p. 506. On *Test. Sol.* in Armenian magical literature see Russell [2013]; on Solomon and the demons in a recent Armenian magical manuscript see Russell 2011, p. 124.

⁴⁶ See Nira Stone 1997, pp. 81-90 and fig. 7. The present study was presented at a Workshop on Armenian folklore and mythology at Cambridge, MA on 31 August and 1 September 2013 co-sponsored by this writer (Mashtots Chair in Armenian Studies, Harvard), the Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes, and the Society for Armenian Studies. Nira Stone passed away late in June and the meeting by unanimous agreement of the organizing committee was dedicated to her memory.

⁴⁷ The authority on this subject is also the lifelong partner of Dr. Nira Stone and great Armenologist and founder of the AIEA, Prof. Michael E. Stone of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, Israel: see Michael Stone 2002 (reviewed with a view to the folkloristic aspect of the myth by this writer in the *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, Boston, Summer 2003, pp. 309-312).

⁴⁸ See Husband 1980, pp. 40-41 and fig. 18, also p. 112 (wild woman with a dragon abducting baby) and p. 126 (wild men farming).

house spirit. It has some strikingly particular similarities to the Armenian *švot*. There is an association with the otherworld of the dead, since it is considered to be the ghost of a respected or primordial ancestor; cf. Christ called by Trdat a *šahapet* of tombs (with St. Gregory's clever assent) in Agathangelos, and the divine being designated as *xšāthrapati* and linked to the underworld, of ancient Iran. Indeed one of the Russian spirit's principal designations is *navnoi*, from *nav'*, a term for the after-life. And because the dead ancestor was a prominent man, the spirit is also given honorific titles: *khozyayin*, "chief"; *bol'shak*, "big one"; *gosudar'*, "sovereign", etc.; cf. the title *šahapet*, the title in ancient Iranian usage of a divinity. The *domovoi* can appear in various forms: as a man covered with shaggy fur, as a member of the family, even as a pig riding a horse in circles. But he is not titanic in stature.⁴⁹ There is a vast corpus of stories and beliefs about him.⁵⁰ He dwells in the *pech'*, the hearth, at the very center of the home. The *domovoi* is in general a benevolent spirit, though, its principal concern the wealth and well being of the household, especially the livestock; and here one perceives a similarity to the agricultural concerns of the Armenian *švot*. Its name day is the feast of St. Ephrem the Syrian (Rus. *Efrem Sirin*), 7 Feb. O.S. — that is, roughly the time of Lupercalia, Candlemas, and Arm. *Teaṛnəndaṛaġ*; and "it is precisely in February that unclean spirits who have forced their way out of the lower world carouse freely" (*imenno v fevrale svobodno razgulyvayut vyrvavshiesya iz nizhnego mira nechistye dukhi*). So the name day fixed period when the disruptive, procreative energy of nature is associated with the spirit, though its own misbehavior comes later, with the later spring-time of the Russian land. On 5 April O.S., the feast of St. John Climacus (Rus. *Ioann Lestvichnik*), *domovye* do not recognize their own, act up, and annoy the animals: people speculate that the spirit feels the sap of the northern spring and wants to bed a witch (*ved'ma*).⁵¹

The comparison of the Armenian and Russian phenomena does not suggest (and is not intended to imply) a genetic connection, even though the two peoples practice an eastern type of Christianity, both belong to old and fairly close branches of the Indo-European tree, and for many

⁴⁹ This might suggest that there was no substrate in which the *domovoi* was divinized. From the Irano-Greek gods on their throne at Nemrut Dagħ in Commagene to the monolithic *moai* of the royal ancestors on the *ahus* of Rapa Nui (Easter Island), the gods are always *big*.

⁵⁰ Novichkova 1993, p. 130 f.

⁵¹ See Nikitina 2006, pp. 13, 14 n. 3, 15, 25-26, 34.

centuries they have been culturally and politically close. Their similarity seems, rather, to be functional; and these functions afford a point at which to conclude, since they are likewise diverse, likewise determined by intricate links to both space and time. The Armenian spirit likewise has a connection to the otherworld, is greatly respected, and dwells in the house but also has an important role to play outside its walls. This function has to do with procreation — hence the association with the mischief of February — and with agricultural fertility — hence the ritualized transition of the *Švot* to the outdoors in the same month. The spirit has, thus, multiple functions as a *genius loci* and a *Zeitgeist*, a spirit of place and a spirit of time. The adoption by Armenians of the name *Švot*, with its fortuitous resemblance to the term *šahapet*, an epithet used, it would seem, of a variety of tutelary nature spirits, chthonian deities, and divinized ancestors of titanic stature inspiring both pious affection and noumenous dread, might have begun to gain a footing as early as the eighth century, if the explanation of *šuyt* proposed here prove to be correct. But the texts of Vardan Arewelc'i and Mxit'ar Ayrivanec'i from the thirteenth century, examined here for the first time I believe with regard to this problem, push back the first *testimonia* for the *Švot* six centuries before the ethnographical data compiled in pre-Genocide Armenia. The *Švot* of recent times is usually a house spirit with its February frolics, but, as we have seen, could be also a dangerous supernatural being inhabiting a rock or stream — the word still covering the range, then, of the *šahapet* of old.

This documentation would suggest that one reason for the eclipse or diminution (literally and figuratively, with the truncation of the word) of the term *šahapet* and the rise to general usage of *Švot* might have been the association of the spirit overwhelmingly with the folk rites sanctioned by the Christian church in connection with the feasts of the Presentation of Our Lord to the Temple (*Teaṛnədaṛaṣ*) and Shrove Tuesday (*Bun Barekendan*). And this would have happened at a time when the rich mythology of the Christian faith had finally and fully taken root in Armenia and captured the popular imagination: Jannes and Jambres, their busy demons, and eventually, even their enjoyable smoke weed. But for all that, behind the *Švot* and its vernal revels looms the earlier *šahapet*, master of the realm, the family hearth, the warm stables, the fields and pastures, outward and into the past, of the formative Achaemenian and Arsacid epochs and the immemorial ages of an Armenian antiquity that, like its powerful and unquiet spirits, endures in its folk lore and folk life.

APPENDICES

1. An ethnographical study of the *švot*. Zaven V. Xařatyan 1989, p. 44 f.:

“... The idea of a house spirit was embodied in all the objects and members of the family that to a greater or lesser extent were connected with the family’s wellbeing; but for all that did not have a defined, strictly fixed personification. We may add also that the Armenians had the custom of selecting for the role of protector of the family, aside from the house spirits mentioned, one or another Christian saint. This attests to the rootedness in tradition of the idea of a patron or protector of the house and the family.

According to the conceptions of the Armenians, there existed also a certain demon who was capable of bringing harm to the family’s affairs. According to the report of G. Bunatov, this spirit ‘... is active only at the beginning of March and is called *švod*. He, like all spirits, can take any sort of appearance. The *švod*, in order to sneak into dwellings, takes the form of a cat, enters the house without any obstacle, and brings in frost with it. The day particularly favored by the *švod* is the first of March: for this reason, peasants open the doors wide on that day and beat all the corners and walls of the house with sheepskins and switches, repeating *Švod durs, mard ners* (“*Švod* go away; man, come in” [i.e., understood as Arm. mard “man”, not mart “March” — JRR]). After this, they draw lines around the corners and around the pillars, and put a plate of iron at the doors, so that the *švod* may not enter the room. In this way the *švod*, denied admission to the dwelling, wanders through the fields. Usually it is known to the *švod* who is absent and from the house of what family, so at night he assumes the form of the absent relative and asks in that one’s voice that they open the doors. Through deceit he then compels the one who opened the doors to him to wander together with him through the fields till dawn. For this reason on the first of March all members of the family must be gathered at home so the *švod* is unable to trick anybody. The Armenians also call frost and the month of February *švod*.” [N. 59: G. Bunatov, *Iz poverii, predrassudkov, i narodnykh primet armyan Echmiadzinskogo uezda* (“Some of the beliefs, prejudices, and folk superstitions of the Armenians of the Echmiadzin district”), *Sbornik materialov dlya opisaniya mestnostei i plemën Kavkaza* (“Collection of materials for a description of the localities and tribes of the Caucasus”), Vol. 17, Tiflis, 1893, p. 117.]

The people of Nor Bayazet called this spirit *švot*. Here they described it as ‘... a spirit thin and tall, clothed in a white shirt. Unlike Satan, he is not immortal, but he is born and does multiply. He is not an opponent of God, but, rather, prays to Him. In the winter he dwells in houses; and in the summer, he goes to the tilled plots and fields. In February his blood warms, and he bewitches people with erotic dream-visions. In [p. 45] February cats start to meow, because they can see the *švot*, who comes in and out of the house. The inhabitants chase out the *švot* with calfskins, saying *Švod durs, mart ners* (“*Švod* out; March, come in!”) [N. 60: E. Lalayean, *Nor Bayazet, Azgagrakan Handēs* (“Ethnographic Journal”), No. 17, p. 107.]

In Muš it was believed that ‘*švots* live in groups and appear in the month of *švat* (Arabic *šubat*, ‘February’); on the evening of the last day of this month people draw a line around the *erdik*’s [i.e., the smoke-hole in the squinch-formed

dome supported by four pillars, above the hearth at the center of a traditional Armenian house or *glxatun* — JRR] and thresholds of all dwellings, and when it gets dark they take a apron, striking the pillars of the room and all the walls with it, to chase out the *švots*, while repeating at the same time *Švotn i durs, Martēn i ners* (“*Švot* out; March, come in!”). Then they place the iron cross from the *t’onir* [the earth-oven at the hearth — JRR] at the threshold of the entrance-doors; while the lines drawn around the *erdik* prevents their return through that entry.’

In Vaspurakan this spirit was known by the name *p’uṛdik* or *pupušik*. Here the man of the house, winding a goatskin around his head, would take a sheepskin in one hand and a sickle in the other, and, striking all the walls with the skin, would say, ‘*P’uṛdik*’, out! *P’uṛdik*’, out!’ Coming up to the front door, he would say, ‘*P’uṛdik*’, go to the pastures, to the cool springs, to the green fields...’ after which he would shut the door at once. In order to prevent the *p’uṛdik* from climbing back into the house through the smoke-hole, they would cover the latter in advance with two sticks in the form of a Cross.

According to these beliefs, *švots* living in stables are particularly tenacious: in order to drive them out, people would strike the animals and the walls of the stable with a wineskin full of little stones to make a noise, repeating ‘*Švot* out; March, come in!’

In some places people did not believe in February dreams, considering them false and unreliable, since they could have been dictated by a *švot*.

In the popular conceptions about the *švot/d* presented here the following basic motifs stand out:

1. The *švot* was considered an evil spirit and was associated with cold, and therefore people drove him out of dwellings at the end of February or the beginning of March.
2. The *švot* caused people to have erotic dreams.
3. The image of the *švot* was closely associated with the Cat.

In analyzing the connection of the *švot* to cold, one notes the characteristic mythological images of old women personifying cold among the mountain Tajiks and the Uzbeks of Khwarazm: these were associated with a short period of frost that preceded the arrival of spring. It is true that the image of an old woman bearing cold was known to Armenians as well; but according to their conceptions this figure appeared at the beginning of April, not at the beginning of March. The Central Asian image of the old woman is interesting precisely because, according to the information provided by al-Biruni, the cold ‘days of the old woman’ came precisely during the winter month of Šubat. In Assyrian texts⁵² this name is attested in the form *šebet*. It appears possible to associate with these names the form *švot* itself, which enables us to explain the genesis of Armenian folk conceptions about the *švot* spirit.

⁵² In Armenian this term generally refers, not to ancient Assyria, but to the Syrian Christians, *aysor* or *asori*, who employ Syriac in their rituals and some of whom still speak neo-Aramaic. Armenians and *asoris* have always lived in close proximity to each other and many of their folk beliefs and practices are nearly identical.

H. Ačarean explains this term in the following way: 'The month of February; considered the month of the devil; a particular evil spirit active in February' (*Armenian Etymological Dictionary*, Vol. 3, pp. 537-538). A. Ōdabašyan, comparing the data of Armenian and Assyrian written sources, determined that Švot, the fifth month of the Assyrian calendar, would have corresponded to February, the second month of the Roman calendar (*Amanora hay žolovrdakan tonac' uyc' um* ["The New Year in the Armenian folk calendar"], p. 34), and, citing ethnographic materials, affirmed that this term, as the designation of a month, was used in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Moks, where it was equivalent to the Roman February. (N. 46: In these materials, collected by A. Darbinyan, a native of Moks, the people of the region called the month of February *subat'* or *subəat'*: his papers are in the archive of the Institute of Armenian Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR.) All this served as a basis for Ōdabašyan to suggest that the words accompanying the banishing of the *švot* mean, 'Švot-February, go away; March, come in.' She considers that 'the purpose of this ritual custom was not only to protect stores conserved from the previous year from the malign activity of evil spirits, but also properly to welcome the new agricultural year, which begins with the month of March and the arrival of spring.' A. Łanalanyan regards the ritual in much the same way (A.T. Łanalanyan, *Ařacani* ["Compendium of proverbs"], Erevan, 1960, pp. xi-xii).

It seems to us that the explanation of such an intricate complex of folk conceptions as that of the *švot* spirit by the single sacral phrase 'Švot, out; March, come in' does not provide an exhaustive characterization of this figure. And the interpretation of this phrase as 'February, out; March, come in' creates more problems than it solves. In this connection, the explanation of the interrelationship of the names of the months in various calendars employed in Armenian folk life (ancient Armenian, Assyrian, Roman) assumes great significance. This problem has not been substantially explored in specialized literature, and that naturally complicates the examination of the questions and aspects of interest to us. The understanding of the phrase 'Švot, out; March, come in' serves as a striking example of this. For if the words *švot* and March are simply month names, then one naturally poses the question why one is named according to the Assyrian calendar; and the other, by the Roman. This would scarcely make sense. But if this is a matter of more and other than the mere names of months, then we deal with a phenomenon of purely ritual content.

In ethnographical and folklore materials relating to the Armenians of Moks, who employed the term *švot* (in the form *subat*) as the designation of the month of February, there are unfortunately no data attested about a corresponding name of a figure, ritual, or other expression of the *švot*. But it is very indicative that in the historical and ethnographical region of Vaspurakan, contiguous to Moks, the figure was known by the name *P'urđik'*, or, more affectionately, as *Pupušik* (E. Lalayean, *Vaspurakan, Azgagrakan Handēs*, No. 25, p. 58). Thus we deal with multiple designations of one and the same being: *švod*, *P'urđik'*, *Pupušik*, *švot*. What is this? Local differences of designations, or differences of a diachronic character, or the result of the confusion of various conceptions, figures, and names? One thinks a solution of the puzzle and an understanding of the concepts and acts associated with it can be arrived at on the basis of a consideration of all three parameters.

First of all, one notes the following aspect: in the description cited above by G. Bunatov, after the expulsion of the *švod* people invited into the home not the new month of March but a man (*mard*); while in the Vaspurakan variant after the expulsion of the *P'urdik'* they did not invite in anybody at all. These facts indicate to a limited extent that the understanding of the terms *švot* and *mart* as the names of months is not always supported by the ethnographic data. To the contrary, these data provide a foundation for the discovery and exploration of a defined demonological image and of the concepts and actions associated with it among the Armenians, for whom, in the majority of regions, it is known as a *švot*.

Let us now consider the role assigned to the *švot* in the economic life of the people: was it negative or positive? An answer to this question allows one to determine the character and basic functions of this specific demonological figure.

It strikes one forcefully at the very first glance that the *švot*, classified as an evil demon, still dwelt in warm houses and stables together with humans and animals all winter long and was patiently tolerated by them. And only at the end of February, or at the beginning of March, they chased it out, considering it an evil spirit. In one story about the *švot* it is related that the spirit expresses its displeasure at being ejected at just this time of year. 'Listen here, dearie,' the women say to each other, 'I went out tonight and what do I see but a bunch of *švots* at the gates of Yekho's house. How they were cursing, cursing that house of Yekho's! For chasing them outside into this snow and ice. Would it have been so hard, said the *švots*, to let us stay in the warm upper corner of the barn?' (Bense, *Bulanəx kam Hark'* ["Bulanəx or Hark' (district)"], *Azğagrakan Handēs*, No. 6, p. 10).

In Vaspurakan the expelled *švot* went out to the green fields, to the cool springs; and according to materials from Nor Bayazet the *švots* generally spent all summer in the fields and farmlands. But, as is well known from the ritual practices of many [p. 47] peoples, no evil spirit, upon its expulsion, is ever dispatched to such useful and functionally important places of humans. How did the *švot* earn, then, such regard? And here another aspect of the *švot* commands attention: its instilling erotic dreams in people. Apparently with this feature it was somehow associated and connected at one time with this idea of fertility and conception — an idea so characteristic of the onset of spring. Not for nothing was the *švot* in most instances represented in the guise of a cat or else was associated with cats: after all, the end of February and the beginning of March is the start of the 'love period' of cats, which even in the present day in several regions is called *švat* or *švayt*. (N. 83: Of no small significance is the fact that the Armenian word *švayt* means "lewdly rowdy" — one cannot exclude here a connection to the *švot*.)

It is noteworthy that in a number of places a girl who wanted to get married would secretly clamber onto the flat clay rooftop of the home of her chosen young man, and, stealthily creeping up to the smoke-hole, would meow through the opening like a cat. It is interesting also that folks sometimes said of girls entering adulthood, 'She's meowing like a cat: it means she wants to get married.'

Commenting on the connection of the *švot* to cats, A. Ōdabašyan notes that the cat was a totemic symbol of pregnancy in the beliefs of many peoples of the ancient world. One might add that the same idea was familiar to peoples of South

and Southeast Asia. In one Khmer myth, for instance, it is related that a hermit created a cat out of the first menses of a girl entering adolescence (*Kkhmerskie mify i legendy* ["Khmer myths and legends"], Moscow, 1980, pp. 26-28). In the same myth the cat created by the hermit is closely connected to customs of weddings and marriage, and to the happiness and well being of the bride in her new home — the house of her husband.

The Italian 'mimicry of the rite of courtship' is very important in this regard: it is performed in early March, the time when people fall in love (N.A. Krasnovskaya, *Ital'yantsy* ["The Italians"], in the vol. *Kalendarnye obychai i obryady v stranakh zarubezhnoi Evropy: vesennie prazdniki* ["Calendrical customs and rites in the countries of Europe beyond the (Soviet) border: vernal holidays"], p. 15). The holiday of *Šabuot* of the Georgian Jews, considered a festival of green plants, is interesting: 'In Jewish villages they try on this holiday to decorate dwellings with green plants and to spread green grass on the floor' (*Religioznye verovaniya narodov SSSR* ["Religious beliefs of the peoples of the USSR"], part II, p. 316). Most weddings also took place on the days of the *Šabuot* festival.⁵³

Thus by comparative analysis of the materials connected with the complex of concepts and customs a particular link is found between the cat and the idea of conception, on the one hand, and that of this idea and the *švot* (in both name and content), on the other. This circumstance suggests the further thought that the *švot*, being located in the fields in the spring and summer, could by means of its 'fertilizing' capacity exert an influence upon agricultural labor as well, making the fields more fertile. The custom of the Armenians of Akhalkalaki serves as testimony to this (B. Karapetyan described this custom to us on the basis of stories told to him by his mother, a native of Akhalkalaki): on the night before the expulsion of the *švot* the women of the house would draw in flour on the walls and pillars of the house and barn depictions of either oxen in harness or domestic animals leaving the stable to graze. The meaning of those drawings was to make the *švot* go out to the tilled fields and pastures along with the animals and the plow. It is no coincidence that in Vaspurakan they would chase out the spirit while brandishing a sickle. No less important is the ubiquitous use in the ritual of expulsion of the *švot* of a sheepskin, which was understood among many peoples as a means of fertility. (N. 91: See for example N.P. Lobacheva, *Razlichnye obryadovye komplekсы* ["Various ritual complexes"], p. 307.)

The analysis and juxtaposition of all the motifs cited above, together with the characteristics and functions of the *švot*, seemingly elusive at first glance, provide a basis for associating its image with that of the *polevik* [the Russian spirit of the fields — JRR]. In this connection it is appropriate to mention the spirit called *xlvlik* (the word in Armenian means "playful"; it is noteworthy that Georgians call a lizard *xlvivi* or *xvliki*), which, according to the conceptions of the people of Vaspurakan, lived in the fields and was a producer and protector of crops (Lalayan, *Vaspurakan, Azgagrakan Handēs*, No. 26, p. 205).

⁵³ There seems to have been some confusion here. The holiday is actually that of "Weeks", Heb. *Šavu'ot*; but the 15th day of the month of *Švat*, corresponding to *Švot* and February, is celebrated as the "New Year of Trees" (JRR).

It is interesting that the image of this spirit did not enjoy wide distribution among Armenians: perhaps only the spirit noted by Bense among the Armenians of the Muš region, the *xipilik*, can be regarded as a spirit-protector [p. 48] of the harvest. However in a number of regions of Armenia there existed a holiday of the *Xlvlik* celebrated in the autumn (N. 95: See, for instance, M. Salmastec'i, "*Xlvlik*," *Arjagank'* ["The Echo"], 1893, no. 1). One cannot exclude the possibility that with the *xlvlik* we deal with a surviving attestation of the figure of some sort of divinity of vegetation, a preserver and protector of crops and fields: the fact of the existence of similar spirits and divinities amongst various peoples of the Caucasus would argue in favor of this hypothesis (N. 97: See G.F. Chursin, *Očerki po etnologii Kavkaza* ["Sketches on the ethnology of the Caucasus"], pp. 50, 53, 55; and V.F. Miller, *Osetinskie etyudy* ["Ossetic studies"], part II, pp. 282, 297). It is also quite likely that the *švot* was once a divinity who returned home with the harvest in autumn. Later on this motif was consigned to oblivion; and all that was retained in folk memory was the rite of the expulsion of the god at the beginning in spring of the new farming year.

For the determination of the character of the extremely complex type of spirit called *švot* it is important to note that in Vaspurakan he was called *p'ur'dik'* — a name also given to bread that fell into the oven while baking, as well as to a kind of ceremonial bread. Ōdabašyan writes of the coincidence of names: 'Through the expulsion of the *p'ur'dik'*-*švot* and the baking of sacrificial bread called by the same name, people strove to frustrate the possible negative influence of this spirit on the stores of grain depleted towards the beginning of spring' (Ōdabašyan, "New Year..." *op. cit.*, p. 36). One should note that the custom of naming ceremonial breads after those divinities or Christian saints to whom the loaves were dedicated is attested in the cultic and ritual customs of numerous peoples, particularly among various Georgian ethnographical groups. It is quite possible that the *p'ur'dik'* as well was a theophoric designation of a ceremonial loaf that had at one time been consecrated to a god or spirit of the same name. At least, for Vaspurakan and contiguous regions this seems an entirely plausible suggestion.

The exposition of the functions and precise identification of the character of the *švot* as that of a demonic personage is further complicated by the fact that it does not have analogues in the demonological representations and ritual practice of other peoples. Of undoubted interest is the Georgian custom of expulsion of mice from the home, which is analogous to the expulsion of the *švot* among Armenians. The Georgians would address the mice with these words: 'Little mouse, little mouse, go out into the yard; angel, come into the home.' They would tempt the mouse at this point with a branch of *shipovnik* (Rus., sweetbriar or eglantine) on which were placed pieces of cheese, lard, and other kinds of food. It is also worthy of note that the Georgians regarded with reverence a household rat with a bright patch on its breast: during festivals, special sacrificial wafers called *lemzyr* were left on the floor for it. As we can see, Georgian images of the rat and the mouse were connected with the idea and image of a household spirit whom the Armenians also sometimes imagined in the form of a mouse (E. Lalayan, *Nor Bayazet, Azgagrakan Handēs*, no. 17, p. 97).

Turning now to the *švot*, it is essential to mention another circumstance: in several regions of Armenia the bread that fell into the furnace upon breaking, the

p'uridik', was considered the portion of an angel (S. Amatuni, *Hayoc' bat u ban* ["Armenian Wörter und Sachen"], Vataršapat, 1912, p. 660). The question arises: Which angel? Could it not be that of the good being of the same name, the *p'uridik'-švot*? In any case, one thing is clear: people would have been unlikely to call the angel's portion by the name of an evil spirit. If one adds to this the fact that in Sasun, bordering on Vaspurakan, the *p'uridik'*-bread was considered the *barakat* and *dovlat* of the home,⁵⁴ then there is no doubt that the *švot-p'uridik'* was actually considered a household spirit; and the rite of a sacrificial offering of bread to it is seen to be common among a wide range of peoples (N. 106: S.A. Tokarev, *Religioznye verovaniya vostochnoslavjanskikh narodov...* ["Religious beliefs of the East Slavic peoples..."], p. 95).

As is apparent from the foregoing material, one finds concentrated in the image of the *švot*-spirit various strata of folk religious world views; and in the complex of beliefs about it that has come down to us, one already finds diverse qualities ascribed to it. This circumstance makes it particularly difficult to specify the genealogical roots of this most particularly specific demonological type. But the fact that the *švot* was associated with cold and even to some degree embodied it [p. 49], indicates a genetic connection of the primordial archetype of the *švot* with the spirits of nature.

A comparative analysis of the complex of representations and rites connected with the *švot*-spirit allows us to distinguish one main idea: that of pregnancy, growth, rebirth, and, finally, fertility. In this aspect the syncretic type of the *švot-p'uridik'* can be interpreted as that of the good spirit regarded as the protector of the welfare and wealth of the family. From this point of view the *švot* is linked intimately to the *polevik* and to household spirits. The study of this material demonstrates also that the most archaic features attributed to this spirit were preserved in the folk conceptions of that part of the Armenian population inhabiting the Lake Van basin and neighboring parts of historical Armenia."

2. Jannes and Jambres in the Armenian apocrypha. From *Patmut'iwn Movsēsi* ("The History of Moses"), in S. Yovsēp'eanc 1886, p. 202.

"... and then Moses and Aaron went before Pharaoh and performed great signs. For Moses cast his staff before Pharaoh and it became a serpent (*višap*).⁵⁵ Then the magicians (*diwt'k'n*) of Pharaoh, Jannes and Jambres, stood forward. They had contempt for Moses, and said to Pharaoh, 'This one is our pupil and by our teaching does [add.: whatever he does].' And the two of them cast their staffs to the earth, and they became snakes (*ōjk'*), to the eyes but not in truth. For the snake of Moses swallowed the two staffs of the sorcerers (*zkaxardac'n*) and after a while they melted and it digested them."

⁵⁴ These two Arabic words, borrowed *via* Persian into Ottoman Turkish and from there into Armenian dialects, are left untranslated by the author. *Baraka* means "blessing"; *dawla*, "power" or "dominion" (JRR).

⁵⁵ There may be an implied contrast between Moses' *višap*, which in Armenian tradition has the heraldic overtones of the noble *sēnmurw* of ancient Iran as well as the power of a dragon, and the generic *awj*, "snake", of the two magicians — even though Moses' creature is called one at the end of the pericope.

3. The anti-paradise of Jannes and Jambres. From the *Life* of Macarius of Alexandria. Robert T. Meyer 1964, pp. 58-61.

(Palladius was born in Galatia (northwestern central Anatolia) in 363/364 and was a pupil of Evagrius of Pontus. He became a monk, traveling to Israel and Egypt; and then served in Bithynia as a bishop. He composed his *History* in Greek in 419/420 for Lausias, a chamberlain of the Byzantine emperor Theodosius II. There are translations in numerous East Christian languages, including Armenian, in long and short recensions.)

"He once wished, so he told us, to enter the garden-tomb of Jannes and Jambres. Now this garden-tomb had belonged to the magicians who had power along with Pharaoh back in the old days. Since they held power for a long time they built the work with stones four feet square. They erected their monument there and put away much gold. They even planted trees there, for the spot was damp, and they dug a well, too.

Since the holy man did not know the road, he followed the stars, traversing the desert as though it were the sea.⁵⁶ Taking a bunch of reeds, he placed one at every mile, leaving a mark so that he might find the way back on his return. After traveling for nine days, he reached the place. Then the demon who ever acts in opposition to the athletes of Christ collected all the reeds and put them by his head as he slept near the garden tomb.

He found the reeds upon arising. God had permitted this for his own further training, so that he might not place trust in reeds, but rather in the pillar of cloud that led Israel for forty years in the desert. He used to say, 'Seventy demons rushed from the garden tomb to meet me, shouting: "What do you wish, Macarius? What do you want, monk? Why did you come to our place? You cannot stay here." I told them,' he said, 'Let me but go in and look about, then leave.'

He continued, 'Upon entering, I found a hanging brass jar and an iron chain near the well, already consumed by time; the pomegranates had nothing inside, so dried out were they by the sun.'

Then he started back, and was twenty days traveling. When the water which he was carrying gave out, and also the bread, he was in a very precarious situation. And just when he was on the verge of collapse, he caught sight of a maiden dressed in a pure white linen robe and holding a jug dripping water.

He said that she was far off, about a stade or two, and he was on the journey three days seeing her with the jug, standing there as it were, but he was unable to attain it, as in a dream. He survived only in hopes of drinking it. Next there appeared a herd of antelope. One of them had a calf, and he saw that her udder was dripping milk. Crawling under her, he sucked and was refreshed. The antelope accompanied him to his cell and nursed him, but would not take her own calf."

⁵⁶ When I was a graduate student at Oxford in 1974-1976 Fr. Goriun Khojababian (later appointed Archbishop of Isfahan) told me that when he had served the Armenian faithful of Qamishli in northern Syria he was driven through the desert to remote parishes in a limousine whose driver used an astrolabe to navigate.

4. The Armenian version of Macarius' journey. From *Patmut'iwn surb hōrn Makaray egiptac'woy* ("The history of the holy father Macarius the Egyptian"), *Vark' srboc'* 1855, vol. 1, pp. 90-92 (tr. by JRR):

"And it was when he had been three days in his cell, he said, 'I wish to go into the paradise (*draxt*) of of Jannes and Jambres. And he sought grace of God, that he might enter the paradise of the sorcerers (*kaxardac'n*), and said, 'I have heard that in every hour the demons (*dewk'n*) are armed by themselves, for Jannes and Jambres planted plants and so fortified it that there is nothing anywhere like it. And they did this because their hope was in the earth.' The blessed one, the elder and servant of Christ Macarius, had a desire for this paradise that he might be tried by the demons. And the blessed elder set out to go, making Venus (*zAruseakn*) his guide as helmsmen of ships do on the depths; and he departed, going into the desert. 'And I took,' he said, 'a bundle of reeds and made a mark of the places where I passed and said, 'When I return to my hut, I shall come without difficulty. When I was close to the paradise, about a mile, and night had fallen, sleep took me. And the wild and evil demons went off and gathered the reeds, made a bundle of them, and put it under my head. And I say, 'They did this great grace for me, and this was the will of the Lord and not from the demons, so that I might not rely upon the guidance of a reed, but upon the grace of our Lord as by a cloud He guided the children of Israel in the awful desert for forty years.

'When I approached the paradise, the demons came out before me. Some danced lewdly,⁵⁷ some made noise, some ground their teeth over me, and some like ravens flapped their wings in my face and said, "Why have you come, Macarius the hermit, to test us? Are we some sort of hermitage for you hermits? Is it not already enough for you that you drove our companions out of the desert? We are not the equal of you all, so why did you come to our place? Many are you hermits to whom we have left the desert. This place was erected in our name and there is no way for you to be here. Why do you seek to enter the work of others, for since its builders died no son of man has entered herein.'" After these demons and those demons had expressed their stubbornness, the elder then addressed them: 'I will enter one time and look around, then I will exit and depart from this place.' And the demons said to him: 'Swear to us by Christ, who is God, that you will go away.' And Macarius said, 'I will do so.' And the demons vanished before him.

'So I entered,' said he, 'and saw everything and remained there for three days and departed from thence without disturbance. And after twenty days I returned from there to my cell, and for those days I tasted neither bread nor water till I had accomplished the matter. And when I had been three days in my cell, a demon appeared to me in the form of a girl, and in her hand she carried a pitcher, and her raiment was white, and for three days she walked about, and on the third day she made bold to say to me, "Take and drink this water, for here you are, dying of thirst." And I made no reply to her. After a short time the girl went away and milked a buffalo, brought the milk, and said, "Drink this, so that you do not die of thirst." And in this, too, the grace of God consoled me.' For God prospered Macarius in deeds, in grace, and in healing..."

⁵⁷ Arm. *kak'awēin*, lit. "did the partridge dance".

5. Jannes, Jambres, and (the) *šwōt* in Medieval Armenian Historiography.

(Vardan traveled to Cilicia and to the court of the Mongol khan Hulagu in northern Iran. In his *History* he relies heavily on the *Chronicle* of Michael the Syrian, which he translated from the Syriac. The latter, 12.1, mentions that the Byzantine emperor Leo IV (776-781) sent the caliph al-Mahdī (775-785) the book Jannes and Jambres, which “contained all the magic of the Egyptians and everything they did in opposition to Moses.”⁵⁸ Vardan died in 1271 and was buried at Xor Virap. He evinces an interest in etymology, offering an explanation, for example, of *mesrop*, the epithet of Maštoc’, inventor of the Armenian alphabet, as “verdant”, which, Thomson suggests, may be based on Arabic *masrur*, “fertile”. The form *šuat* in the MSS seems closest to the actual pronunciation of the name of the month /Šavāt/, whilst *šabat*’ may be a *lectio faciliior* rendering the familiar Sabbath, Arm. Saturday; and *šwōt* could be our Armenian folk spirit itself.)

1. *Hawak’umn patmut’ean Vardanay vardapeti* (“The Compilation of History of Vardan vardapet”), Venice, 1862, p. 19, para. 9 (tr. by JRR; the text has also been tr. and ed. by Robert W. Thomson 1989, pp. 125-226):

... ew Yanēsñ ew Yamrēsñ arin zordisñ Israyēli ew taran znosa hngetasan awur čanaparh and anapatn, ew šinec’in zdraxt iwreanc’, zhngetasan tari: ew i katarman šinuacin, yordwoc’n Israyēli arin tlay innhariwr ew ut’sun, ew zohec’in diwac’, ew hawak’ec’an ar nosa, ew edin pahapans draxtin, ew yaynmhetē arawel hnazandec’an dewk’ kaxardac’, ew č’orek’hariwr dewk’, asen, oč’ hnazandec’an, minč’ew krkin zohec’in yanun noc’a, ew apa ekeal arin hawanut’iwn, bayc’ šwōt amisñ anhnazandec’ gorcen zkams iwreanc’ tanelov omans i mardkanē.

“... and Jannes and Jambres took the children of Israel and conveyed them fifteen days on the road into the desert, and they built their paradise (*zdraxt*), for fifteen years. And at the completion of the building, they took from amongst the children of Israel nine hundred and eighty boys, and sacrificed them to the demons (*diwac*’), and they were gathered to them, and they placed them as guards of the paradise. And thereafter demons were more obedient to sorcerers (*kaxardac*’), and four hundred demons, they say, did not submit till they again sacrificed in their name, and then they came and undertook agreement, but not submitting in the month of *šwōt* they work their will, taking away some of mankind.”

2. Mkrtič’ Ēmin 1861, pp. 28-29:

Ew yanēsñ ew yamrēsñ arin zordisñ Israyēli ew taran znosa hngetasan awur čanaparh and anapatn, ew šinec’in zdraxtn iwreanc’ zhngetasan tari. Ew i katarman šinuacin yordwoc’n Israyēli arin tlay innhariwr ut’sun ew zohec’in diwac’. Ew hawak’ec’an ar nosa ew edin pahapans draxtin ew yaynmhetē arawel hnazandec’an dewk’ kaxardac’. Ew č’ork’ hariwr dewk’, asen, oč’ hnazandec’an, minč’ew krkin zohec’in yanun noc’a ew apa ekeal arin i hawanut’iwn: bayc’ zšuat amisñ anhnazandec’ gorcen zkams iwreanc’: tanelov zomans i mardkanē.

⁵⁸ See Pietersma 1994, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

“And Jannes and Jambres took the children of Israel and conveyed them fifteen days down the road into the desert, and they built their paradise (*zdraxtn*) over fifteen years. And at the completion of the building they took from amongst the children of Israel nine hundred eighty boys and sacrificed them to the demons (*diwac*’). And they were gathered to them, and they placed them as guards of the paradise and thereafter demons were more obedient to sorcerers (*kaxardac*’). And four hundred demons, they say, were not obedient, till again they made sacrifice in their name, and then they came and undertook agreement; but disobedient in the month of *šuat*, they work their will, taking away some of mankind.”

3. K. Patkanov 1869, p. 272:

Yanēs ew Yamrēs, ork’ arin zordisn Israyēli ew taran hngetasan ōreay čanaparh and anapatn: ew šinec’in draxt ink’eanc’ hngetasan am ew ylsrayēlē 980 tlays zohec’in diwac’ ew hnazandec znosa edin pahapans draxtin: ew ut’sun dewk’ [var.: 400] oč’ hnazandec’an, minč’ew krkin 980 tlays ayl zohec’in, ew apa hnazandec’an, bac’ i šabat’ amsoy.

“Jannes and Jambres [are the ones] who took the children of Israel and conveyed them on a road of fifteen days into the desert: and in fifteen years they built a paradise (*draxt*) for themselves and out of Israel they sacrificed 980 boys to demons (*diwac*’), and having made them obedient placed them as guards of the paradise: and 80 demons [var.: 400] did not submit till they again sacrificed another 980 boys, and then they submitted, except in the month of *šabat*’.”

6. The plant of Jannes and Jambres. *Patmut’iwn pilc t’ut’unin* (“The History of Foul Tobacco”): the earliest MS is dated 1701; see for a full discussion and annotation of the poem Russell 2009.

O Christians, give ear!
See how foul a thing tobacco is:
They pay money- throw it in the fire-
And do their souls harm besides.

- (5) The *qalyun*-pipe is richly adorned:
Putting their mouths to it, they lap it up like dogs,
Drink, and expel the smoke from their mouths,
Their noses, eyes, and ears.

They expel the smoke in billowing clouds:

- (10) The angels flee the stench,
Soar up, and rise to Heaven
And make complaint to the Son of God.

There is a man hungry for tobacco
Who smokes fifty waterpipes in a day

- (15) And swallows the smoke, which reaches his gut
And — worse than a dog — turns and comes out.

- He's withdrawn his hands from any work,
 Fallen to the demons' lot.
 What wretched children all they are!
- (20) And not a scrap of bread's left in his house.
 At night his thoughts dwell on it.
 He turns and tosses, cannot sleep,
 Gets up, sits down, and strikes the flint —
 And imbibes filthy tobacco greedily.
- (25) This world has phony priests
 Who drink to excess foul tobacco —
 They are like the evil Pharisees
 And partners to the Hebrews' company.
 They sit and drink in public
- (30) With hacking coughs like junkyard dogs.
 Their waterpipe is marble black;
 Of finely-worked ebony, its handle.
 The laity see all this
 And are emboldened to imitate it.
- (35) The pastor knows how to read — they say —
 And must know best, for ignorant are we.
 He's the shepherd, we're the sheep,
 We'll follow him home, wherever he goes.
 If he doesn't say that it's a sin,
- (40) Then what do we care about such things?
 Tobacco is a weed that grows:
 Scripture does not refer to it.
 But now it's found a cozy home,
 A dwelling for the demons' throng.
- (45) The sermon's plain when you get up close:
 Worms and blood fall off the tongue.
 The serpent deceived Adam and Eve.
 The evil Tempter was the cause.
 They didn't keep the Lord's command:
- (50) Deceived, they ate of Eden's fruit.
 As soon as they had, they felt regret,
 And were stripped of the ineffable light they wore.
 They saw that they were naked
 And wrapped themselves in fig leaves.
- (55) Where are you, Adam?— cried the Lord.
 For shame he fled and hid.
 He says: You did not keep the commandment!
 Come on, get out! This is not your house.
 They say: The serpent tricked us —
- (60) And point at the tree with the fruit.

Our Lord cursed the serpent.
 Off fell its limbs — it had to slither.
 The demons collected them
 And took them to the bold devil.

- (65) We found the potion of perdition —
 They said — Destroyer of men's souls.
 Jannes and Jambres, they say, in the Garden
 Planted them, and tobacco grew.

First they called it *k'ark'i*.⁵⁹

- (70) This is tobacco — the devil said.
 They sowed its evil seed in the world,
 A trap, a moth to eat men's souls.

Thus have they hunted down mankind,
 Made a place for themselves, a home.

- (75) Men have forgotten church and prayer:
 Night and day they drink foul tobacco.

They do not want the aroma of incense.
 They are blinded by this ugly smoke.

- (80) Signed on with the wicked foe.

They impoverish their widowed souls,
 Consigning them to hell's undying flames.
 They collect somewhere and drink that scum
 And, like hounds barking, belch coarse coughs.

- (85) With smoke you have blackened your soul.
 You never come to church to pray.
 Wretch! Go and see for yourself
 What the interpreter of Scripture has to tell.

- (90) They fasten on the water pipe and pass it round,
 And, taking it, raise their hands above their brows
 And declare: Let its dust and flame
 Pile up and on our heads crash down!

They take it from the Muslims' mouths,
 Drink, suck the poison up.

- (95) The body enjoys a little pleasure,
 But the soul becomes black within.

They have become the demons' habitation,
 Spending the whole day in that company,
 For all the writings testify:

- (100) Repulsive is foul tobacco.

⁵⁹ Unless saffron is meant, this is an unknown word.

The soul clamors from within,
 To the angels makes complaint
 And says: Take me out of this place,
 Out of this repulsive and foul body!

- (105) Better far the reek of hell
 Than this foul tobacco that they smoke:
 They smoke it, spill the smoke on me,
 And murder me right now.
- My place is hard and ugly, foul
 (110) And dark and muddy, gloom:
 Satan's fattened us all up
 To make of us the fiend's food.
- Brethren, I counsel you,
 Think well on what I've said.
 (115) Do not perform Satan's will,
 For hard and bitter is the day of death.
- You despatch yourselves to hell for nought —
 You do harm to your own soul.
 When that evil *k'ark'i* grows green,
 (120) They say it is shunned by the bee.

7. *Šahariks on the Euphrates*. Misak' Mecarenc', *Irikuan ilj* ("Evening's desire") and *Irikuns* ("This evening"), from the volume *Nor tater* ("New Lyrics"), Constantinople, 1907, nos. 30 and 31; A.S. Šaruryan 1981, pp. 126 and 127. In the transcription I have restored the original, Classical orthography employed in Western Armenian, from the modified system adopted in Soviet Armenia and retained by the present Republic of Armenia that Šaruryan employs in his critical edition.

IRIKUAN ILJ

Öriord Nardikin

- (1) *Irikuan mēj anhetelu yoysn unenal,*
Ew yanjnəwil nurb kacani mə k'əmayk'in:
Xorxi mə pēs t'otul janjroyt'n u yap'rank'n al
Ew andorrov patmučanel hiwand hogin!
- (5) *U loyserov paracackel hiwand hogin;*
K'oyr unenal jurin karkajñ u kapoyt bal,
Ew unkndrel čambun k'overn ergot siwk'in,
Mec k'atc'rut'ean mə xañəwil, u menanal!
- Ənkern əllal c'orennerun, mrgastanin*
 (10) *Duřə banal zawki mə pēs, mətermörən,*
U t'otul or šaharikner əzk'ez tanin
- T'ewaparp'ak— layn lərut'ean mə hamörən.*
Hon šrjasp'iwř caferun het etbayranal:
Tarp'otñ əllal catiknerun; covacawal
- (15) *Irikuan mēj, anhetelu yoysn unenal!...*

EVENING'S DESIRE

To Miss Nardik

- (1) In the evening to hope to vanish without trace
 And give oneself to fancy's narrow trail;
 Like snakeskin to slough off both boredom and ecstasy!
 To vest one's sick soul in untroubled calm.
- (5) And to swath the sick soul in lights all round,
 To have a sister in the water's burble and blue mist,
 Intent to heed the whisper of the roadside breeze—
 To mingle with a mighty sweetness and abide alone!
 To be comrade to the wheat field and the fruitland,
- (10) To open wide the door, familiar as a child,
 And let in the *šahariks* to bear you off,
 Arms wrapped around, mute into the broad silence.
 There to be brother to the trees spreading round!
 Lover to the flowers spreading wide as the sea!
- (15) In the evening to hope to vanish without trace!...

Both this and the following poem belong to the series *Əllayi, əllayi* ("If I were, if I were"), in which the poet expresses his longing to be one with Nature, remembered as the world of his rural childhood. The poem is dense with sublimated erotic longing (cf. *yanjnui*, "submit"; *xairnui*, "commingle"), none of which ever became the lineament of gratified desire for the poor young poet.⁶⁰ But he would have nature in the form of the sylvan tutelary spirits enter his house (the Arm. verb in the reader's mind would be *matnel*), to which he would admit them in intimacy (*matermōrēn*). The kidnapping *šahariks* (cf. the *Švot*!) are thus welcome ravishers. This is a reversal of the usual attitude towards the child-stealing spirit, as though Goethe had let the child in his anxious father's arms give voice to a yearning for the more intimate embrace of the love-smitten Erlkönig. Schubert would have been shocked. So one looks for other reversals of the conventional; and in line 3 the poet wishes he could slough off both tedium and intoxication like the skin of a snake. One thinks, inevitably and rightly, of the serpent in the Garden of Eden, and of an oceanic delight in nature transcending not only the contrasting moods of quotidian existence, but perhaps good and evil themselves. The use of the marked verb *patmučanel*, derived from a Mlr. loan used only for the vestment of a priest, alerts the reader to the use by Mecarenc' of the sacral, or of the inversion of it by a kind of pantheism.

In keeping with his evocation of the supernatural *šahariks*, Mecarenc' encodes the name of a magic *flower* into his poem. For as the reader nears the broad fields of flowers, the poet deploys the parallel adverbs *hamrōrēn* "mutely" and

⁶⁰ According to the historian of late Ottoman Armenian Constantinople, Y. Č. Siruni, Miss Nardik "was a young lady who loved books, with whom [Mecarenc'] had exchanged barely a few words or a smile" (writing in *Hayrenik* ["Fatherland"], 1923.10, p. 65, cited by Šaruryan 1981, p. 381).

termōrēn “intimately”, neither of which is a particularly conversational usage and both of which therefore invite attention as marked lexical items. The latter has given up its code, which is desire for penetration; but the former appears in the phrase *hamrōrēn hon šrjasp’iwr*, where one searches for a deeper structure, a hypogram. The repetition of initial *h*- whets the reader’s expectation of alliteration in *h*- in the third word; and the opening and closing syllables of the phrase in fact form an acrophonic *hamasp’iwr*, lit. “all-spreading”. This is the magic flower of Armenian folklore and mythology *par excellence*;⁶¹ and we know the poet knew it and knew how to play with it besides. For in the poem *Mitk’ ew bnut’iwn* (“Mind and nature”) Mecarenc’ uses the word adjectivally, as an epithet of his own mind, which yearns for oneness with the infinity of nature, of course. The word concealing, as it were, the magic *hamasp’iwr* — *šrjasp’iwr*, lit. “round-spreading” — is not all that different in meaning or in construction. And it is to foreground, as a synonymous construction, the densely alliterative epithet the poet will then apply to the flowers, *catikner covacawal*, lit. “flowers sea-dilating” (pronounced /dzaghignér dzovadzavál/). The epithet harkens back to the famous Song of the Church of St. Grigor Narekac’i, with whose writings Mecarenc’ was very familiar (cf. the following poem), where the eyes of the Theotokos *covn i cov cicataxit cawalanayr* “dilated sea into sea dense-laughing” (K’yoškeryan 1981, p. 120; the saint uses *cov* and *cawal* together very often in his hymns).

IRIKUNS

Banastelc Vahram T’at’ulin

- (1) *Irikuns ē bari! bari! u liajēn u hotewan:*
Oski ut mē, kamurj etac əndmēj tiwin u gišeruan.
Varsaditak caferun tak kə kkat’im loysin hamar:
Arewin perč loysin hamar, or kə p’atp’i k’rk’manəkar
- (5) *Mējn hotewan cayrineru cayracawal catiknerun,*
Ur dic’anuēr bažakneru k’amec’ ambrosn anyag metun.
Cařoc’ etin čačanč’awuxt pastař mən ē arewn oski,
Ur catkacin utēšneru čamuk hiwsk’ə kə sořoski.
U zep’iwrn al, kayřrun hamboyř, mankut’iwn m’ē veradarjac:
- (10) *U jrc’aytk’n al, p’sp’suk’n ē barekamin, mētermasac’.*
Siwk’n ařjanak, or hiwsisēn kə k’nk’šanay hogwoys vəran:
U jrc’aytk’n, or lařak k’əllay narkisneru glxun deřjan,
Kam artasuk’, ač’k’erun mēj šahprakneru hoylin c’irc’an
U k’alc’rut’eamb k’ōcē menik catiknerun ayd ləřaran.
- (15) *U t’ert’ikner, šahariki šənorhk’, k’iynan ap’erus mēj,*
Bac’ ap’erus, or k’erkarin loysi xurjin p’otp’otenēj.
Aha! k’anc’ni, məšuřuac bil kazov tesil m’al zert’ alik’:
Zarmanuhi m’ē varsaget, kat’ u vardi! hərařalik’...
Yaweržahars kat’ u vardē, catik, čačanč’, řur u zep’iwr...
- (20) *Šat ēř lec’un hogwoys, ov Tēr! bazmazetumn ays řrjasp’iwr...*

⁶¹ See most recently Russell 2012, pp. 667-669 and n. 94 with refs.

THIS EVENING

To the poet Vahram T'at'ul

- This evening is good, fragrance-laden, its hands full:
 Bridge betwixt the day and night, a path of gold,
 I yearn for the moon, beneath the trees so shaggy to behold,
 For the solar, splendid, saffron-daubed lunar glow
- (5) Amidst the fragrant trees' lip-swelling blossoms⁶²
 Whose ambrosia, from cups offered to the gods, the insatiable bee drains.
 The golden sun is the trees' final flare-embroidered tapestry
 Whose weave, fine raiment, slips down the flower-bearing stems;
 And the zephyr yet, a boldly stolen kiss, is youth restored.
- (10) And the plashing fountain is the fond murmur of a friend,
 A girlish shade slipping from the north to gently cover me;
 And the fountain's splash is the narcissus' blushing veil
 Or the tears in the eyes of myriad corollas wide-flung:
 With sweetness it anoints that place of silence of the flowers lone.
- (15) And the petals, the *šaharik's* graces, tumble into my palms,
 Palms open, stretching towards the light's sheaves' moving coruscations.
 Lo! She passes, a vision like a wave, of misty blue and gauze,
 Woman of marvel, lovely in her tresses, all of milk and roses! Miracle...
 A nymph made of milk, of roses, flower, sunburst, water, zephyr...
 Such fullness, O Lord, for my soul, this superabundance spreading its
 bounty everywhere...

Mecarenc' was influenced strongly by Symbolism; and its spirit is evident in these verses. But he sought also to evoke his idyllic rural childhood, which he describes, not only with the allusive images of the Symbolists, but with the bold strokes of a portrait from nature. Armenian nationalism of the late 19th century, like similar movements elsewhere, had a large antiquarian and mythological aspect, and the short life of Mecarenc' coincides with the period when most of the great ethnographical monographs and studies were published. His contemporary Daniël Varužan (1884-1915) was the poet most explicitly associated with aesthetic neo-paganism, with his *Het'anos erger* ("Heathen songs", Constantino-ple, 1912). In the work of Mecarenc' one finds only a few lines imbued with any sort of nationalistic fervor; but the fairies (*payik-k'*), nymphs (*yaweržaharsunk'*), and sylvan spirits (*šaharik-k'*) of the pre-Christian Armenian pantheon and the folklore of the Christian nation abound in his poems.

Western Armenian poetry of the pre-Genocide era reflects also the high literacy of author and reader, the firm grounding in Classical texts that the community's excellent educational system provided to its best and brightest, and the continuity of the literary tradition from the earliest period to the present. It is not surprising, then, that two texts of the tenth-century mystical poet St. Gregory of Narek, Arm. Grigor Narekac'i (951-1003), also bring to bear their vivid lexical

⁶² The desired effect is an alliterative pattern in /dz/; the *cayri* is identified by Šaruryan as a kind of tree but I find no record of it in any source.

imagery and thematics in the poem. The first is the liturgical *Taḥ yawrhnel jroc'n*, "Song for the blessing of the waters" (K'yoškeryan 1981, pp. 66-71): one stanza (lines 13-20) contains Narekac'i's neologism *p'otp'olenēj* (used by Mecarenc' in line 16 of his poem); but two others, l. 29-36 and 41-49, are also relevant with their imagery. Armenian poets have loved and read especially the shorter hymns (*taḥ*) of the saint because of their use of alliterative sound patterns, richly obscure vocabulary, elements of the contemporary vernacular, and luxuriant, naturalistic imagery. Mecarenc' in 1908, the year of his early death from consumption, published an article, *Narekac'iin het* ("With Narekac'i"), on his engagement with the saint's writings (Loys, Constantinople, 19 Jan. 1908; repr. by Šaruryan, pp. 265-270).

TAL YAWRHNEL JROC'N: SONG FOR THE BLESSING OF THE WATERS.

Lines 13-20:

*Awetis k'ez, Tiramayr,/ Srovbēanman, k'rovbēat'oṛ,/ Hup erraki loys ger-
azanc'./ Lusoyñ arp'i vehinačem./ Seṛic'n ant'ac' biwruc' ijeal./ Šotšoteni,
p'otp'olenēj./ Manraheṭet, gaṭtni šawit/ Ancanawt'i čanaparhin.*

"Good tidings to you, Mother of the Lord,/ Like a seraph, enthroned as a cherub,/ Connected to the supernal, trinitarian light,/ Sunlight of radiance walking on high,/ Descending flow of the myriad races,/ Glitter and glow, shining in its rise and fall,/ Little flood and secret path/ On the road of the unknown."

Lines 29-36:

Awetis caṛoc' caṭkanc'./ Boḅbojoxit, xitasataṛt'./ Goyn geṭec'ik, pṭinawēt,/ Aknaḥačoy, ham k'alc'runak,/ hot burazuart', p'unj xuṛneram,/ Cayric' vardic' p't't'inaṣard/ T'ert' taraceal oskečačanč'./ Terewaxit kanač'ac'eal.

"Good tidings to the flowering trees/ Dense in bulbs, thick in green,/ Lovely of hue, abundant in fruit,/ Pleasing to the eye, sweet to the taste,/ Gay aroma to the smell, multifarious bouquet,/ The roses' corollas with petals adorned,/ Leaves spread out like a sunburst of gold,/ Dense leaves glowing green."

Lines 41-49:

Awetis tayr Yovhannēs/ Yord alberac', hoyl vtakac'./ Jur manuacoy cicat cawal,/ karkač'ahos, utxinahos,/ Cayt'inasēr, manuacawal,/ Šrjanaptoyt manr awazin./ Holov xoroc' mēt mēt zugin,/ Vayr ver anēj! ver vayr i ver!! P'ut'an i jursn Yordananu.

"John gave good tidings/ To the brimming springs, myriad streams,/ Laughing, spreading, winding water,/ burbling in flow, rushing rill,/ caressing shores,⁶³ in little streams,/ Swirling about the shallow sands,/ Flowing to meet and join the many depths,/ Plunging upwards, swirling up and down,/ As they hasten to the waters of the Jordan."

⁶³ Arm. *cayt'inasēr* is a hapax one tentatively emends to **cayrinasēr* with *cayr*, "river-bank"; the suffix *-sēr* "loving" would then fit with the next strophe mentioning sand. St. Grigor was accused of being a *cayr*, "heretic", but the possibility seems faint indeed that the calumny occasioned a copyist's *lapsus calami*.

The second text is the *Matean otbergut'ean* ("Book of lamentation"), a cycle of 95 meditative, penitential prayers, with the medieval poet's neologism *l'aran* ("place of silence") in Ch. 91.2 (p. 228 of the Buenos Aires ed. used for the Erevan *Concordance* of the *Matean*), which Mecarenc' uses in line 14 (the *shva* indicates in printed Armenian poetry and hymnology a *sut vank*, i.e., the pronunciation of a consonant cluster as a full syllable). Jacques Sayapalean, a particularly obtuse critic who wrote under the *nom de plume* P'aylak, took Mecarenc' to task for his recondite lexicon in a review of *Nor tater* with the title *Kanxahas zatik* ("Premature Easter", in the journal *Masis*, Constantinople, 1908.20): "The Evening' [*Irikuns*], p. 56, is the chef d'oeuvre of words monstrous, tasteless, and vile to the ear [*ančōrni, ančāšak, xžalur*]." The poet replied in a vigorous polemic, *Hetamnac' barekendan* ("Retarded Carnival", *Biwzandion*, No. 3488, Constantinople, 13/26 March 1908, repr. by Šaruryan, pp. 271-277), pointing out that many of these words, including *p'otp'olenēj* and *l'aran*, are actually Narekac'i's, adding, "*L'aran*, my boy, means 'a place in which to be quiet', and how much profit might there be for P'aylak, if only he knew and respected the meaning of *l'aran* — the place to keep silent!..."

Mecarenc' poem is about evening; and Chapter 91 of the Narek is one of four listed in the Jerusalem, St. James' edition of 1964 as *Ałōr'k' gišeraynoy* ("Prayers for the night"), along with 12, 41, and 94. Ch. 12 is the most well-known, incorporated into the evening liturgy, and Mecarenc' cites it in his article on Narekac'i. It implores the protection of the Holy Cross as a barrier against demonic invasion upon the smoke-hole, the doors and windows — all the places where the expelled *Švot* tries to re-enter the home!⁶⁴

Ch. 91.2: "Now I stretch forth my hands to inscribe with my fingers your lordly sign, in this hour of night — you who are never darkened by tenebrous ignorance, but perceive all in your sight, even as you rest in your dwelling of unapproachable light. Receive me, imploring and in danger, speaking words of thanks, under your mighty arms' protection. Save me from the foul intruding phantasms, cleanse the mirror of my heart, my sense of sight, and strengthen me against sorrowful dreams by your tree of life. Besprinkle with your blood the bounds of my station; circumscribe my steps of departure and entry with the life-giving flow that sprang from your side; may the shape of your four-fold form be the protector of my perambulations; and when I lift up my eyes, may the mystery of your salvific passion meet them. May the deed of your suffering strengthen the lintel of my door; and my hope in faith depend upon your tree of blessing. Confine, O Lord, hereby that ruiner of souls: may the defender of the light enter in unopposed. Lighten my debts' burden, in place of the severe weight of my pain, which I confess to you, knower of all: the innumerable particulars of my wicked and iniquitous deeds, here in the place of quiet of my thoughts, gathered in the bedclothes of my couch, recalling the bitter fruits of my despair."⁶⁵

⁶⁴ On the prayer, see Russell 1994.

⁶⁵ Text in P.M. Xaç'atryan and A.A. Łazinyan 1985, p. 609.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Firuzi I. ABDULLAEVA, tr. and ed., *Tolkovanie Korana (Lakhorskii Tafsir), Pami-atniki pis'mennosti Vostoka* 124, Moscow: Izd. Vostochnaia Literatura RAN, 2001.
- E.M. BUTLER, *The Myth of the Magus*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1948.
- Owen DAVIES, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Mkrtič' ĖMIN, ed., *Mecin Vardany Barjberdec'woy Patmut'iwn tiezerakan* ["The Universal History of Vardan the Great of Barjberd ('the High Castle')"], Moscow, 1861.
- Gevorg HALAJYAN, *Dersimi hayeri azgagrut'yunə* ["The ethnography of the Armenians of Dersim"], *Hay azgagrut'yun ev banahyusut'yun* ["Armenian Ethnography and Folklore"] 5, Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1973.
- James L. KUGEL, *Traditions of the Bible*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Ė.H. HARUT'YUNYAN, *Mxit'ar Ayriyanec'i, kyank'n u stelcagorc'ut'yunə* ["Mxit'ar Ayriyanec'i, his life and work"], Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1985.
- Timothy HUSBAND, *The Wild Man: Medieval Myth and Symbolism*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1980.
- Ferdinand JUSTI, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, Marburg, 1895, repr. Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 1963.
- Philip G. KREYENBROEK and Shehnaz Neville MUNSHI, *Living Zoroastrianism: Urban Parsis speak about their religion*, Richmond, Surrey, UK: Curzon, 2001.
- Arminē K'YOŠKERYAN, ed., Grigor NAREKAC'I, *Taler ew ganjer* ["Songs and hymns"], Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1981.
- David MAGIE, *Roman Rule in Asia Minor*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1950.
- Hrach K. MARTIROSYAN, *Etymological Dictionary of the Armenian Inherited Lexicon*, Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010.
- Manfred MAYRHOFER, *Onomastica Persepolitana*, Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften, Phil.-Hist. Kl. Sitzb. 286.1, Vienna, 1973.
- Robert T. MEYER, ed., Palladius, *The Lausiaca History, Ancient Christian Writers* 34, New York: Paulist Press, 1964.
- Michael G. MORONY, *Iraq after the Muslim Conquest*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984.
- G. MXIT'AREAN, ed., *Mer giwłə Datem* ["Our village Datem/Tadem"], Boston: Hairenik, 1958.
- A.V. NIKITINA, *Russkaya demonologiya* ["Russian demonology"], St. Petersburg: St. Petersburg University Press, 2006.
- T.A. NOVICHKOVA, *Russkii demonologicheskii slovar'* ["Russian demonological dictionary"], St. Petersburg, 1993.
- K. PATKANOV, *Khronologicheskaya istoriya, sostavlennaya ottsom Mekhitarom, vardapetom ayrivanskim, armyanskii tekst* ["Chronological History compiled

- by Fr. Mxit'ar, the *vardapet* of Ayrvank', Armenian text"], *Trudy vostochnogo otdeleniya Imperatorskogo russkogo Istoricheskogo obshchestva* ["Proceedings of the Oriental section of the Imperial Russian Historical Society"] XIV, St. Petersburg, 1869.
- A. PIETERSMA and R.T. LUTZ, tr. and intro., *Jannes and Jambres*, in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 2, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1985.
- Albert PIETERSMA, *The Apocryphon of Jannes and Jambres the Magicians*, Leiden: Brill, 1994.
- J.R. RUSSELL, "The Platonic Myth of Er, Ara, and Arda Viraz," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 18, 1984, pp. 477-485.
- , *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, Harvard Iranian Series 5, Cambridge, MA, 1987.
- , "A Wandering Herder of Camels," *Annual of Armenian Linguistics* 8, 1987(a), pp. 5-15.
- , "Zoroastrian Elements in the Book of Esther," in S. Shaked and A. Netzer, eds., *Irano-Judaica II*, Jerusalem: Makhon Ben-Zvi, 1990, pp. 33-40.
- , "Grace from Van," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 7, 1994, pp. 35-45.
- , "On Armeno-Iranian Interaction in the Medieval Period," in R. Gyselen, ed., *Au carrefour des religions. Mélanges offerts à Philippe Gignoux. Res Orientales*, Vol. VII, 1994(a), pp. 235-238.
- , "Polyphemos Armenios," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 26, 1996-7, pp. 25-38.
- , "A Scholium on Coleridge and an Armenian Demon," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 10 (1998,1999 [2000]), pp. 63-71.
- , "The Praise of Porridge," *Le Muséon* 116.1-2, 2003, pp. 137-179.
- , "The Armenians, the Holy Cross, and Dionysius Bar Salibi," *St. Nersess Theological Review* 8, 2004, pp. 1-12.
- , "The Credal Poem *Hawatov xostovanim* ("I confess in faith") of St. Nersēs the Graceful," in J.J. van Ginkel et al., eds., *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*, Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta 134, Leuven, 2005, pp. 185-236.
- , "The Demon Weed," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 19 (*Festschrift for P.O. Skjaervo*), 2009, pp. 129-132.
- , "An Armenian magico-medical manuscript (*Bzhshkaran*) in the NAASR Collection," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 20, 2011, pp. 111-130.
- , "Armenian Secret and Invented Languages and Argots," *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana*, Transactions of the Institute for Linguistic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, Vol. VIII, part 3, St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2012, pp. 602-684.
- , "On an Armenian Word List from the Cairo Geniza," *Iran and the Caucasus* 17, 2013(a), pp. 189-214.
- , "Hārūt and Mārūt: The Armenian Zoroastrian Demonic Twins in the *Qur'ān* Who Invented Fiction," in S.R. Tokhtas'ev and P.B. Lur'e, *Commentationes Iranicae: Sbornik stat'ei k 90-letiyu Vladimira Aronovicha Livshitsa*, Institut Vostochnykh Rukopisei RAN, St. Petersburg: Nestor-Istoriya, 2013, pp. 469-480.

- , “Language of demons, language of men,” in publication, *Festschrift Michael Stone*, ed. Theo Van Lint, [2013].
- A.S. ŠARURYAN, ed., *Misak’ Mecarenc’*, *Erkeri liakatar žolovacū* [“Complete works”], Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1981.
- Martin SCHWARTZ, “Apollo and Khshathrapati, the Median Nergal, at Xanthos,” *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 19, 2005, Ann Arbor, MI, pp. 145-150.
- Michael E. STONE, *Adam’s Contract with Satan: The Legend of the Cheirograph of Adam*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002.
- Nira STONE, *The Kaffa Lives of the Desert Fathers*, CSCO 566, Leuven: Peeters, 1997.
- Danny SUGARMAN, ed., *The Doors: The Complete Illustrated Lyrics*, New York: Hyperion, 1991.
- Michel THIERRY, *Répertoire des monastères Arméniens*, Turnhout: Brepols, 1993.
- Robert W. THOMSON, “The Historical Compilation of Vardan Arewelc’i,” *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 43, 1989.
- Vark’ srboc’ haranc’ ew k’alak’avarut’eanc’ noc’in əst krkin t’argmanut’ean naxneac’* [“The lives of the holy fathers and the civilities of the same, re-translated by the ancients”], Venice: S. Lazzaro, 1855.
- P.M. XAČ’ATRYAN and A.A. ŁAZINYAN, eds., Grigor Narekac’i, *Matean olbergut’ean* [“Book of lamentation”], Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1985.
- Zaven V. XARATYAN, *Paštamunk’ayin motivnerə Hayoc’ əntanekan cisakargum* [“Ritual motifs in Armenian family ceremonies”], *Hay azgagrut’yun ev banahyusut’yun: nyut’er ev usumnasirut’yunner* [“Armenian ethnography and folklore: materials and studies”] 17, Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1989.
- Hranuš XARATYAN-ARAK’ELIAN, *Hay žolovrdakan tonerə* [“The folk festivals of the Armenians”], 2nd ed., Erevan: Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography of the Armenian Academy of Sciences, 2005.
- S. YOVSEP’EANC’, ed., *Ankanon girk’ hin ktakaranac’* [“Non-canonical books of the Old Testament”], Venice, 1886.
- Ladislav ZGUSTA, *Kleinasiatische Personennamen*, Prague: Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, 1964.

The Epic of Sasun: Armenian Apocalypse

James R. Russell

Violent, irrational, intolerant, allied to racism and tribalism and bigotry, invested in ignorance and hostile to free inquiry, contemptuous of women and coercive toward children: organized religion ought to have a great deal on its conscience. There is one more charge to be added to the bill of indictment. With a necessary part of its collective mind, religion looks forward to the destruction of the world.

In *The Future of an Illusion*, Freud made the obvious point that religion suffered from one incurable deficiency: it was too clearly derived from our own desire to escape from or survive death.

CHRISTOPHER HITCHENS, *God Is Not Great: How Religion Poisons Everything*, NEW YORK AND BOSTON: TWELVE, 2007, PP. 56, 103.

1 General Considerations

There seems to be a perversity in religion: on the one hand, believers desire to escape from or to survive death; on the other, they look forward to the destruction of the world. Apocalyptic encompasses both, seemingly contradictory, desires; and the illogic of the situation requires awkward repetitions and convolutions in the theoretical outcome of the future achieved by theologians and prophets. Men are to be judged, once at death and again at resurrection; so the wicked will suffer twice in hell, first till the end of time and then forever after that, while the souls of the righteous will go to heaven till Judgment Day and then be reborn in resurrected bodies for bliss on earth. At the end of time, the Second Coming, Judgment Day, the world will be destroyed. But then it will be restored—how, as what, nobody knows. A thinking person cannot help but agree with Christopher Hitchens that the cosmological dogmas of religions are primitive and demeaning systems of wish fulfillment. Life is inevitably tragic: we experience loneliness and loss, pain, sickness, and age, and we die. The world around us, for all its beauty, is also a place of fear and violence, thanks in no small measure to the incurable vices of our own species. We want to live, but not the way we do; we want a world to live in, but one better than this.

With Christianity, the Armenians inherited a developing apocalyptic scheme that was similar in some respects to that of the Zoroastrian religion whose beliefs and practices had exerted such a profound influence on the

culture of the country previously. This was not entirely fortuitous; for although unconnected cultures often achieve analogous visions of apocalypse, in the ancient Near East apocalyptic ideas have a chronological priority, density of articulation, and ideological centrality in the teachings of Zarathuštra. Prof. Jon Levenson has argued brilliantly and convincingly that ancient Israel developed a belief in a collective, one might even say national resurrection that stands apart from the patterns of belief that emphasize the spiritual immortality of an individual.¹ This system was not the result of Iranian influence; but other beliefs accreted in the Second Temple period—the time critical to Christian origins—definitely were. And the Armenian Christians, uniquely among the *chrétientés*—national Christian cultures—had in any case a Zoroastrian religious substratum from which they drew abundantly in their symbolism—especially of light in opposition to darkness, as one might expect—and in religious terminology. The Avestan word for apocalypse, the renovation of the world at the end of time, *frašō.kərəti-*, lit. “making wonderful,” Pahlavi *frašegird*, for instance, is found as Armenian *hrašakert*, the “masterpiece” of God’s Creation; and the word for the dread crisis of end-time, *awrhas*, must be from OIr. **avi-frasa-* “intensive questioning”!²

However the Armenians did not entirely abandon their older faith. It endured for nearly two millennia through the medium of orally recited heroic epic, a kind of secular scripture that existed alongside the teachings of Christianity. Though Christian clerics railed bitterly against the vices ostensibly preached by the *gusank’* “minstrels” and the reciters of epic songs in turn poked fun at the hypocrisies and foibles of the clergy, more often one observes a coexistence, even a symbiosis, of Armenian epic and Armenian Christianity. A small but telling example of this is the episode in the epic of Sasun, *Sasna c’ier* (*c’er* means, literally, “bent,” and describes here a hero of wild, imprudent valor) where Sanasar, one of the twins who found Sasun, dives to the shrine of the Holy Mother of God beneath the waters of Lake Van to receive his magic weapons. He also, predictably, fights a dragon. Now a legend about the tenth-century mystic St. Grigor Narekac’i, who lived on the south shore of the lake, where the epic begins, was shaped on the model of the episode or its older mythological underpinnings; but then, later variants of the epic episode in turn were colored by the legend about Narekac’i.³ This cross-fertilization can be observed in many aspects of Armenian spiritual and material culture.

¹ See Levenson 2006.

² See Russell 1998a.

³ See Russell 2007.

I was able to discover and establish the hitherto unnoticed interrelation of the epic passage and the Christian legend noted above by employing a method that, strangely, has not been utilized in the study of the Sasun epic before. The latter exists only in individual recitations in various Armenian dialects, principally of the regions around Van, especially to its west and south. It is accepted that there are four main chapters, or branches (Arm. *čiwł*), of the narrative, and the reciters know them as such. They reflect a basic narrative unity. But there was never a written *Quelle*; so the elegant harmonizing text published in Soviet Armenia by Joseph Orbeli from which Artin Shalian accomplished his wonderfully lively English translation, and the much longer, composite *Sassounacan* text Tigran Č'it'uni printed in wartime Paris, were achieved at the expense of many of the fascinating details that cause the variant recitations to diverge and make them in fact irreconcilable at important points. Important as they are for an overview, the composites cannot serve as a sort of reliable critical edition. So I have translated for this study from the transcribed texts in Armenian dialects 24 versions of the famous final episode of the Sasun epic, with its vision of apocalypse, collected in the three principal volumes published at Erevan in the Stalinist years by Manuk Abelyan and Karapet Melik'-Öhanjanyan (sc 1, 2, 2.1). This section, which may be summarized in general terms, concerns the fourth and last of the great heroes of the line of Sasun, "Little" (Arm. *P'ok'r*) Mher (Mithra), son of the slain David (Arm. *Davit'*). Mher avenges the latter by destroying the city of (A)Xlat' on the northwestern shore of Lake Van. He then finds that the ground is too soft and weak (or "old") to support the hooves of his steed, K'uřkik Jelali. He goes to the graves of his parents and learns his father has cursed him (or, he learns all this in a dream): he is to be imprisoned alive till the end of time in a cave at Raven's Rock at Van. When the earth is hard enough again for his horse not to sink in, and grains of corn are as big as rosehips, Mher can come out. Then he will either rule or destroy the world. In the meantime, the rock opens on one or two holidays every year (though one variant has five): Ascension (*Hambardzum*) and Transfiguration (*Vardavar*). People see Mher and his horse as giants; if they enter the cave, time does not seem to pass for them. The water that trickles down the rock face is believed to be the urine of Mher's steed. This place, also called the Gate of Mher (Arm. *Mheri duřn*, Tk. *Meher kapısı*), in most variants can be identified as an Urartean blind portal at Van carved as a gateway for the gods.

The "branch" of Little Mithra is the shortest of the four in the epic, but it is structurally and thematically the densest, with numerous and intricate foreshadowings and recapitulations that both give it a tight and symmetrical internal unity, and link it to the three previous sections. When it begins, Mher does not know David has been murdered; and his relatives, afraid of the chaos his

vengeance will bring on, attempt to hide him. David, too, was hidden away and had to discover the particulars of his identity. Mher breaks loose, learns the truth, and laments his father, wishing in each refrain that he had gone blind. This is an ironic and prophetic foreshadowing of the curse he is to hear from his father's grave: that he will go into the earth and his eyes will not see. That is a direct paraphrase of the curse of king Artasēs, that Artawazd be kept in Ararat and not see the light. And the latter draws upon the Iranian myth of Yima, Persian Jamšid, who is to be confined in his hypogean *var* and not behold the light of the sun. So the Armenian oral epic not only echoes the tradition with precision here, but positively reverberates with it. Mher fights a girl, Gohar, armored like a youth, and then marries her, much as his father David married Xandut'; and, like the latter, Gohar is to die by her own hand. Xandut' killed herself for grief over David's murder, but the motive for Gohar's self-destruction is more mysterious. Twice before his father's ghost curses him, Mher will intone that he has no heir and no death: perhaps Gohar understands his eerie premonition of a lonely immortality and understands she is not to share it. In a foreshadowing, again, of his visit to his parents' graves, Mher goes on a pilgrimage to Baghdad to visit the grave of Sanasar's brother, Baldasar, thereby tying a loose end from the beginning of the epic. Though Mher in the course of the narrative recovers his weapons, mounts the magic steed, avenges his father, defeats seven kings who are assisted by a treacherous abbot, marries, and travels, all these events are telescoped into a very short time so as to impress upon the reader Mher's youth, which will congeal into an arrested and eternal adolescence—a manner of presentation of what I will call the neotenic theme in the discussion below. In this he is in vivid contrast to his grandfather *Mec* Mher, "Great" Mithra, whose story is all about the *longue durée*, maturation, fallibility, and death. One is tragedy and sudden death, like the *ēbgad* (incursion of the evil one); the other, the gazing forward into deathlessness of *frašegird*. Together, they compass both the human condition and its contrasts, and the dual and paradoxical themes of apocalyptic itself.

The timing of the ending of the episode of *P'ok'r* Mher is itself of great interest in resolving the issue of the integrity of the epic as a single work. The action of the epic opens on Ascension Day, when the maiden Covinar goes out for a last walk on the shores of lake Van before being sent away to Baghdad in marriage to the Arab caliph. She is thirsty, and drinks one-and-a-half handfuls of a milky liquid that gushes from a phallic rock. Nine months later the unequal twins, Sanasar and Baldasar, are born: the former founds the fortress of Sasun. At the end, Mher is immured in his cave, which opens on the eve of the Ascension (and, sometimes, on the feast of the Transfiguration as well). The action of the epic can thus be seen as taking place within the cycle of an archaic ring com-

position; and this is a strong argument for its narrative integrity as something much more intricate than a collection of different legends like the *Kalevala* or *Ossian*. The Mithraic mysteries seem to reflect a similar historical cycle: the primordial bull was slain at the incursion of Ahreman into the universe on the day Ohrmazd of the month Fravardin⁴—the vernal equinox, modern Iranian Nō Rūz—in the 6000th year of Creation; and the final sacrifice of another bull will usher in the unending bliss of immortality on the same day in the 12000th year. Easter, despite its Iranian name in Armenian (*Zatik*, i.e., “Birth”), was perhaps too strongly Christian a festival to stand in for the Zoroastrian spring New Year; but Ascension day, with its pre-Christian rites, seems to have been a suitable substitute. The summer holiday of Transfiguration, too, with its overtones in Armenian folk ritual of pan-Indo-European flower festivals like the Roman Rosalia or Greek Anthesterion, and of the specifically Iranian summer holiday *Ābrīzegān*, “Water-splashing,” was also suitable for Mithra.

The themes the epic deploys in this narrative are common folklore types. Among the more prominent ones are: information received in a dream (D 1810.8.2), a mountain or rock that opens or closes (D 1552), the magic door (D 1146), the extraordinary cave (F 757), and giants in the otherworld (F 167.3). We find them elsewhere, also with apocalyptic overtones: there is a cave in the Carmel range believed to be that of the immortal, apocalyptic prophet Elijah, for instance; and, according to an Aramaic fragment found in the Cairo Geniza, yet another immortal, apocalyptic figure by the name of Jesus hid in it and it closed up on Him. But Rabbi Judah the Gardener came and ordered it to open, and Jesus fled.⁵ The presence of these types in such narratives does not prove very much beyond the obvious observation that people tell symbolically meaningful stories about important religious figures and ideas in similar ways. Since such types can be encountered in normative scripture as well as in oral literature, they do not even make the tale being told more or less authorial and intentional, avowedly confessional or consciously artificial. They are elements, even as language itself is a necessary element, of narrative art. We have not found a way to do without them and probably do not need to. But the details subsumed by these types are local, traditional, and significant: it is Mithra, not Christ or Elijah, in this particular, Armenian cave. So the narrative enlarges one's sense of Mithra as an apocalyptic figure enduring in Armenian tradition. And the context—of heroic epic here—is of distinguishing significance, too;

4 That is, “of the *fravašis*,” or protective spirits of the righteous dead, Av. *Fravašayō*: the Zoroastrian designation persists in the old Arm. month name Hrotic', gen. pl. of **hro(r)t* < **fravart(i)*, i.e., Median or OIr. for *fravaši*.

5 See Ben-Amos 2006, 135, citing Ginzberg 1928, 332–5.

for that circumstance does elevate the episode in cultural importance for its hearers from a magic tale without necessary normative value to a document freighted with the high seriousness of the collective, social narrative of a people conscious of a tradition—of a secular scripture.

Mithra, then, merits particular attention in the discussion of apocalyptic in Armenia. For of the four principal heroes of the Epic of Sasun, two bear the name of the ancient Zoroastrian divinity Mithra (Mir. Mihr, Arm. Mihr, Mher): *ariwcadzew* (“leontomorphous” or “lion-slaying”) Mher, and his grandson at the end of the epic. Why is it that this particular *yazata* of the many worshipped in the older religion has remained so prominently?

2 The Humanity of Mithra

One reason that may be adduced for the marked importance of Mithra/Mher in the Armenian epic’s apocalyptic section is his anthropomorphism, a feature that would not have gone unnoticed by adherents of a newer religion whose transcendent God exists as a salvific, incarnate man, Jesus Christ.⁶ It is noteworthy that Mithra, alone amongst the thirty-three lesser *Yazatas* (“[Spiritual beings] to be worshipped”) and seven *Amaša Spəntas* (“Bounteous Immortals”) of the Zoroastrian pantheon, possesses a stable and relatively consistent iconographical profile that is faithfully reproduced in every region, however remote from the Iranian lands, where the divinity was an object of cult.⁷ Everywhere—on Graeco-Bactrian coins from the second century BCE on (the god is labeled ΜΙΠΟ, i.e., *Mihir), the bas-reliefs of Commagenian Arsameia on the Nymphaios and Nimrud Dagħ in the first century BCE, the reliefs, sculptures in the round, and frescoes of the Mithraic religion from the northern littoral of the Black Sea, down to Cilicia on the Mediterranean coast, northwest to Hadrian’s Wall on the Caledonian frontier and northeast to the Danubian and Rhenish outposts of the empire in Pannonia and Germania—the god is

6 The early Christian polemicists did not fail to notice the affinities between Christ and Mithra and their respective cults; but of course they regarded those of Mithraism as a demonic parody of the true mysteries of their own faith. The iconographic convergences are numerous as well: see, for instance, Mathews 1993, 153–155 with figs. 121 and 125, on the similarities of the gods and the processions of their faithful on frescoes at the Aventine Mithraeum and Domitilla (Christian) Catacomb.

7 The literature on Mithra and Mithraism is vast. See Russell 1987, chapter 8; and the following articles: Russell 1989, Russell 1994, Russell 1995, Russell 1999, Russell 2002–3, and the “Introduction” to Russell 2000, with references.

portrayed as a strong and beautiful youth in “Persian” *anaxyrides*-trousers and the “Phrygian” cap (the felt *başlık* of the Anatolian shepherd). Often the radiate nimbus of the Sun god—Iranian *Xvarə xšaēta*, Greek *Helios*—surrounds his head. There are some features less widely attested: a fresco in the Mithraeum at Dura Europos and numerous terracotta statuettes in the round from Arsacid Armenian Artaxat and Parthian Iran proper show the god on horseback; and the icon of tauroctonous Mithras, though adumbrated in Zoroastrian references to Mithra’s activity as a sacrificer (he receives animal sacrifice on the festival of Miθrakāna-/Mehregān, cf. the Armenian month Mehekan), is attested sparsely in the north Black Sea region and Anatolia, ubiquitously in Roman Mithraism, but not in Iran and farther East. But the Mithra-image with radiate nimbus is largely stable; and one can witness its influence on sculptures of the third and final Buddha of the future, Maitreya (whose name is a derivative from Mitra, the Iranian Mithra’s Vedic cognate), as far East as Japan.

The third-century Sasanian state inscriptions refer to the replacement of shrines derisively called *nišēmag ī dēwān*, “dwelling(s) of the demons” by sacred fires. One should specify with respect to this oft-mentioned Sasanian iconoclasm, that the destruction of the image-shrines (called **bagina-*, Armenian *bagin*, by their own devotees), where likenesses of the gods, presumably in diverse media, were recipients of cult, and the installation of consecrated fires (Armenian *atrušan*, etc.) there, did not affect the depiction of the gods in other contexts. The supreme Creator God Ohrmazd (Avestan Ahura Mazdā, the “Lord Wisdom,” Arm. Aramazd) Himself is shown in relief in the investiture scene of the first Sasanian monarch, Ardašir I, at Naqš-e Rostam near Persepolis (still venerated in its ruin by the Persians of the period as *Sad stūn*, “[the place of the] Hundred Columns”): he is a man on horseback, extending the ring of *xvarənah-*, the Glory of the primordial dynasty of the Kavis, to Ardašir, who is also mounted, facing Him. The front hoof of the steed of God crushes the serpent-wreathed head of the prostrate arch-demon Ahreman; and the king’s horse likewise tramples underfoot the fallen Arsacid king, Ardavan. The Armenian ekphrastic compound *smbakakox*, “hoof-downtrodden,” seems to have been coined on the basis of just such a scene; and on the walls of the tenth-century Church of the Holy Cross on Alt’amar built by king Gagik Arcruni of Vaspurakan in 920 (it is this Gagik who is remembered as Covinar’s royal father; and it was on the south shore of the lake, facing the island, that she drank) the mounts of the three warrior saints Sergius, George, and Theodore trample dragons and Satan. The image, with its Christian afterlife and Armenian rhetorical voice, indicates that there was no Zoroastrian iconoclasm of a radical type comparable to the sort one encounters in Byzantium in the early Islamic period, or, in latter days, amongst

Protestants. (The Puritans of the Massachusetts Bay Colony prohibited the Holy Cross itself). The Sasanian corpus abounds in portrayals of female divinities: many of these must be Anāhīd (Avestan *Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā*, the “Watery Mighty Undeified [Goddess],” Armenian *Anahit*, New Persian *Nāhīd* “Venus”), given her prominence in invocations and the designation of the Sasanian regnal fire at the temple of Ādur Anāhīd at Staxr. But it is unlikely that all these are the same goddess: Ārd (Avestan *Āši*, “Wealth,” the Zoroastrian equivalent of Indian *Lakṣmī*), Spandārmad (Avestan *Spəntā Armaiti*, “Bountiful Devotion,” the goddess Mother Earth), and the Dēn (Avestan *Daēnā*, “Vision,” the personification of the individual soul and of the Zoroastrian Faith itself) were also all important, all candidates for iconic depiction. The well-known portrayals of Zoroastrian, Buddhist, Hindu, and Hellenic divinities on the coinage of Bactria indicates that whatever iconoclasm existed in the western reaches of the Iranian world was a relatively local phenomenon; and the discovery of a much richer iconographic program of the Zoroastrian gods on the ossuaries, frescoes, and funerary bas reliefs of the Sogdians, in their Central Asian homeland and in their settlements in China at the termini of the Silk Road, enables scholars to undertake a nuanced re-evaluation of the Sasanian evidence. Yet the careful and unmistakable portrayal of Mithra (Middle Iranian Mihr) at Tāq-e Bostān in Iran is impressive withal, coming as it does from a later stage of the dynasty when depictions of the gods were less frequent than they had been in the third century. In the relief, Mithra stands on a flat, open lotus and holds the priestly bundle of *barsom*-twigs in his hand (I have alluded above to his participation in liturgy; the place where Zoroastrian sacerdotal rituals are solemnized is called a *dar-e Mihr*, or “Court/Gate of Mithra”). His radiate nimbus glows behind his noble head.

After Tāq-e Bostān, though, the trail begins to grow cold: with the Arab subjugation of Iran in the seventh century and the consequent eclipse of Zoroastrianism as a major religious and cultural influence, the old Iranian culture recedes gradually from the Buddhist world. Though the Maitreya cult grows, the image of that Buddha changes. Odd, isolated images recur: on a medallion, believed by Prof. David Bivar to be datable to the period of the Būyid dynasty, there seems to appear the leontocephalous figure associated with Mithraism, of which more is to be said presently. The tauroctony resurfaces on the adorned capitals of monastery pillars in mediaeval Europe; but there is no reason to think it was anything more to the sculptor than a barbarous curiosity, seen on some ruin and added to the eclectic dossier of the bestiary, which swept up pagan and exotic imagery, sacred and profane, as indiscriminately as the callow young shepherd David of Sasun, who drove into town at dusk not only the cows and sheep, but the wolves and martens and bears of the hills and

dales. The temporally and geographically remotest echo of the iconic Mithras-Apollōn-Hēlios-Hermēs, though, is beyond question the most magnificent and monumental object of the corpus since the conception of the image itself. It is the great nimbus-crowned Statue of Liberty by Bartholdi in New York harbor, with Emma Lazarus' stirring ode to the New Colossus, the Mother of Exiles, at its base. With the statue, the symbolism of Mithra's Phrygian cap as the sign of manumission, then of Revolution, attains for the West its zenith and the history of the icon there most likely has reached its end, except perhaps on the strange new continent of the Internet, where neo-Mithraists have resurrected the ancient image.

I wish to propose the idea that the reason for the unique stability, ubiquity, and anthropomorphism of the image of Mithra in particular in the Zoroastrian pantheon is precisely his humanity, that is, the pre-eminently and particularly human concerns that his functions embrace, by comparison to the other *yazatas*. Mithra is the witness (*gugāy*, cf. Arm. *l-w vkay*), guardian, mediator, and arbitrator of all relationships between human beings that exist by an act of rational will, from legal agreements (including, in fact, a rather important super-human one: the accord of Ahura Mazdā and the evil spirit Angra Mainyu at Creation to fight for dominion over the world only for a specified time) and judgments (including the measure of tortures in hell: Mithra sweeps his mace over the funnel of the Inferno thrice daily to remind the imps not to afflict the damned beyond their specified sentence), to the ties of love and friendship. His name was formed from the Indo-European base **mei-*, "exchange." The Sun, whose light illuminates all, also sees all; so Mithra and the Sun are invoked thrice daily together. The importance of Mithra in Iranian religion cannot be overstated. The 16th day of every month bears his name; so he presides over the second half of the month even as Ahura Mazdā, after whom the first day is named, rules the first half. The late Achaemenids invoke the triad of Ahuramazdā, Mithra, and Anāhitā in their inscriptions; and the corpus of theophoric names is huge and prominent, from Mithradates of Pontus in the *Lives* of Plutarch to Mithrobarzanes in the *Menippus* of Lucian. Lucian, though he wrote in Greek, was a Syrian of Commagenian Samosata, within the Armenian and Parthian world. The name of his magus is that of the venerable sacred fire Ādur Burzēn Mihr of the Parthian homeland.

In modern Persian, Mehr is a name of the Sun, particularly in the poetic pairing *Mehr ō Māh*, "Sun and Moon." But the word also means "love"; and the peach fuzz on the cheek of a boy—the archetypal object of love in the secular and religious poetry of Muslim Iran—is called *mehre gīyāh*, literally "Mithra's grass." Now, it may be objected that Zoroastrianism, a human invention like all other religions, is anthropocentric and its gods embody phenomena that

involve us: Vərəθraϥna (Middle Persian Bahrām, Armenian Vahagn), “he who smites his opponent,” personifies just force. Anāhitā assists child birth; Sraoša’s job is to listen (as Soruš, an alternate name of the angel and psychopomp Gabriel, he is the only Zoroastrian divine being absorbed into Iranian Islam).⁸ We need health and hope for prolongation of life: the Amēša Spēntas of the plants and the waters, Haurvatāt “Wholeness” and Amərətāt “Immortality” (demonized into the Harūt and Marūt of the *Qur’ān*; in Christian Armenia, petals of a flower named after the pair, *hōrot-mōrot*, are scattered upon water in a vernal rite of divination), fulfill these functions.⁹

All the above qualities are to some degree those of animals, too; yet the creation and maintenance of relationships through artificial structures—viable and changeable institutions—is an activity unique to a creature whose management of life and transit through it are not assured and compassed entirely by instinct. As the American anthropologist of the Southwest, Prof. Weston La Barre, observed, human beings are perennial learners and experimenters, caught in a sort of perpetual adolescence of discovery, invention, and uncertainty: he termed this state *neoteny*—a condition, not of perpetual physical youth, but of a kind of continuing intellectual and emotional adolescence (the sort of state *P’ok’r Mher* is literally trapped in) in which one remains naïve, testing, learning, questing. Animal relationships and societies may be more diverse and complex than we yet know; but they do not seem to be susceptible to self-conscious reflection, written comment, or considered alteration. Elephants have emotions, rituals, commitments, and consciousness. They deserve more respect that we accord them. But to the best of our knowledge one generation of these noble creatures will not, say, debate gay marriage, polygamy, pre-nuptial agreements or other changes to the pattern of society materially different from the practices of pachyderms of an earlier time, in full awareness that there is a quality of arbitrariness and contingency to any social relationship. The creation of institutions may be an adaptive response to human frailties, and thus possess an element of determinism; but it is still neotenic *kat’ exokhēn*. Since Mithra’s chief function is precisely to oversee voluntary associations and covenants, rather than the relations determined wholly by nature, he is the *deus neotenicus*, the peculiarly human *yazata*, the one best suited to portrayal as a man. There is nothing necessarily anthropomorphic about a god who represents dawn, or the Sun, or Sirius, or Vega, the haoma

8 His bird is the rooster, who heralds the sunrise; and it is likely that the white cock of cosmic proportions of the *Mīrāj-nāme* is the bird of the *yazata*.

9 See Russell 2013.

plant, fire, or force (the Armenians and Parthians were quite content to represent Vahagn/Bahrām as a wild boar, *varāz*). But a human image of Mithra *cannot* be misrepresentation.

“What if God were one of us?” wonders Joan Osborne in a poignant song probably familiar to most young Christian believers in the United States. Their early forebears in the Roman Empire were perhaps unduly disturbed by the similarity of the Iranian answer to that question to their own, to the Nazarene. For the small, secretive Mithraic conventicles never posed a threat to the vast, evangelistic organization of the Church, whose salient feature was the transformation of an intimate mystery rite into an overtly public ritual—a mystery without secrets. The Mithraic *agapē* stayed intimate: few Mithraic “cave”-temples, the *spelaea*, could accommodate comfortably more than thirty communicants. The cult never sought, nor gained, the numbers that make for tectonic shifts in the politics of religious faith. But it stayed an *agapē*, till its final dissolution at the hands of a vengeful, victorious *Ecclesia*. Roman churches stand, literally, upon vanquished mithraea. The primary object of Christian hostility, usurpation, and worry—the various psychological expressions of the anxiety of influence, an algorithm of criticism Harold Bloom has applied as convincingly to Christian co-optation of Scripture as he has to the development of secular literature—was of course *Synagoga*, shown in mediaeval art as a grieving woman, downcast and hoodwinked by her willful ignorance. The Jews survived this. But what of the smaller number of surviving Mithraists whose faith the Church suppressed?

Mithraists were noted for their exclusivity among the Oriental mystery cults; the others let their adherents join other groups: a devotee of Isis might also enjoy the rites of the Moon-god Men, for example—but the Mithraists did not. Yet in the fourth century some banded together with other philosophically minded pagans in the hope, perhaps, of strength in unity: the last Eleusinian hierophant, in the mid-fourth century, was a Mithraist. Later still, Mithraists might have endured within the relatively free zone of quasi-religious confraternities of artisans that changed and coalesced over the mediaeval period. The necessary obscurity that protected such movements forces one to speculation in the absence of documentation; so their study is regrettably susceptible to the vagaries of conspiracy theory and other popular amusements. But it is at least beyond dispute that one of these groups emerged into the light of day in the safety of the Age of Enlightenment in Europe as the brotherhood of Freemasons. The English writer and Freemason Rudyard Kipling, with his wide knowledge of the military, of Eastern and Western religions, of Masonic lore, and of Roman history, took for granted the Mithraic origins of the noble Craft;

and modern American Masonic historians also welcome such research.¹⁰ But where Masonry is under attack by the Christian Church or the popular press, official publications are more circumspect: the research lodge of the Quatuor Coronati in England does not welcome discussions of Mithraism.

In Eastern Anatolia, the very region where the Romans had first encountered the devotions they were to adopt and partly reshape into Mithraism, the Kurdish sectarians of the Yāresān and Ahl-e Ḥaqq continue to preserve the form and many of the particulars of Mithraic ritual in their own fraternal associations. Within the wider urban society of medieval Anatolia and Iran, and to a lesser extent elsewhere in the Muslim world, conventicles similar to those of the Kurds developed. They performed civic and quasi-military functions, while the religious aspect of their activity was more or less successfully co-opted by canonical religions: among Muslims, they were grafted onto the Sufis; while an Armenian priest who composed a constitution for a fraternity drew upon the Neoplatonic treatises of the Muslim Ikhwān al-Ṣafā. They were called, generically, *javān mardān* or *futuwwa*—"young men"—in Persian and Arabic. Another designation sometimes applied to them in Persian, *ʿayyār*, from a Middle Iranian word meaning "helper," undergoes curious semantic development: retaining the initial *ʿayn* acquired in Arabic transliteration, it comes to mean something like a crazy ruffian; as *yār*, it means "friend, lover" and is a Sufi name of God. Some of the Armenian confraternities are similarly designated *ktrič*, "intrepid, daring." The heroes of the Armenian epic of Sasun are called *cuṛ*, literally "crooked, bent" and understood as crazily daring and intrepid: the four generations of *Sasna cʿrer*, the daredevils of Sasun, serve the Armenian community and defend it against its Muslim enemies (who are called Egyptian idolaters—*kṛapašt* of Məsər, i.e., Mišr).¹¹

The central figure of the Iranian national epic, the *Šāh-nāme*, is the Scythian hero Rostam, with his trusty steed Raxš, who was well known to the Armenians of the time of Movsēs Xorenac'i (ca. 5th c. CE). There are Armenian oral epic recitations about him down to the modern period. Though Ferdōsi's masterpiece bears the title *The Book of Kings*, many of the latter are base, weak men; and Rostam is maneuvered by one of them, Kāvūs, into killing his own son, Sohrāb

10 See Russell 1989.

11 One of the latter, the devious woman Ismil Xat'un of Xlat'—a center of Arab rule—is the lover of Davit' and their daughter treacherously murders him in the bath. And his father Mec Mher's dalliance with another woman of Msr had led to his estrangement from his lawful wife, Armaḷan, and to the death of them both immediately after the birth of Davit'. (Mec Mher's lion-slaying exploit reminds one of Samson of Dan; and the alien is his Delilah.)

(Armenian preserves the Kurdish form of the name, Zohrab) for fear that if both champions are left alive, Rostam will take the throne. Indeed, Rostam is not only *pil tan*, “elephant-bodied,” but, notably, *tāj baxš*, “bestower of the crown.” The only king of Armenia in the Epic of Sasun, Gagik, makes a cameo appearance and then disappears right after the beginning. He is no more than a tributary of the Arabs. The heroes of Sasun hold center stage: they quarrel, they fight alien invaders, but they do not rule Armenia as *kings*, though: there is none of the tension that animates the relationship between the crowned Agamemnon and the fighter Achilles, or between Rostam and the shahs he serves. The braves of Sasun are *aznanc’ordik’*, “sons of the nobly born,” many times taller and stronger than other men, and are seen as a race apart. Their youthful exuberance and rebellious, even anarchic and blasphemous behavior arouse alarm at times, so much so that in the third of the four divisions, or “branches” (Armenian *ēwt*) of the epic the uncles of the child David try to prevent him from discovering his heroic strength, martial mission, and magic steed and weapons. They are *‘ayyārān*, in short; and if one recalls that to this day Iranian muscle-men train in the gymnasias called *zōr-xāne* to the accompaniment of the chanting of *Šāh-nāme*, then it is plain that epic was a sort of secular scripture, not just for the laity, but for the martial and civic fraternities in particular, expressing the beliefs and behavior they were to inculcate and emulate in their own activity. The Armenian medieval lyric poet Kostandin of Erzinka (modern Turkish Erzincan, in Eastern Anatolia) even composed at the request of the “brothers” a Christian cosmological poem in the “voice” (Armenian *džayn*) of the *Šāh-nāme*.¹² If there are literary relics of Mithraism, then, it is in epic, with its special social function amongst the Irano-Anatolian fraternities, that we may reasonably expect to discover them; and *Sasna crēr* proves to be no less than an eloquent *tableau vivant* of the symbols and scenes familiar from the lovely, mute stone bas-reliefs of Roman Mithraism.

This Armenian dossier is indispensable to a serious discussion of the phenomenon of Mithra, not only because the country itself was the enduring Western outpost of Zoroastrian civilization—a conduit of Iranian thought and faith to the Classical civilizations of the Mediterranean basin—but because, of the four male protagonists of the four branches of the Epic of Sasun, as was noted above two bear Mithra’s name. The first generation of the heroes are born of the lady Covinar after she has drunk milk of a rock in the sea: the Roman Mithras is *saxigenus/petrogenes*; the Mithras of Ps.-Plutarch, *De Fluviiis*, ejaculates on a rock on the banks of the Araxes—the river that defined Armenia in the Roman imagination—to engender the monster Diorphos; and in the

12 For the text and translation of the poem, with discussion, see Russell 2001–2, esp. 83–9.

Armenian Christian hymnal, the *Šarakan*, the Blessed Virgin Mary, called *Astuaca-cin*, "*Theo-tokos*," is also called *vima-cin*, "generator of the Rock." The Armenized Christ has co-opted Mithras Saxigenus; though the Hebrew designation of God, *Šûr*, "the Rock," also provides ample biblical justification for the epithet as well. *Mec* ("great") or *ariwcazew* Mher, hero of the second branch, breaks a vow and dies young, reflecting as a negative image, as it were, the principal concerns of the *yazata*: truth and fidelity to a covenant. *Mec* Mher's sudden death and leonine association, if related, may echo an ancient symbolism: in the Mithraic rites of initiation, which recapitulate the human process of coming of age and of learning, among other things, of the facts of mortality, the candidate to the fourth degree underwent a symbolic death and rebirth and received the Mithraic *syndexios*, or hand-clasp. (There are specific similarities to the analogous third degree of Masonry here, too.) The ritual death happened as he was conducted past a fearsome, fire-breathing leontocephalous figure called the *deus areimanius* (i.e., "the Ahrimanic god"). Such a leontocephalous man is employed as a symbolic figure on some medieval and later Armenian sarcophagi—perhaps as a symbol of leonine courage, an emblem of death and of the hope of resurrection.

The second Mithra of the epic is of course the hero of the fourth and final branch. *P'ok'ṛ* ("little," probably "youthful" is meant) Mher, son of the greatest hero of the line of Sasun, David (Arm. Davit') of the third branch, is in conflict with his father, though not in open rebellion as was the son of David's biblical namesake. As mentioned above, *P'ok'ṛ* Mher finds himself in a changing world no longer hospitable to the heroic code, a place where the very earth will not support the hooves of his magic talking steed, K'urikik Jelali. Speaking from the grave, the ghost of David commands Mher to go to a cave where he is to remain immured till the end of time. The *topos* will be familiar to any English speaker who has heard an indecisive prince ponder the instructions of another specter at Elsinore. In the context of Armenian oral heroic literature the episode has a precise antecedent, though, in the pre-Christian epic cycle of the Artaxiad dynasty of the second century BCE, alluded to above, where the ghost of the dead king Artasēs (Artaxias) I dooms his rebellious son Artawazd to millennial confinement in a cave in Mt. Ararat (Armenian *Azat Masik'*). So Young Mithra follows a talking raven (cf. the Mithraic *corax*, "idem," itself derivative from the Avestan *karšiptar*-, lit. "black-winged [bird]," in aspect and function) to a cave (cf. again the Mithraic *spelaeum*-temple), to the blind portal at Van behind which he is to remain. The Armenians call this Urartean carved gate *Mheri duṛn*, "Mithra's gate," from which is derived the modern Turkish name, *Meher kapısı*; the Zoroastrians call a place of rites *dar-e Mehr*, "idem."

At the end of time, Artawazd and Little Mithra are to emerge and destroy, save, or possess the world: Armenian Christianity makes Antichrists of both, understandably; and just as predictably Armenian Communist poets hailed the Great October Socialist Revolution of 1917 as the liberation of Mithra from his chains, bearing the blood-red banner, crushing the temples of the mighty, ravening for joy. Anti-Soviet writers have seen themselves as immured future avengers of David, too.¹³ Both the Roman Mithras and the Avestan Mithra have prominent eschatological roles also: the tauroctony scene of Mithraic altars probably telescopes the murder of the Primordial Bull that set earthly time in motion with the final sacrifice that will end time and bring immortality. The zodiac arches over the scene, with the vernal sign Aries at the center: both events, cosmogonical and eschatological, take place on 21 March/ 1 Fravardīn. Mithra in the scene is sometimes portrayed with an expression of ecstatic or agonized emotion: far from standing in impassive tranquility above the world, he is all pathos and passion, fully involved, suffering with the creatures of the earth whom he is helping to rescue.

It is noteworthy that the Epic of Sasun, keyed to heroes instead of kings, is so emphatically Mithraic. It contrasts in this respect with the epics of Armenia's pre-Christian dynasties with which other points are shared, whose official cult replaced Mithra with *Vərəθraγna* in the triad Aramazd-Anahit-Vahagn. The boar-totem (Armenian *varaz*, from Avestan *varāza-*, Persian *gurāz*) of Vahagn is so emblematic of Arsacid mythology and ideology that in a polemical Christian inversion of the latter, when king Trdat (Tiridates) persecutes St. Grigor he is transformed into a boar. Why did the Armenian kings seemingly demote Mihr and elevate Vahagn? Had the former become too closely associated for comfort with the class of hero-warriors whose social descendants were to be the *cīer* of folk epic and the *ktrčworac' elbayrut'iwuk'*, the "brotherhoods of the braves" of medieval Christian society? The tension between the roles of king and hero-warrior is as old as the rivalry of the two "best of the Achaeans," Agamemnon and Achilles, or of the uneasy equilibrium in Ferdōsi of the Iranian kings and the elephant-bodied Rostam the Saka.

The Armenian epic, by making of Mithra a multi-faceted literary character, accomplishes the fullest humanization of the god, a character adumbrated in his every classical feature. He is human frailty and bravery, fidelity and rebelliousness, a complete mirror image of our neotenic predicament. No other *yazata*, surely, could ever have become a character in a drama demanding the coincidence of contraries that is the essence of the human state. In

13 See Russell 1998b, a translation and discussion of a poem by Gevorg Emin.

the Armenian narratives, a shepherd or girl beholds the imprisoned youth Mher when the rock-portal at Van yawns spectrally open on Ascension Eve, when Heaven and Earth embrace. In one variant, Mher is covered in shaggy hair head to toe. This detail invites comparison of the Mithra-figure to the Armenian *vayri mard*, “wild man,” and Caucasian *garmakoči*, “idem,” who are of identical appearance: hairy humanoids. And the latter in particular is related to the prototype of Prometheus—the suffering god who is friend and helper to men, yet still a god, and therefore doomed to be in between or apart, something unnatural, a monster even if loved. Such deep association with the human predicament must of necessity alienate a god from the company of the immortals; and to the extent he advances the interests of mortals, he attracts the antagonism of his fellow divinities and invites punishment. Mithras in his *spelaeum*, and Mher in his cave, are not simply actors in a *topos* of apocalypse; they also are sharers, in a way, of the imprisonment of mortals in the Platonic metaphorical myth of this world as a cave where we see shadows cast before a fire and erroneously think them to be true objects lit by the real sun.

Such reflections on the humanity of a particular Iranian god and its implications for his image raise larger questions, as noted, about his evolution outside and beyond graphic art, as a literary character. The force of the humanity of Christ, a figure known first from a text, overturned the Second Commandment and brought to the fore, for all historical time to come, the Promethean tensions inherent in the concept of an immortal who shares the lot of mortals—a God who really does care. It is a conflict that is not susceptible to resolution, and maybe for that very reason it fertilizes the extremes of religious expression: mysticism, and literature—with a man at the center. The Iranian case of Mithra is somewhat the reverse: the preponderance of the evidence, with the large exception of the Hymn to Mithra in Avestan, the *Mīhr Yašt*, is iconographic; and the subsequent development is literary.

3 The Variants of the Text

The individual recitations of variant narratives enable one to discover details that the artificial, composite texts obscure.

In some mithraea, notably the fresco from Dura-Europus, the god is shown hunting on horseback; and numerous terracotta figurines from Arsacid Iran and Armenia show him thus. So it is noteworthy that Mher goes hunting in (8), and in (5) is led to his cave by a deer he is hunting. He shoots at the talking raven of (14): this conflates the image of the Avestan black bird *karšiptar* together with the theme of the hunt. In most texts he either enters the cave,

after which the stone flanks of the rock come together like closing doors, or he falls in, suggesting that the cave (Arm. *ayr*, Arabo-Tk. *mağara*, Heb. *me'ara*, see below) is also a hypogeum (Tk. *mağaza*). The cave can have various numbers of dwellers. In (2), both Mher and his wife are imprisoned. This would seem to be a variant upon the theme in (9) of the married woman who chances upon him when his rock opens and is stuck inside forever: the narrator insists the woman's husband was impotent, leaving some question as to why she stayed with Mher. Most likely the latter narrative conflates two themes: Mher and his consort, and the hapless traveler who is in the cave when it closes (14) or who visits and explains to the guileless hero how humans live by their wits (7, 13). But in (6) the three surviving heroes of Sasun, Great-voiced Ovan, Uncle T'oros, and Ovanes son of Davit', are all immured: this reminds one more of *Kang dez*, the fortress of refuge in Iranian epic where the heroes live immortally, than a place of imprisonment. Ovanes, i.e. standard Arm. Yovhannēs, "John," is sometimes mentioned as Mher's son, whom he kills; so Ovanes here seems to be a stand-in for Mher. Though the texts stress in unison that Mher is to be without issue—or that the noble progeny he sired have all died off—there is, again, some variance of opinion. After a lecture on the epic in Watertown, MA, during which I mentioned that Mher has no descendants, a member of the audience averred that his family trace their descent to the hero.¹⁴

Though most variants specify that Mher is immured in Raven's Rock at Van, in (12) the cave is at Xlat': this is perhaps because that is where he took revenge for the murder of Davit' and the two episodes are conflated, or else because of the proximity of the great, snow-crowned Mt. Sip'an (Tk. Subhan dağı, Arm. Nex Masik') so similar in its majestic appearance to Ararat in the northeast, where Artawazd is imprisoned. Sip'an is at least mentioned in Mher's itinerary in (24). In (13) the rock is located in the district of the city of Van called Shah-baghi, where an important tradition of Mher concerning the fate of his magic Lightning Saber (Arm. *t'ur kecaki*) endured (see note to the translated text), probably to distinguish the Urartean portal near there from another on the high rock of Van fortress. This suggests competing local traditions even within Van itself. In (10), the rock is called Xəzəš, a word meaning excitation or anger—perhaps because Mher will emerge from there to wreak destruction (or, cf. perhaps Mlr. *ristāxēz*, "resurrection"). In the same variant he is called Davit'

14 Dr. Kegham Chobanian, a physician living in Belmont, MA, told me his maternal grandmother, from the Aygestan district of Van city, was named Arsenian and was a descendant of the Arcrunis. His paternal grandfather, Mher Mherian, whose family came from Šatax, was born in Hayoc' Jor. According to family legend, the name went back many generations and the line descended from the Mher of the epic.

son of Davit' (and, in (16), Davit'-Mher), either because of conflation with the Davidic, messianic line or because the much longer episode on Davit' simply co-opted the material on Mher. But it should still be stressed that in the same period the Epic of Sasun was taking final shape, the Armenian Bagratids put about an anachronistic claim to Davidic descent. Since Armenian Christian writers are aware of a Jewish messianic belief that David will return, the apocalyptic overtone is still present. The only outward symbol of the cave to distinguish it from a Christian shrine is a walnut tree that grows nearby (14). The latter may have had meaning once for the reciters and hearers, since it is a tree of importance in Iranian tradition: the archer Ǝrəxša (Pers. Āraš) defined the boundaries of the Iranian clime by shooting an arrow that came to rest in the trunk of a distant walnut.

In (1) is mentioned that in the cave where Mher is immured, "To either side a candle burns by night and day (*erku kuštā mek mem mom vaṛuk a gišer c'erek*)."

It has long been recognized that this is perhaps a memory of the beings who become the Mithraic *dadophori*, "torchbearers." (It is in (1) that Mher is also described as covered with hair, like the Caucasian bigfoot.) But in (14), light is associated also with the annual opening of the cave: "Once a year the door of the cave (*herā* ') opens. / Then light streams forth like Jerusalem (*inč' Erusalem lūs kə kat'ə* ')." The explicit equation of this light with the radiance of the city holy to Christians seems more than a vivid figure of speech. The Zoroastrian Mithra is, after all, a Sun god; and Mher's brilliance here is both a memory and a challenge to the newer dispensation, reflecting the ambivalence of folk tradition. In the same text, both Mher and a girl who goes to the cave, thinking it a church (*žam*, "chapel"), and is immured for a year that passes imperceptibly, are sustained by manna from heaven. She calls this a "round thing," indicating confusion with a communion wafer (*nšxar*): in the legend of Narekac'i noted above, a child he protects in an underwater dwelling is fed the holy bread and doesn't notice the year pass.

In several texts it is specified that Mher is to remain confined till Christ's second Coming (Arm. *galust*) or Judgment (Arm. *datastan*). But in (16) the formula is employed, "till the unborn is born and the immortal dies." This riddle belongs to an ancient *topos* in folklore that in Armenian and other Christian myth is incorporated into the tale of the cheirograph, or written contract, of Adam. When Adam was expelled from Eden, night, which he had never seen before, began to descend. Satan came and assured Adam that the Sun would return if only our forefather would pledge the servitude of his progeny till—yes—the unborn is born and the immortal dies. Christ erased Adam's signa-

ture.¹⁵ The exploitation of the formula is awkward, since it implies that Mher will be released, not at the Second Coming, but at the Nativity, and is thus not only a non-Christian figure, but a pre-Christian one as well. At the end of the same text the reciter declares that the race of Davit' is of the aggregate of the demons: the *hapax* used, *devəstan* (<**diwastan*), is a collective form, rather like "pandemonium."¹⁶ Since in (11) the progeny of the secondary heroes Great-voiced Ohan and Xor Manuk ("Deep Child")¹⁷ of Sasun are considered the ancestors of the young braves (*ktrič*), and the line of Mher, now ended, was that of the *aznanc'ordik*, "sons of the nobles,"¹⁸ this explicit association of Davit' and his son with the demons is striking and has very ancient roots. The genetic kinship of the story in general and in verbal detail (especially the curse formula) to the epic of Artašēs and Artawazd has been noted; and in the latter it is also said that "the progeny of the dragon [i.e., the Medes] kidnapped the child Artawazd and put a demon (*dew*) in his place" (*višapazunk' gołac'an zmanukn Artawazd ew dew p'oxanak edin*). So the statement that the Sasun heroes were demons may be quite specific, not merely a general, affrighted reflection on their otherness.

For the curse of Mher by Davit' derives from that of Artašēs against Artawazd in the *History* of Movsēs Xorenac'i. In the same chapter one learns various other details identical to those in the myth of Mher: that Artawazd is imprisoned in a cave (*ayr*), that he "strives to emerge and bring an end to the world"

15 See Stone 2002; and review, Russell 2003.

16 It should be compared to Phl. *mowastān*, "(the aggregate of) the Magi" Cf. Arm. *krawnstan*: Grigor Narekac'i, *Matean otbergut'ean*, ch. 72.1, *Ayl aha jez asem, ov eketec'ik' mianjanc' ew ašakertut'iwkn' krawnstanac'*; "But now I say to ye, O churches of hermits and discipleships of the religious." The ending *-stan* is a collective plural as well as the more commonly encountered toponymical suffix.

17 This character is probably related to another figure in Armenian mythology: see Russell 1998c. I think these various "kids" are the unruly members of the Sasun *Männerbund*, bit characters from subsidiary episodes attached locally to the epic by diverse reciters and now lost.

18 As noted above, this is the term used, as recently as the sixteenth century and as far from Armenia as Poland and Ukraine, to describe the associations of young men in Armenian communities who engaged in mystical initiation and study, athletic and military training, and social service. Their activities are analogous to those of the *futuwwa*, *axī*, and *javān mardān* of Arabic, Turkish, and Persian-speaking Muslims. Just as the heroic exploits of Rostam in the *Šāh-nāme* of Ferdōsī are still chanted in the Iranian gymnasium, or *zōr xāne*, one surmises that in addition to the Armenian songs "in the voice" (i.e., meter) of the Persian bard that Kostandin of Erzuka was asked to compose for the "brethren" (presumably, of a conventicle of the *ktrič* youth), tales of Sasun would have been recited as well.

(*janay elanel ew arnel vaxčan ašxarhi*), and, as we noted, that it was believed that Artawazd was not a human but a demonic changeling.¹⁹ With all these correspondences, it is perhaps predictable that Davit' and his line also should belong to the *dewastan*. Armenian Christians would have seen in an apocalyptic figure seeking to destroy the world a satanic being, an Antichrist. So the association of Mher with Satan through the legend of the cheirograph of Adam makes thematic sense. Yet when one recalls that the heroes of Sasun are worshippers of the Holy Cross (*xač'apašt*) fighting the idolatrous (*krapašt*) Arabs with magic weapons bestowed by the Holy Mother of God of Marut'a (the latter is the Syrian saint who interred holy relics at Maypherqath/Martyropolis), the demonic associations are startling. They are a reflection of the unease and ambivalence with which the Armenians regarded the apocalyptic conclusion of a heroic cycle that was theirs but came from before Christianity and remained in some ways outside it.

As to the curse itself, in (17) the dead Davit' curses his son from the grave: "Woe, Mher!/ I ask of God that you be immortal (*anmax*)./ Let no heir come from you./ Your place, too, will be in a rock./ You will not see the world with your eyes (*Dü k'ü ač'k'öv axšar č'tisnas*)./ When you see the world, the world shall you destroy (*t'avris*)."²⁰ This echoes the account by Movsēs Xorenac'i (2.61) of the curse that the apparently already deceased king Artasēs pronounces on his son Artawazd: "If you ride to the hunt up on Azat Masik' [i.e., Greater Ararat], the *k'aj's* will take you, carry you off up on Masik', you will stay there, and you will not see the light."²¹ (In several texts, Mher indeed goes hunting; and in one it is the hunted (and wounded) raven that leads him to its rock). And as I have suggested above, a likely remoter source of both epic episodes is the scriptural and epic myth in the Avesta of Yima, the primordial king who sins and is condemned to an undying existence in the underworld. The *Gāthās* of Zarathuštra refer to the legend of Yima in *Yasna* 32; the tenth verse condemns the one who ruins our reputation or fame (*sravah*) by professing the worst (*ač'išta*) for the sake of the sight (*vaēnah*) of the Cow and the Sun (*hvar*) with his eyes (*aši*—the word used here is "daēvic," i.e., used only of demons and evil creatures). This passage in turn may derive from a curse in the Avestan hymn to the sacred plant *haoma* (*Hōm Yašt*, *Yasna* 9.28–29) against the violent and wicked man that he see neither Cow nor Earth (the rhyming pair *qam/ zqm*) with his two eyes (*ašibya*).²¹

19 On the Artaxiad cycle and these fragments, see Russell 2006–7.

20 *Et'ē du yors hecc'in yazat i ver i Masis, z'k'ez kalc'in k'ajk', tarc'in yazat i ver i Masis, and kayc'es, ew zloys mi tesc'es*. For discussion see Russell 1987, 399–435.

21 I am indebted for the suggestion of a derivation of the line in Y. 32 from the hymn to Haoma to Prof. Martin Schwartz of the University of California, Berkeley.

Though in a number of versions Mher rides to Raven's Rock once the curse has been explained to him, in (24) he first must fight the angels of God: this ancient and widespread epic theme is found in the Armenian heroic ballad of the naïve Aslan *aġa* (lit. "Lord Lion," cf. *Ariwc* "Lion" Mher!), who does not understand what death is and cannot find anyone willing to die in his place.²² This contest fits in well with Mher's image, both as an ingenuous Promethean rebel and as a member of an older dispensation whom the new Christian faith literally conquers.

Mher will emerge when grains of wheat are as large as rosehips and the ground is firm enough to support his horse: according to (22), when the world is destroyed and rebuilt anew, it will be his. But according to (8) he will cause a massacre and then be "martyred"; in (5) and (10) all that is said is that he will lay waste the world. So there is some ambiguity about whether his second coming will be for good or bad and whether he himself will survive thereafter. In (3) the element of apocalypse is entirely absent: Mher will stay in the cave till the day of his death (*mahvan ōrə*). But that dénouement is entirely uncharacteristic of the overall message of the variants I have read: Mher is coming back, and his return will be bad news.

The urine of Mher's horse is either always to be seen on the rock face behind which the hero and his steed are immured; or else it trickles down on one of the Christian holy days when the cave is said to yawn open. This rather anti-climactic-sounding detail is always given prominence, even in the most laconic versions of the episode. So it may be of greater than incidental significance. One is tempted to offer an explanation with reference to the *xar ī se pāy*, "three-legged ass," of Zoroastrian cosmological myth. This mythical equid being's urine, expelled into the world-ocean, kills the demonic beings that would otherwise destroy the tree of life. The horn of the unicorn was in mediaeval Europe believed likewise to purify the water: perhaps that is why the creature is shown on one of the tapestries of the Unicorn series at the Cloisters museum, New York, to plunge its horn into a stream.²³ And that, if it isn't an explanation, is at least a good guess.

²² See Russell 2002.

²³ See Cavallo 1998, 57 and fig. 35. But one is reminded also of the story of the fellow who during the years of Prohibition in America took a bottle of hooch to a doctor, wondering what exactly he'd been drinking. "Sorry, sir," said the physician after analyzing the sample. "Your horse has diabetes."

4 From Van to Jerusalem

In the Spring of 1967 the Arab states massed their Soviet-supplied armies for the stated purpose of destroying the State of Israel and driving the Jews into the sea. In the midst of this crisis, Naomi Shemer was asked to write a song for the festival to be held in Jerusalem on 15 May, the anniversary in the Western calendar of the founding of the State nineteen years earlier. Previous songs about the Holy City did not mention its division: at that time the Old City was occupied by Jordan, the Jewish Quarter lay in ruins, and Jews were denied access to the city in general and the Western Wall in particular. Shemer composed a song, *Yerushalayim shel zahav*, "Jerusalem of Gold," a love song to Jerusalem and a lament over its division. Shuli Natan performed it at the festival, to immense acclaim. Egypt had blockaded the Straits of Tiran that day, and Yitzhak Rabin had to leave the concert early to deal with the developing situation. War began on 5 June; and on 7 June the Israel Defense Forces liberated the city, returning sovereignty of David's capital to his own people for the first time since the Second Temple Period. Shemer, who was in El Arish that day, composed a final stanza for the song, which was made the official song of the Israel Jubilee in 1998 and has the status of an unofficial second national anthem.

Several stanzas of that apocalyptic song of an apocalyptic moment in the life of a nation that has too often stood on the brink of apocalypse, or mused about it, rehearse perhaps not so strangely the durable, suggestive images and *topoi* of which the episode of Mher is replete. *U-va-me'arot asher ba-sela' / Meyalelot rukhot*, "And in the caves that are in the rock/ Spirits [or 'winds'] moan," in the desolate city that languishes in captivity. *Ki shemekh tsorev et ha-sfatayim / Ke-neshikat saraf*, "For your name burns the lips/ Like a seraph's kiss," makes one think of Jacob— or Mher— wrestling the angel. The strophe *Eikha yavshu borot ha-mayim*, "Woe! The very wells of water are dry," stands in contrast to the staling of Mher's horse, perhaps. But then, *Khazarnu el borot ha-mayim, / La-shuk ve-la-kikar / Shofar kore be-Har ha-Bayit / Ba-Tr ha-Atika / U-va-me'arot asher ba-sela' alfe shemashot zorekhot, / Ve-shuv nered el Yam ha-Melakh / Ba-Derekh Yerikho*. "We have returned to the wells of water, / To marketplace and square. / The ram's horn trumpet calls upon the Temple Mount / Within the Old City. / And in the caves that are in the rock / Shines the light of thousands of suns / And to the Dead Sea we shall descend again / On the Jericho Road." Water springs, and from the open cave shines the light of redemption. Or as Hovan of Moks put it, as he chanted the Epic of Sasun to Garegin Hovsep'yan, "Then light streams forth like Jerusalem (*inč' Erusalem liis ka kat'a*')." And both the songs of the Six Day War and the Epic of Sasun have become political phenomena, irruptions of mythology into the cultural arsenal of irredentist sentiment, the modern apocalyptic of two minority nations.

5 Conclusion: The Sense of No Ending

Apocalypse predicates upon the destruction of the world the instauration of eternal life. The variant recitations of the Armenian Epic of Sasun mention both, but never do so in a conclusive way. Whatever is to happen, the epic ends with Mher in his cave, visited now and then by the chance traveler, K'urkik Jelali making his presence known. Naomi Shemer, in her song, looks forward to dazzling lights bursting forth from Jerusalem's limestone caverns, the *shofar* blasting triumph, and water purling from dry wells—but after all that, what happens? People go to the seashore. What will we say to God? muses Vahan Tekeyan. He decides to tell Him, “Send us to hell. Send us *back* to hell. You made us know it so very well. And give Your precious Eden to the Turks.” For two cultures with such abundant apocalyptic traditions, Jews and Armenians seem remarkably resistant to apocalypse. Perhaps that is because the hope of living as free people in our own country—indeed, the hope that the world will leave us alone to live at all—has been so distant an ideal. So the restored cosmos is simply being at home again in Jerusalem, or Van; and immortality is seeing our children grow.

Appendix: Texts²⁴

- I. A list of translated texts in foreign languages of passages concerning Mher's occultation:
 1. Collins 1901, 78–9. This is a tr. of II.7 (pub. in 1873), as is scs (cf. 148–50).

²⁴ The following abbreviations have been used:

S= Tigran Č'it'uni/Dikran Tchitouny, *Uwunūwlywū* (French title: *Sassounacan: Épopée Populaire Arménienne*). Paris: Arak's/T'öp'alean, 1942.

sc 1= Manuk Abelyan and Karapet Melik' Ohanjanyan, eds. *Uwūw dntēr* (Daredevils of Sasun), v.1. Erevan: Petakan hratarakč'ut'yun, 1936.

sc 2= Manuk Abelyan and Karapet Melik' Ohanjanyan, eds. *Uwūw dntēr* (Daredevils of Sasun), v.2. Erevan: Petakan hratarakč'ut'yun, 1951.

sc 2.1= Manuk Abelyan and Karapet Melik' Ohanjanyan, eds. *Uwūw dntēr* (Daredevils of Sasun), v. 2, pt. 1. Erevan: Petakan hratarakč'ut'yun, 1944.

scs= Karapet Sital, *Uwūw dntēr* (Daredevils of Sasun). Philadelphia, PA: Amerikahay Yafa'dimakan Miut'iwn ["American-Armenian Progressive Union"], 1946.

sd= H. Örbeli, ed. *Uwunūgh Ĵawh̄r: hawlyawlyan dthghrdhawlyan tcyu* (Sasunc'i Davit': An Armenian popular epic). Erevan: Haypethrat, 1961.

2. Shalian 1964, 367–71; Feydit 1964, 393–5; Surmelian 1964, 274–9; Mkrtčyan 1982, 338–41. These are translations of the “composite” text, SD.
3. Tolegian 1961. This is a translation of the rendering of the epic into modern Eastern Armenian verse by the poet Hovhannes T’umanyan (d. 1912).
4. Boyle 1976. This is a translation of the “composite” text, S, pp. 1083–97.

II. Translations of texts in Armenian dialect.

1. *Sasma crer*, recited by Aṙak’el Šakoyan of Nor Bayazet, recorded in 1905 by Ervand Lalayan (SC 2, p. 172).

“The ground then gave way under his horse’s hooves;/ It gave way (*dayanmiš*) up to its knees./ He looked, saw: above Xlat’ there was a mountain:/ He turned thither, rode to the mountain’s summit,/ Asked: ‘What mountain is this?’/ They answered, ‘This is the Carven Rock (*Kerpac k’ar*).’/ He said, ‘I’ll ride my horse slowly over those rocks./ The ground will be calm lest I go and break them.’/ By God’s command the Carven Rock came over him,/ Made an arch (*tap*) and stood./ It stands there still till now./ The hair of his body has grown and covers him,/ And his breast is seven ells wide./ On Holy Ascension day/ He comes out of the cave with the good light,/ prays, and walks seven great strides from his place./ He rides his horse outside:/ Beneath the horse’s hooves the ground still gives way./ As soon as three hours have passed/ He goes inside: he does not have permission to remain longer./ Then the door of the cave closes./ His daily food is three communion wafers (*nšxark’*)./ To either side a candle burns by night and day (*erku kušta mek mem mom varuk a gišer c’erek*)./ His horse stales: the urine comes out of the cave./ The horse’s alfalfa (*yonjen*) is in front of it/ And is green in summer and winter.”

2. *Davit’ ev Mher kam Sasna crer*, recited by Sargis Hakobyan of K’avañ, recorded in 1903 (SC 2, pp. 229–30).

“Mher mounted his horse and rode to the palaces of Aleppo: he called Gohar from there. Gohar recognized her husband’s voice and came out to him. When she saw Hohanes was not there, she asked, ‘But where is Hohanes?’ Mher deceived his wife and said, ‘He’s gone bird hunting (*av u huš*); he’ll return in the evening. But I’ve come to take you to go hunting with me: we’ll come home by evening.’ After those words, Gohar mounted behind her husband and Mher spurred his horse towards Van. Near there, there is a great boulder-rock. Mher stopped in front of the boulder-rock and said, ‘O Lord God, after my son’s death

I am unworthy to live. For that reason, let this cliff split and give me and my wife a place in itself. Upon these words, the boulder-rock divided in two. Mher rode his horse inside. The boulder-rock closed overhead from either side and was made one again. It took within itself Mher, his wife, and his horse. Till today every traveler passing by that boulder-rock on Fridays hears the wailing and crying of the luckless parents and the neighing of Mher's K'uřik Jallad."

3. *Sasna c'rer*, recited by Murat Hovsep'yan of Ayrarat, recorded by Sargis Haykuni (SC 2, p. 316).

"Great-voiced Hovan saw that no matter how he begged,/ he did not stay./ He said,/ 'Son, I ask of God/ That your place be the Rock of Van (*Vana k'arn*)./ Mher mounted his horse and rode towards Van./ When he had ridden his steed from Sasun to the fortress of Van,/ He saw that his horse's legs were sinking up to the knees in the earth./ He said, 'Now I know the world and the earth are grown old (*axšark'xot'xalivorc'e*).'/ There was a cave: he went inside./ The doors of the cave came together and it took him to itself./ He stayed in that rock till the day of his death (*č'ur ira mahvan orə*)./ From one Ascension to the next, the door of the cave opens./ He comes out and observes (*t'amaša k'ani*) the world./ He heaves a sigh and rides back in, remains inside./ The doors come together and it takes him to itself once more."

4. *Sasna tun*, reciter and recorder unknown (SC 2, p. 480).

"Thereafter Davit' died and they buried him in Axlat'. After forty days were past, *Mher's mother also died [the authors emend from "David's"]. It was Little (*Pstik*) Mher's time to strike, play with, and oppress his people in every way. When evil befell that Little Mher, he got up and went to his mother's grave, cried long, and said, 'Mother, what am I to do? The earth will not support my horse anymore.' From his mother's grave a voice arose, and said, 'Go, it is not I who have cursed you. It is your father who gave you the curse: go and cry over his grave.' Little Mher got up from there and went to cry over his father's grave. And from that grave a voice arose and said, 'Go, mount your horse, ride to Van. There stands Raven's Rock (*Ağravu k'är*). Go there. In that Raven's Rock will you sit.

Little Mher arose and mounted his horse./ He rode to Van, to Raven's Rock./ There he went up on a high rock,/ Entered an opening in it,/ And by God's command that rock closed up,/ And he remained there till now./ Whosoever wishes, let him believe./ Three apples came down from heaven:/ One for the teller, one for the hearer,/ And one for the one who gives an attentive ear."

5. *Sasna crer*, recited by Barseł Sahakyan of Aparan, recorded by Ervand Lalayan in 1912 (SC 2, p. 531).

"He mounted his horse and came to Aleppo,/ Drew his saber, and put it in between him and them (*drec' ort'alaf*)./ He rose in the morning, thanked his father in law,/ Took his wife, and was to go to Sasun./ He mounted his horse, seated his wife behind him, and rode on./ Uncle T'oros, Vegev the Shitter,/ Little Sparrow, Great-voiced Hovan/ Arose and went before,/ Came, reached Mher./ They took Mher and turned from the road./ As they came, a deer appeared right in front of them./ Mher lowered his wife from his mount/ And plunged after the deer./ They took his wife and went on to Sasun./ Mher spurred his horse after the deer./ He went, and a great rock opened,/ The deer went in,/ Mher rode after it, and it hid them./ Till now he, the deer, and his horse/ Are standing, in the rock./ When Mher comes out of the rock/ He will lay waste to the world (*ašxark' piti avera*)."

6. *Sasuna crer*, recited by Mkrtič' Petrosyan, recorded in 1946 by Vard Bdoyan (SC 2, p. 703).

"Some time passed./ Uncle T'oros went on pilgrimage:/ He took the son of Davit', Ovanes, with him and Great-voiced Ovan./ They went and made their pilgrimage: they were inside a cave./ The two mountains came together,/ And they remained within the cave./ Since that time still, they say,/ They are alive (*sał*) within the cave."

7. *Sasunc'i Davit' kam Mheri duř*, recited by Krpo of Taron, recorded by Garegin Srvanjtyanc' in 1873 (SC 2.1, pp. 41–4).

"The brothers of Davit' set off/ And came to the Lady Xandud./ They touched the lady's breasts with their hands/ And saw there was milk, since there was a babe./ They went out, gathered, and said:/ 'Maybe what has happened, is there./' When they went and arrived at Kagizvan,/ They said to the ones seated there,/ 'Our brother's wife has given birth to a child. Where is he?'/ They said, 'Nothing of the kind./' Those men replied,/ 'We have a sign of it./ Our sister in law's bosom has milk./' Some others said to this,/ 'A girl was in these parts, but she has died./' They said to them,/ 'We have a sign of death:/ At one year, it's one giant step;/ At two, it's two,/ And now...'/ They went to have a look at the graves,/ But there was nobody's grave long enough to be one of their own./ Great-voiced Ovan said,/ 'Bring the skins and wrap them round me, for me to cry./ Mher: they've made an underground storeroom (*malaza*),/ Placed a guard over it,/ And put him there./' They wrapped Great-voiced Ovan in the skin and he wailed./ Mher recognized his voice./ Mher said he was going out, and his grandmother said,/ 'That is not the voice of your kin./ There are boys

and tambourines: that's what you hear./ When Mher recognized the voice a third time,/ He struck out, broke the door down, came outside./ He broke one door down after the other,/ Kicked in the next,/ One after the other,/ Smashed seven in all and came out./ He saw his uncles were there but his father was not./ He asked his uncles,/ Whether the men of Xlat' had killed him./ He cried, sank to his knees, nose and mouth bowed./ When he fell to the ground/ His uncles fell upon him,/ Tried but could not straighten him up./ Mher's tears wore a hole (*handak*) in the ground and disappeared.// When three days had passed, Mher straightened up again./ He mounted his father's colt/ And went to Xlat', reduced it to rubble,/ Destroyed it utterly./ Then he went to the summit of Nemrut,/ Looked, and saw smoke rising. He turned then/ And saw an old woman was passing./ He took her, tied one foot to one tree, one foot to another,/ And let the trees apart. Thus he killed them./ He ended the life of Xlat'./ He sent a message releasing (*izin*) his uncles from there/ And they went home./ He himself went to the hill of Tosp (*Tospan blur*)./ They say there's a cave there: that's where he is./ And everyone (*omya*) sees his horse there:/ And his horse's urine always comes out of the rock.// On the night of Ascension the door of Mher's cave (*Mheri eri dur*) opens,/ And there is no command that he may go out./ The ground will not sustain him./ His legs bend in the earth./ On one Ascension night a hunter/ Sees Mher's door open:/ The hunter goes inside./ Mher asks him:/ 'How do you live?' (lit. 'How do you eat the world?' *imal duk' zašxar k'utek'*) He responds, 'By intelligence.' (*xelk'ov*)./ Mher sits up and says, 'How is it, your intelligence?' Well, take the horse's bag, put it on its head./ However hard the hunter tried, he couldn't lift it./ He brought the horse to the bag,/ Opened it and lowered the horse's head to it./ Then he bound the cord round the horse's neck/ And the horse raised its head./ The hunter led it back to its place and hitched it there./ He said, 'Our intelligence is like this./ We live this way./ And the hunter asked,/ 'Mher, when will you come out of this place?'/ He said,/ 'When a grain of wheat is bigger than a quince (*aluč*),/ and a hop is bigger than a rosehip./ Then the command will come allowing us to leave this place./// Three apples came down from heaven:/ One for the teller, one for the hearer,/ And one for the whole wide world (*alam ašxarin*)."

8. *Sasma c'ier*, recited by Murad of Aparan, recorded by Garegin Hovsep'yan (sc 2.1, pp. 101–2).

"Some time passed,/ And Mher mounted his horse/ To go hunting (*avətuš*)./ The ground did not sustain his horse:/ It sank to its knees in the earth./ Mher said, 'What will I do?' The ground does not hold up my horse./ He spurred his horse and came/ To the side of a giant rock (*joj k'ari*), and said:/ 'O God, what will I do, what can I do?'/ When he spoke thus, made a plea,/ God heard his

voice./ The rock opened and took Mher in./ A voice came: 'Mher,/ You will stay in the rock/ Till a grain of wheat is the size of a rosehip./ Then you will come out of the rock again.'// Now Mher is in the rock till that hour,/ And they say that when his horse stales, the urine comes out of the rock."

[Variant ending: "Now Mher and his horse/ Are alive in the rock./ On the five great dedicatory festivals of the year (*hing avak' katik*, i.e., Arm. *nawakatik*),/ Mher comes out of that rock,/ Looks at the world, enters that rock./ There is no command allowing him to walk the world./ When a grain of wheat is become a rosehip,/ The ground will become firm (*xayimna*)./ Mher and his horse will come to the world./ Again Mher will wreak massacre (*Nor Mher kuturum k'eni*);/ At the end he will be martyred (*Verj ka martirosi*)."]

9. *Sasna tun*, recited by T'amo Davt'yan of Sasun, recorded by Karapet Melik' Ohanjanyan in 1932 (SC 2.1, pp. 195–6).

"Mher mounted his horse and rode./ The horse could not resist (*däyaxa*), and sank (*gə lorxer*) in the earth./ Davit' had cursed it, the horse could not stand./ He sent Mher to the city of Aleppo—/ Davit' had built the city of Aleppo—/ So Mher got up and went there./ There his horse could not stand, it could not stop./ Mher burnt the townspeople./ One day he mounted his horse and departed./ He got up and fell into a cave (*zutrín*),/ The rocks came together, the door closed./ Mher stayed in the cave. / [Variant: No matter how Mher turned, the earth would not sustain him./ He went to the mountains of Axlat', to its valleys, went up on the rocks./ He went up on one rock and was stricken:/ The rock came together and he himself entered within.] Till a kernel of corn becomes the size of a rosehip,/ Till a grain of wheat becomes the size of a walnut,/ Mher will not come out of the cave.// Till now men have seen him./ A bride of seven years was taking bread to the plowmen (*ladzvurnun*)./ The door of the cave (*k'afu*) opened./ That bride was married seven years,/ Her fiancé was bound from her (*gabug ə əti*),²⁵ / Lest people talk./ The cave door yawned open,/ Mher appeared (*gə hazərvi*), came out,/ And the door of the cave closed up again./ There is a command he not emerge till Judgment Day (*tadasdan*),/ Till a kernel of corn be like a rosehip,/ Till a hop be like a plum."

10. *Sasuna Davit'*, in the dialect of Xlat', reciter and recorder unknown (SC 2.1, p. 246).

"The lady Xandud remained with two souls. In nine months, nine hours, and nine minutes she was stricken, and bore Davit', the son of Davit'. When Davit' came out of his mother, he fell on the ground. His hand was closed. The world

25 The man has been rendered impotent by demons, cf. Arm. *kap* "binding (spell)."

tried but could not get it open. His mother gave him her hand, and by God's command his hand opened. They saw that the man was taken and delivered after his mother's heart. He reached his twelfth year and laid waste to Xlat'. As many hard stones as there were, he split every one in two. He turned the world upside down, destroyed it and went entered Xəzəş²⁶ rock. He is there till now, till a grain of wheat becomes bigger than a rosehip: when he emerges, he will destroy the entire world (*elman ašxark' avira*)."

11. *Sasuna c'ier*, recited by Manuk T'oroyan of Alaškert, recorded in 1932 by Karapet Melik' Ohanĵanyan (sc 2.1, pp. 351–3).
 "Mher fell into thought./ He thought, 'I have become a sinner./ How can a man kill his own son/ And not be a sinner himself?'/ So Mher went along, thinking./ He came to a spot below a mountain,/ A black rock (*sev k'ar*) right in front of him./ He said, 'Wait, I'll let fly at this rock with my mace (*gürz*)./ If it breaks, I'm not a sinner./ If it doesn't break, then I am a sinner./ When the mace hit the rock,/ The rock split on either side:/ He and his horse went into the rock./ The rock came back together./ Mher escaped, was freed (*pərdəzav, azadav*)./ Mher's line (*j'ins*) came to an end./ Uncle T'oros died of grief/ When he heard of Mher's death./ The line of all the rest who remained continues still./ Now when there are brave men (*ktrič*) amongst the people of Sasun,/ They say those are from the line of Great-voiced Ohan, of Deep Child (*Xor Manuk*)./ The sons of the nobles (*aznanc'ordik'*) are from the race of Mher./ They went, ended."

12. *Davit' ev Mher*, recited by Uncle Naxo of Moks, recorded in 1886 by Manuk Abelyan (sc 1, pp. 50–1).
 "Mher got up and wanted to go;/ When he put down his feet, they sank into the earth./ The earth had weakened before him./ There was no place on earth for Mher to rest./ He went and entered beneath the cave of Xlat'.// Some days passed, and a man on horseback came./ Mher went and took his horse away./ He got up, mounted the horse,/ Intended to perform more heroic feats (*p'ehlvanut'ün*)./ He mounted and rode the horse to the plain./ The earth before him was weak/ And the horse sank into the soil./ There was no place on earth for Mher to rest./ Mher for twenty years/ Prayed beneath the cave of Xlat', saying:/ 'O Lord God,/ My father's curse has reached me,/ It has pulled the vein of my insides,/ From my side no heir has fallen into the world./ Nor is there death for me/ Till Christ comes for the Judgment (*č'ur K'ristos kă datastan*)./ O Lord God,/ I call to you,/ Whatever you do/ Do not leave (*dzges*) me in the Rock of Van/ Till Christ comes for the Judgment,/ Makes provision for my soul (*Im*

26 Cf. Tk. *qiziš*, "hot, angry, excited."

xogu čarə eni).'/ God issued a command/ That he be left corporeally (*marmnavor*) in the Rock of Van/ Till Christ comes for the Judgment.// They say that on the night of Ascension/ The door of Mher's rock opens./ A man does not see; there is no command a man see./ A bride of one year saw him./ That bride was taking her cow to pasture./ The calf fled, she followed it, they fell into the rock./ The door of the rock opened and Mher came out from inside the rock./ The bride came home and reported the news./ Before they could come back there, the rock had closed.// There is no command a man see/ Till Christ comes for the Judgment."

13. *Sasma p'ahlivanner kam T'alor Davit' ev Mher*, recited by Zatik Xapoyenc' of Moks, recorded in 1898 by Bagrat Xalat'yanec' (sc 1, pp. 117–18).

"The earth grew old (*axt'iarac'av*)./ Mher mounted his horse, departed, rode around./ The horse sank into the ground as though into a hole./ Mher said,// 'Merciful, beneficent God,/ You commanded/ And the angel Gabriel came down but gave not death/ Till Christ comes for the Judgment./ Angel Gabriel,/ Cast me into the Rock of Van/ Until Christ comes for the Judgment.'// The angel Gabriel cast Mher into the Rock of Van/ Till Christ comes for the Judgment./ There was a girl./ They filled a kerchief full of eggs,/ Put it in the girl's hands and said to her,/ 'Take it to your godfather's house.'/ The girl departs, takes the kerchief, goes to the Rock of Šabał.²⁷/ She sees the door is open./ The girl goes there./ Mher brings her in, questions (*kə jrbə*') her, saying,/ 'Girl, give some grass to my horse. Let him eat.'/ The girl says,/ 'Let me have your lance (*əram*)./ I'll spear the grass with your lance/ And put it in front of the horse, so he can eat./ My hand can't reach that far: he's tall.'/ Mher says,/ 'He doesn't want it. My horse won't eat the grass.'/ Mher says, 'The world is still evil./ I cannot live in the world.'"

14. *Davit' ev Mher*, recited by Hovan of Moks, recorded by Garegin Hovsep'yan (sc 1, pp. 243–5).

"He arose, mounted up, and reached the plain of Van./ He looked over the plain of Van and saw/ There was a raven, it spoke (*Mek aḡrav kær, kə xuser*)./ He took out his bow and arrow, shot and struck the raven./ The raven was injured (*birindar*)./ The raven fled, he spurred his horse, went after it./ He reached a

27 This is the district of Van known as Šāh-bāyi: in 1995 Krikor Boghosian, whose mother was from there, told me she used to say that the waters of Lake Van were vexed on Fridays because Mher's sword was falling then into the water. See Russell 2001, 211 n. 58 (=Russell 2004, 1159).

rock and saw it was open, it was a storage-cave (*malaza*)./ He saw: the raven had entered the cave./ He turned himself and his horse away on the ground,/ But as he turned, the horse's hoof found no resting place on the ground and was buried./ It was high noon. The more he spurred/ The horse, the deeper it was buried, till evening./ He took the horse, rode into the cave, said,/ 'I'll wait till dawn, leave here, and go.'/ When he went in there,/ He dismounted and hitched his horse,/ The door came together and he remained inside./ He didn't come out again, God did not command (*amr*) that he come outside./ He remain there till at the end of the world the earth become firm (*kə kək'və*) and/ Hold up (*dayamiš*) beneath the horse's hooves.// Once a year the door of the cave (*herə*) opens./ Then light streams forth like Jerusalem (*inč' Erusatem lüs kə kat'ə*)./ The door of that cave opens./ And why does it open?/ For the sake of God's grace (*xat'və*)./ Manna from heaven falls there:/ Both he and his horse eat./ They eat once a year and are not hungry thereafter./ They call the name of that place Raven's Rock (*Agravu k'är*)./ Since the raven entered it,/ Because of that they call it Raven's Rock./ Once a year, in the month of Roses (*Gilan*)./ The urine of his horse comes out.// On the evening of Red Sunday (*Karmir kiraki*) when the Divine Liturgy is done,/ That evening a man says to his daughter,/ Get up and go to church (*žam*), light a candle, bless the fire (*oxnuk krak ar*). Go./ The girl goes outside, looks, and sees/ The light of a lamp is coming out of that rock./ The girl got up and went there hoping that was the church./ She went in, lit a lamp./ She turned and was about to go, the door came together./ The girl remained there./ She saw manna was coming from heaven./ Mher took it and ate, so did his horse, the girl too./ They were not hungry again till a year had elapsed./ On that day when one year had passed,/ The girl lit a lamp./ When the door opened, she came outside, took the lamp and went home./ Her father said, 'Girl,/ A whole year has passed, where have you been?'/ The girl said, 'Dad, didn't I go out just now,/ Light a lamp, and return?/ I didn't even sit down there.'/ He said, 'That house where you were, who was there?'/ She said, 'A man and his horse.'/ He said, 'What was there on the door?'/ She said, 'There was a walnut tree (*kök'və'car*) there; there was nothing else there.'/ She related some more, and said,/ 'A round thing came from heaven and I ate it./ I was hungry; he was hungry.'/ The girl was hungry for a year./ As soon as she ate it, she was full./ They realized it had been Mher and his horse."

15. *T'vat Davit' ev Mher*, recited by Łazar Hovakimenc' of Moks, recorded in 1899 by Artašes Abelyan (sc 1, p. 300).

"Mher left, went to his father's grave./ He sat down and cried./ He cried so hard, and called on God./ Davit' spoke, and said to Mher,/ 'What are you crying for?'/ He said, 'I have lost the lordship of Sasun.'/ He said:/ 'Son, let the hair down

over my head/ And flee from my face in shame./ There is no permission (*izin*) for me to come out./ God gives no command./ Go to the grove (*razir*) of Van, there is Raven's Rock (*Agrap'u k'är*)./ Enter within that rock./ Your bread is baked./ Your food is cooked, too./ Till Christ's coming (*Č'ür K'ristusä kälstyan*)./ When Christ comes,/ Sits upon a throne of light/ And separates the righteous and the wicked, one from the other./ That day you will come out.// He went and entered Raven's Rock./ Once a year his horse's urine comes out of the rock."

16. *Davit' ev Mher*, recited by Vardan of Moks, recorded by Sargis Haykuni (SC 1, pp. 377–8).

"Mher went. What did he do?/ He went and fell upon the deep grave./ There he cried much, and sang:/ 'My father, they have made me exiled of the house of Sasun./ My father, they have made me disinherited of the house of Sasun./ My father, they have made me bereft of the house of Sasun./ A voice comes from the grave of Davit':/ 'Mher, your horse cannot stand on the earth./ Mount your horse and go to Raven's Rock of Van (*Vana Atk'rp'u k'är*)./ Your place is there/ Till the unborn is born and the immortal dies (*č'ür ancin cnani, anmax merani*).// Mher arose, mounted up, went./ The rock opened and drew him in./ The rock came together, and he remained inside.// Twice a year the door opens/ And he takes a look (*t'amaša*) at the world./ One time it opens on Vardavař./ Mher child of Davit' comes out on the night of Ascension/ And goes a journey of forty days in one hour./ On the day the rock opens, he travels forty days over rocks:/ Wherever he happens on earth, his horse sinks in./ He cannot walk, and turns back./ On Ascension night Mher has two hours of time:/ For one he travels out, in the next he turns back.// The horse's shoe is the size of a big tray./ When it stamps on the earth, it will destroy the world.// They call Mher, child of Davit', Davit'-Mher.// An angel shod the horse of Davit'./ Davit' said, 'Shoe it well!'/ He replied, 'I'll shoe it so well/ That your horse's and your life (*ümr*) will be one.// The race of Davit' that of the demons (*Davt'i azg devästanniruc'i*)."

17. *Jořanc' tun*, recited by T'umas Petrosyan of Moks, recorded by Sargis Haykuni (SC 1, pp. 469–70).

"Davit' curses him: 'Woe, Mher!/ I ask of God that you be immortal (*anmax*)./ Let no heir come from you./ Your place, too, will be in a rock./ You will not see the world with your eyes (*Dü k'ü ač'k'öv axšar č'tisnas*)./ When you see the world, the world shall you destroy (*t'avris*).// Xandüt' saw Davit' had dried up./ She stretched forth her hand to bring Davit' out./ She saw his side and all his ones were shattered./ Xandüt' leaves Davit',/ Looks around for Mher, and Mher is gone, too./ Mher is clean lost./ She gets up, removes Davit',/ Goes and brings his brothers one by one;/ She brings priests, princes./ She gives them a place

to make a pit, has them all dig./ She pays out (*kə xarʃi*) the gold of Davit'/ Has a fine prayer and Divine Liturgy offered./ She herself eats no bread, says,/ 'May God destroy (*k'äki*) Sasun.'/ She is angry (*k'əṛəki*), mounts her horse,/ Hey, ho, wherever you are, I'm coming for you.// Sasun is the ruin that was destroyed."

18. *Sasna p'ahlevanner*, recited by Vardan Muxsi-Bazikyan of Moks, recorded in 1911 by Harut'yun Gilanyan of Moks (SC 1, p. 524).

"By God's command there is a voice: it says,/ 'My son (*mortun*), what can I do, what can I do?/ It is your father who has cursed you./ Go to Raven's Rock (*Agravu k'är*)./ God give you rest (*tävānum*);/ Tarry (*tävānis*) till the time of His coming./ Mher departs, goes to Raven's Rock./ By God's command the rock opens,/ Mher goes in (*k'ya hinə*) with his horse,/ The rock comes together, and it is finished (*kə ləməna*)."

19. *Sasna crer*, recited by Vardan Muxsi-Bazikyan, recorded in 1915 by Senek'erim Ter-Hakobyan (SC 1, p. 600).

"His mother said, // 'Your father has cursed you./ There is no entry for you into the earth./ Go into Raven's Rock (*Äkravu k'är*),/ Your rest (*dävānum*) will be there.// Mher went to Raven's Rock, the rock opened./ Mher went in, his horse went in, the rock came together.// And the sign (*nšanakn*) of it also/ Is that on Ascension his horse stales/ And it comes down the rock."

20. *Sasna crer*, recited by Manuk Harut'yunyan of Moks, recorded in 1933 by Karapet Melik'-Ohanjanyan (SC 1, pp. 647–8).

"The reply came to Sasun to Mher./ Mher goes forth to avenge (*t'ol*) his father./ He slaughters enemies (*zdüşmank'tir*), lays waste to the world (*axšar k'avirə*)./ Mher returns to Sasun, remains./ However long he lives, he doesn't die.// Mher sees a dream (*eraz*)./ In the dream they say to Mher,/ 'Mher, your father has cursed you:/ You will not see death, you will not see an heir./ Go within Raven's Rock (*Agravu k'är*)./ Remain there till Christ comes for the Judgment (*datas-tan*)./ Mher goes, remains in that rock,/ He is kept (*kə pähxkvə*) there, the rock comes together./ To this day, they say, he is there.// Now water comes out of that rock./ They say it is the water of Mher's horse.// This much we have heard."

21. *Davit' ev Mher*, recited by Mkrtič' Harut'yunyan of Šatax, recorded by Sargis Haykuni (SC 1, p. 700).

"He leaves, mounts K'ürkik Jalali, goes (*kə ha*)./ The grounds beneath the hooves of K'ürkik Jalali thunders (*kə t'nda*)./ Mher says, 'Hi ho, it's nothing (*boš*)./ The ground, too, has become old (*xalivorc'er i*)./ It cannot stand firm beneath the hooves of my horse./ By God's command, Mher goes,/ Reaches Raven's Rock

(*Akrp'u k'är*)./ The rock opens, Mher goes into the rock with his horse./ The rock comes together.// They say that when they reap rock and sift sand,/ At that time Mher will come out./ They say Crazy (*Del*)²⁸ Mher and his horse are both still alive./ Today, they say, that place has been made into a monastery (*vank'*)./ Every year on Ascension Day they go there on pilgrimage./ We've heard from many/ That from Friday to Friday his horse passes water (*jr'vack'*)./ The front of the rock gets wet./ Every man has seen it.// Forty times let us pray Lord have mercy for the mighty house of Sasun./ May it stand prosperous and glorious./ The High Mother of God of Marut'a over its foundations."

22. *T'lor Davit' ev Mher*, recited by Margarit Sargsyan of Gavaš, recorded in 1916 by Senek'erim Ter-Hakobyan (SC 1, pp. 932–3).

"He leaves, come close to the grave, says,/ 'Mother, arise. Mother, arise./ Of the house of Sasun they have deprived me./ His mother says,/ 'The times (*dävrana*) have fled my hands,/ The jewel has fallen from my face./ Ask your father./ He goes to his father's grave,/ Thrice he says in a song (*xat*),/ 'Father, arise. Father, arise./ Of the house of Sasun they have deprived me./ Father, arise. Father, arise./ Of the house of Sasun they have deprived me./ Father, arise. Father, arise./ Of the house of Sasun they have deprived me./ His father says,/ 'The times (*dävrana*) have fled my hands,/ The hair has fallen from my beard./ Your writing is written in Aleppo,/ Your place is Raven's Rock (*Akrp'u k'är*)./ You are an immortal son./ The world will be destroyed and rebuilt anew;/ When the earth can endure before your horse/ The world is yours (*Diynen k'ün*)./ He goes, cries before the cave of Raven's Rock./ The rock opens, he goes inside.// It is said,/ Now every year on Ascension there is a sign of him:/ His horse urinates, it appears on the rock./ When the world is destroyed once and rebuilt,/ He will emerge into view (*herevan*)."

23. *Sasna çrêr*, recited by Hambardzum-Xapo Grigoryan of Gavaš, recorded in 1916 by Senek'erim Ter-Hakobyan (SC 1, p. 1022).

"His mother says,/ 'No, son, do not kill [the men of Sasun]./ Mount your horse, go, ride around in the world./ As long as your horse's hooves don't sink, ride around freely./ When it sinks, you will stay in your place.// Mher travels around./ He goes to the realm of Van (*Vana axšar*), sinks in Raven's Rock (*Agrbu k'ärin meĵka xrvî*)./ And he remains until now."

28 According to the Glossary in SC 2, 727, *del* means "bitch" (*k'ac*); but I think it more likely that one should explain the word as Tk. *delli*, "crazy," cf. Delli Dumrul, the Polyphemos-like monster of the *Dede Korkut* epic.



FIGURE 1 *The author at the Gate of Mithra in Raven's Rock (Mheri duin/ Meher kapisi, Aġrawuc' k'ar), Van, Armenia, June 1994.*



FIGURE 2 *The Wild Man (Arm. vayri mard), S. Lazar, Mxit'arist Convent MS 1434, Venice (photo by Rachel Goshgarian).*

24. *Jořanc' tun kam Sasma c'ier*, recited by T'aio Kazaryan of Hayoc' Dzor, recorder unknown (SC 1, pp. 1085–6).

"He went in the morning to Sasun,/ Where he took his father's horse and weapons,/ Mounted up and went to the city of Aleppo./ He did not know the road where he was going./ He travelled till he came to mount Sip'an./ He passed by there and reached the plain of Van./ He was famished with hunger/ And asked God that He either fight him (*křiv m' ta*)/ Or take back what He had given (*amanat'*).// God sent seven angels on horseback/ To fight Mher./ They fought from midday until evening./ Mher lowered the Lightning Sword (*T'urn Kecakin*),/ Could not catch the angels,/ But the angels sore tormented Mher./ Mher raised his eyes to heaven and asked God/ That He open to Mher His compassion's gate./ He turned his eyes up to heaven/ And saw he had arrived beneath Raven's Rock (*Akřp'u k'är*)./ There the rock opened like a door:/ Mher entered, the door shut, he remained there./ He is there still./ His horse's urine from that rock/ Comes forth till now./ Three apples fell from heaven:/ One for the tellers, one for the hearers,/ One for those who give ear, Amen."

Bibliography

- Ben Amos, D. 2006. *Folktales of the Jews, Vol. 1: Tales from the Sephardic Dispersion*. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society.
- Boyle, J.A. 1976. "Mher in the Carved Rock." *Journal of Mithraic Studies* 1.2:107–18.
- Cavallo, A.S. 1998. *The Unicorn Tapestries at The Metropolitan Museum of Art*. New York: Abrams.
- Collins, F.B. 1901. Trans. "David of Sassun: National Epos of Armenia." In R. Arnot, F.B. Collins, and G. Sundukyan, *Armenian Literature*, 78–9. New York: Colonial.
- Feydit, F. 1964. Trans. *David de Sassoun: Épopée en vers*. Paris: Gallimard/Unesco.
- Ginzberg, L. 1928. *Genizah Studies, I*. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary.
- Levenson, J.D. 2006. *Resurrection and the Restoration of Israel: The Ultimate Victory of the God of Life*. New Haven: Yale UP.
- Mathews, T.F. 1993. *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*. Princeton: Princeton UP.
- Mkrtčyan, L.M. 1982. Ed. *Давид Сасунский: армянский народный эпос* (David Sasunc'i: Armenian national epic). Leningrad: Sovetskij Pisatel'.
- Russell, J.R. 1987. *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.
- . 1989. "The Craft and Mithraism Reconsidered." *Transactions, American Lodge of Research, Free and Accepted Masons* 18:15–27. [Repr. in idem 2004, 305–17]

- . 1994. "On the Armeno-Iranian Roost of Mithraism." In *Studies in Mithraism*, ed. J. Hinnells, 183–93. Rome: Bretschneider. [Repr. in idem 2004, 553–63]
- . 1995. "On Mithraism and Freemasonry." *Heredom* 4. Washington, D.C.: The Scottish Rite Research Society, 269–87. [Repr. in idem 2004, 641–59]
- . 1998a. "Armenian *awrhas*." *AAI* 19:37–9. [Repr. in idem 2004, 889–91]
- . 1998a. "Mithras in Stalinist Armenia." *Ararat Quarterly*. Spring: 45–6.
- . 1998b. "The Armenian Shrines of the Black Youth (*t'ux manuk*)." *Mus* 111:319–43. [Repr. in idem 2004, 925–49]
- . 1999. "Iran and Israel in the Armenian Epic of Sasun." In *Irano-Judaica IV*, ed. S. Shaked and A. Netzer, 111–21. Jerusalem. [Repr. in idem 2004, 1051–61]
- . 2000. *An Armenian Epic: The Heroes of Kašt (a tr. and comm. on K. Sital, Kašti kt'jer)*. Ann Arbor: Caravan.
- . 2001. "The Scepter of Tiridates." *Mus* 114:187–215. [Repr. in idem 2004, 1135–63]
- . 2001–2. "The Epic of the Pearl." *REA* 28:29–100. [Repr. in idem 2004, 1261–1332]
- . 2002. "An Epic for the Borderlands: Zariadris of Sophene, Aslan the Rebel, Digenes Akrites, and the Mythologem of Alcestis in Armenia." In *Armenian Tsopk/Kharpert*, ed. R. Hovannisian, 147–83. Costa Mesa: Mazda. [Repr. in idem 2004, 951–88]
- . 2002–3. "Epic in the Armeno-Iranian Marchlands: The Metamorphosis of a Genre." *JAS* 7:1:3–20. [Repr. in idem 2004, 1347–64]
- . 2003. Review of Stone 2002. *International Journal of the Classical Tradition*, 10.2:309–12.
- . 2004. *Armenian and Iranian Studies*. Cambridge, MA; Belmont: Harvard University, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Armenian Heritage, NAASR.
- . 2006–7. "Argawan: The Indo-European Memory of the Caucasus." *JAS* 8.2:110–47.
- . 2007. "The Shrine Beneath the Waves." *Res* 51:136–56. [Russian tr. in *Rossiia* 21 (2007):10–43].
- . 2013. "Hārūt and Mārūt: The Armenian Zoroastrian Demonic Twins in the *Qur'ān* Who Invented Fiction." In *Commentationes Iranicae: Sbornik statei k go-let'iyu V.A. Livshitsa*, ed. S. Tokhtasev and P. Luria, 469–480. St. Petersburg: Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Nestor-Historia.
- Shalian, A. 1964. Trans. *David of Sassoun: The Armenian Folk Epic in Four Cycles*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP.
- Stone, M.E. 2002. *Adam's Contract with Satan: The Legend of the Cheirograph of Adam*. Bloomington: Indiana UP.
- Surmelian, L. 1964. *Daredevils of Sassoun: The Armenian National Epic*. Denver: Alan Swallow.
- Tologian, A. 1961. Trans. *David of Sassoun: Armenian Folk Epic*. New York: Bookman Associates.

LANGUAGE OF DEMONS, LANGUAGE OF MEN.

James R. Russell,
Harvard University,
Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"It was Merlin... calling loud and intolerably glad above the riot of nonsense, *Qui Verbum Dei contempserunt, eis auferetur etiam verbum hominis*."

C.S. Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, New York: Scribner, 1996, p. 348.

The voices in this paper, from the discordant clamor of infernal tongues to angelic choirs singing the strains of *onomastica sacra*, to the prescriptions of Armenian magical manuscripts and the verses of the poets of England, acclaim Michael Stone in unison.¹

In his study "Language of gods and language of men: remarks on some Indo-European metalinguistic traditions,"² Calvert Watkins approaches a long-recognized problem in Homer and texts in Old Indic, Old Irish, and Old Norse: the poets cite the names men and gods give to different things. What men call the bird *kymindis*, the river Skamandros, and the giant Aigaiōn, for instance, the gods call *khalkis*, Xanthos, and Briareōs. In the *Śatapatha-Brāhmaṇa* (10.4.6.1), what men call *aśva-*, "horse"—the regular cognate of *equus*, *hippos*, etc., meaning "fast"—the *devas* call *hāya-*, meaning "impelled, driven". In Armenian the only word for a horse is *jī*, a cognate of the latter; while the reflex of **ekwos-* is *ēš*, "donkey". In this case the hierarchy has simply moved down one step: in the Avestan *Vīdēvdāt* (7.42), the donkey (*kara-*) is considered the least worthy *staora-*, "beast of burden", ranking below the horse.³ The "gods'" word is generally descriptive, charged, semantically marked, and belongs to an established lexicon of poets different from everyday speech though identifiably part of *known* speech. Thus, the Old Irish *Auraicept na n-Éces* ("Handbook of the Learned") distinguishes the various registers of poetic language from *berla Fene*, the "language of the Irish"; and in India *saṃskṛta-*, "perfected" speech, stands apart from *prakṛta-*, "la matière brute du langage".⁴

Specialists in the craft of oral poetry were taught these marked words, which set apart their compositions from everyday speech. They had to be recognized as such by an audience, and they had to produce an intended effect, for there to be any point in using them. The context of performance would thus be important: it could be sacral, in which case the marked terms, the "language of the gods", possess the power of *mantra*. Or the composition could be of solemnly social and historical importance: a heroic epic, for instance. The language of gods is a human invention, or at least is known only through the intermediary of consciously-spoken human language. But it is socially and psychologically elevated above everyday discourse and is intended to convey the audible sound of another world than this. This is a world temporally located in the past to which great deeds and events of collective importance to a community of listeners belong, a world in which supernatural beings were not only audible, but visible and tangible, the sounds of their voices alone enduring thereafter in poetry, but alive, a point of connection for mortals with them, with

¹ This paper was delivered as a lecture to the University of Manchester in November 2009. I thank my host, Dr. Alan Williams, and other colleagues there, for their extraordinary hospitality. I am grateful also to my home institution, Harvard University, for the generous terms of a semester's medical leave following a road accident that enabled me to recuperate, work, and travel to Britain.

² Calvert Watkins, *Selected Writings*, II, ed. by Lisi Oliver, Innsbruck: Innsbrucker Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft, 1994, pp. 456-472.

³ Watkins, pp. 460-462. On possible reasons for this demotion in Armenian, see J.R. Russell, "Two Armenian Toponyms: Hrasekaberd and Išayr," *Annual of Armenian Linguistics* 10, 1988, pp. 47-53, repr. AIS, pp. 281-287.

⁴ Watkins, pp. 461, 467.

their immortality. Some of the ancients understood this as artifice: something sacred (*semnon*) is present in Homer's lies (*pseudes*) and winged machination in the tale of Odysseus, says Pindar (*Nem.* 7.22-23). "Ephemeral! What is anyone? What is he not? The dream of a shadow is man. But when the god-given radiance comes upon them, a shining light rests on men and their lifetime is sweet." (*Pyth.* 8.95-97) It is not just victory in the games that Pindar praises here; it is the creation and perception of the works of the poetic imagination. So even when it is recognized that the reproduction of divine speech is artifice, that art of it provokes a transcendent mental experience recognized as important and valuable to man's social and personal existence.

The language of the gods is in poetry semantic, linguistic; but many Indian *mantras*, and *nomina sacra* in the magical texts of other traditions, are only partially so, or not at all. These are sounds to which a meaning may secondarily and arbitrarily be attached; but they are not natural words. By contrast with Indian usage the Zoroastrian sacred scripture, the *Avesta*, which is linguistic and intelligible in its entirety, is called *maθra-spənta*-, "sacred *mantra*". Martin Schwartz, in a series of pioneering studies, has demonstrated that the text at the core of the *Avesta*, the *Gāthas* ("Hymns") of the Prophet Zarathustra himself, consists of an intricate array of deliberate plays on the sounds comprising words, distributed into symmetric patterns in such a way that whole passages generate others, with phrases flowering from phrases and whole hymns emerging as mirror-images, or perhaps the closed wings of a butterfly opening, the text becoming an inner- and outer-faceted jewel.⁵ But the Zoroastrian mantras are semantic and the Indian ones are not: the term has evidently evolved in the two closely kindred language groups in different ways, as much else in their vocabularies has done.⁶

When we consider the divine language in most Gnostic texts in the Mediterranean world, it is much as in India— often entirely vocalic. Sometimes symbolic meanings are assigned to vowels: in the *Pistis Sophia* Christ pronounces the mystic word IAŌ— a rendering of the Hebrew pronunciation of the Tetragrammaton— and goes on to explain that the All came forth in *iota* and will come again in *alpha*; completion will arrive in the last letter of the syllable and alphabet, *omega*.⁷ There is something of Christ's assertion that He is A and Ω here; and one suspects it was as much the sound of IAO as its meaning in Hebrew or its symbolism in the New Testament that made it popular. But more often the mystical sounds in these texts are unintelligible strings, of the kind Paul warns religious ecstatic practitioners to avoid (1 Cor. 14.7,9).⁸ If these sounds are not semantic, then they must produce some other effect.

⁵ See, most recently, M. Schwartz, "How Zarathushtra Generated the Gathic Corpus: Inner-textual and Intertextual Composition," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 16, pp. 53-64. I have benefited from the insights of Prof. Schwartz, and from the pioneering work of Saussure on the logogram and *locus princeps*, in an analysis of such features in Armenian poetics and epic: the song of the birth of Vahagn, other passages of the Tigranid cycle in Xorenac'i, and later texts including magical ones— in "Magic Mountains, Milky Seas, Dragon Slayers, and Other Zoroastrian Archetypes," delivered as one of the Ratanbai Katrak Lectures at the University of Oxford, 3 November 2009 (in publication in the volume of the lectures, ed. by Elizabeth Tucker and Theo Van Lint).

⁶ The Sogdian word for a magician, derived from **manthra-kāra*-, a maker of mantras, can imply spells that employ nonsense words. The parallel Arm. l-w, *margarē*, has come in Christian usage to mean a "prophet"— one whose words are powerful, not because of their sound but because of the importance and authoritativeness of the esoteric information— from God, about the future— that they convey. Zoroastrianism and Christianity are similarly ethical and monotheistic faiths; so the semantic development in Armenian might be seen as analogous to the process that produced the Zoroastrian usage.

⁷ The significance of sounds as beginnings and endings according to their position in the alphabet, with alpha first and omega last, confers upon them a spatial power: Davies, p. 13, notes that the demon of envy, Autothith, in *Test. Sol.*, can be banished by writing alpha, then omega. That is, the start and finish either confine and bind him, or else surround the worshipper and exclude him. So the word of a spell acquires, as it were, the characteristics of a living being: its sound is heat, breath, motion; its placement, a dimensional location. In *Test. Sol.* 4.81, it is possible the author adumbrates this idea when he explains that a certain female demon is generated from "a voice of the echo of a black heaven, emitted in matter" (Duling, p. 953).

⁸ Patricia Cox Miller, "In Praise of Nonsense," *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman*, ed. A.H. Armstrong, New York: Crossroad, 1986, pp. 481-505, esp. p. 485.

Roman Jakobson once observed, “The proverb is the largest coded unit occurring in our speech and at the same time the shortest poetic composition.” It thus possesses both marked words and significant sound patterns allied to these. He then looked at the related phenomenon of children’s cryptic words and expressions, and found these to imbue both signifier and signified with a quasi-supernatural character, “a certain kind of shamanism.” These observations on relatively simple phenomena serve as a jumping off point for the consideration of very strange and surprising examples of cryptic speech. He cites a spell for protection against *rusalki*, mermaids, published in 1908 by the poet Alexander Blok: *Ау, ау, шихарда кавда! Шивда, вноза, митта, миногом./ Каланди, инди, акуташма биташ./ Окитоми ми нуффан, зидима.* The Flagellant (*Khlysty*, Хлысты) sectarians of pre-Revolutionary Russia used to say while worshipping, *Киндра фендра киравеца*; the first two words of one of their invocations, *рентре фентре*, had been recorded in 1747; and in 1914 Jakobson’s sister, seeing a sectarian stroking a cat, asked him what he was doing and he said, “I am stroking the *kyndra* on the *fendra*” (Кындру по фендре глажу). He refused to be drawn when asked whether he knew what a *kiravetsa* was, averring only that it was an old, wise word.

“If nonsense is an art, it must have its own laws of construction,” wrote Elizabeth Sewell; and from the Russian examples it is evident that the importance accorded to what are apparently nonsense words was sufficient for them carefully to be handed down over centuries. That is, even as nonsense words, as *nomina barbara*, they were marked and remembered. Jakobson finds typical of the dossier phonemes unusual to Russian, like *f*, and clusters like *n*, plus *t* or *d*, followed by *r*.⁹ I would see in terms like *akutashma* an imitation of Turkic noun-formation; with pseudo-Turkic verbal forms in the past tense in *kalandi*, *indi*, and *bitash*. Russians have lived for at least a millennium in close proximity to speakers of Uralo-Altaic and Finno-Ugric— the “nearest Others”, whose speech, subliminally registered, will play a role in the case of the language of a demon, to be considered presently. One would also suggest that words ending in *-andra*, *-indra*, and *-endra*, as well as, perhaps, those in the spell in *-arda* and *-avda*, might sound Greek, and carry overtones of Orthodox sanctity, to a Russian hearer. They are phonetically pleasant, not harsh; and this, too, seems a marker of non-semantic words associated with divinity. The *Khlysty* invented their language of the gods from what they heard. It had to sound pleasant, to establish meter and rhyme, and to have associations with languages thought to be good, or cryptically powerful, or both.

Jakobson drew from the known and relatively easy environment of Russian riddles and rhymes in approaching the more arcane territories of *nomina sacra*. In England, the free inventions of Oxonian philologists in the playing fields of fantasy and science fiction can be similarly illustrative, a way into more serious realms. The divine language C.S. Lewis invented for his science fiction trilogy is strikingly similar to Jakobson’s *-V-ndra*’s: the names of the holy planets Mars and Venus are *Malacandra* and *Perelandra*; while the evil being holding Earth in sway, though his name ends the same way, contains the Greek name of Ouroboros, the satanic worm that grips its tail in its jaws: *Ouroborindra*. In Lewis’ Narnia books, the villains pay for their goods in Crescents and worship an idol, Tash, whose name just happens to mean “rock” in Turkish; he is protected by the Tashbān— the suffix for “protector” is Persian. Such a mixture of Turkish and Persian, with representations of Islam, that faith symbolized by the crescent moon, as idolatrous, provides a concise picture of the Ottomans. J.R.R. Tolkien, who admitted in an essay that making up languages was a sort of private vice, has his nice elves speak a sort of Finnish, full of vowels and soft, rolling consonantal clusters; while the rest of the good creatures of Middle Earth are decidedly Old English, Germanic types. Finnish is a positively marked “near Other” to Norsemen. But the nasty orcs and their ilk jabber in a harsh, agglutinative pseudo-Turkish that is used also for the sinister spell of the Ring. And Tolkien, like his friend and fellow don, resorts to a known, marked word in Greek for the name of the arch-villain: not Ouroboros the worm this time, but its close relative Sauron, the serpent. Both Oxford dons thus mark the dangerous Other as Muslim— the powerful Ottoman Turk at the gates of Vienna!— using strongly marked terms from a canonical, sacred language for him as well; and their good or divine fantasy languages are soft, and sonorous. When the *Lord of the Rings* cycle was filmed, the

⁹ Roman Jakobson, “Retrospect,” *Selected Writings*, IV, The Hague: Mouton, 1966, pp. 637-641.

director presumably realized Finnish would mean nothing to most viewers, so the elves speak in lilting Irish accents.¹⁰

C.S. Lewis and Tolkien used various living languages as sources for the invented languages in their works of fiction; and Jakobson studied the cult language of Russian sectarians. Both the English writers and the Slavic Flagellants seem to have liked the ending *V-ndra*; and this very pattern occurs within or at the end of nearly every word of a long glossolalic passage recited in isolation by a Presbyterian minister in America in the second half of the 20th century and transcribed by the sociolinguist William J. Samarin.¹¹ He analyzes a number of written glossolalic terms used by the Russian sectarian Molokans, and suggests that “some of these look more like borrowings from a non-Slavic language than glossolalia.” That is, the speech of alien neighbors influenced, subliminally or otherwise, the *voces mysticae* of the Molokan texts. And these words are no more random nonsense than the terms used by the Flagellants: a Molokan wishing to address the congregation in a state of inspiration must apply first to the presiding pastor with the rhyming, glossolalic phrase *Parginal assurginal (yuzgoris)*. Many Molokans lived in Russian Armenia in the Tsarist period; so when one encounters glossolalic phrases such as *Tarifta rafti khental*, cited by Samarin, one is tempted to see in them the ghosts of Turkish *tarifta* “on the side” and Persian *rafti*, “you went”.

A late Byzantine text, *De daemonibus*, falsely attributed to the great Michael Psellus, describes a possessed woman “babbling” (*alalazousa*) “in some barbaric tongue” (*barbaron tina glössan*). It is found to be Armenian; so an Armenian exorcist, sword in hand, expels the spirit molesting her with invocations in his own language. The woman remembers later a shadowy female creature with disheveled hair (*enemomenas... komas*)— the typical coiffure of a demon. Who is she? One of the demons interrogated in the *Testament of Solomon*, 13.1, Obyzouth, has disheveled hair. But she is unlikely to have been Armenian. When in an Armenian prayer three saints confront the child-stealing witch, called Lilith by Jews but Al, literally “the scarlet one”, by Armenians, Iranians, and Central Asian Turks, *maz nora ibrew zōji jar jioy*, “her hair (was) like a serpent, a horse’s mane.” Since the hair of the mane of a saint’s mount is elsewhere invoked as a good and protective thing in Armenian prayers, it is possible the copyist, in altering his text, was enjoying the buzzing, alliterative properties of /maz... zodzi dzār dziól/. And later on her hair is additionally described: *maz nora orpēs varazi xozī*, “her hair (was) like a boar pig’s” — stiff and bristly.¹² This phrase, too, has an alliterative pattern in the sound “z”; and sibilants and buzzing noises tend to be used in demonic speech. Milton has his fallen angels hiss, like the snake in Eden; the *Qur’an* has the jinn “whisper” (Arabic *waswasa*); and in the manuscripts from Qumrān the Hebrew term for “incantation” is *divrei lahaš*, “words of whispering.” The Armenian text reaches for a familiar effect, perhaps.

But taken together, the descriptions leave little doubt that this widely known and very dangerous female spirit, the spurned first wife of Adam, had disheveled hair. She is also, invariably, pitch black in Armenian manuscripts and printed books. And the saints command and abjure her in good *grabar*, the Classical Armenian of the Divine Liturgy and Scripture. This is a Lilith-like demoness, then, and she is one who was well known to Byzantine Greeks. As for her tongue, the situation facing the relatives of the

¹⁰ For a discussion of the two writers and the larger implications of their fictional inventions, see J.R. Russell, “News from Zembla,” a review article on John Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War*; Elena Obatnina, *Tsar’ Asyka i ego poddannye*; etc., *The New Leader*, New York, Summer 2004.

¹¹ William J. Samarin, *Tongues of Men and Angels*, New York: Macmillan, 1972, pp. 77, 184-185. On pp. 83-84, Samarin argues that his Presbyterian informant is reducing to glossolalia the sound patterns that come most naturally to him. But this surely cannot be the case for the Russians who produced *indra*-patterns. Rather, I think both groups echo sounds from what they believe to be “ancient” or “sacred” speech. Samarin is closer to the mark, then, when he declares that “glossolalia is a linguistic symbol of the sacred” (p. 231).

¹² Sargis Harut’yunyan, ed., *Hay hmayakan ev žotovrdakan atot’k’ner* (English title: *Armenian Incantations and Folk Prayers*), Erevan: Erevan State University Press, 2006, pp. 130-131. This indispensable and meticulous compilation is marred, as is so often the case with recent scholarship from Armenia, by the failure to credit most Western scholarship in the field under study, the apparent presumption being that savants abroad adhere to a malign agenda.

possessed woman in Constantinople, probably some time early in the fifteenth century, cannot have been unprecedented: Clement of Alexandria in his *Stromateis*, 1.21.142, sensibly observes that people possessed by demons do not speak their own language, but that of the demons who have possessed them. So it was to be expected that a Byzantine possessor-spirit might be babbling in something other than medieval Greek. Still the Armenophone demon so impressed Samuel Taylor Coleridge that he noted it in a gloss to *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, 1816: it inspired the *genius loci* that pursues the unlucky slayer of the albatross.¹³ The only other malign supernatural being who made the transition from Armenia to English literature, to my knowledge, is the Zoroastrian archdemon Ahreman: Lord Byron translated the section on him in the *Ét c'atandoc* ("Refutation of Sects") of the fifth-century heresiologist Eznik of Kolb.¹⁴

Why is it that the demon inhabiting the Greek woman spoke Armenian? The Armenians, after the Greeks, were the largest ethnic group in Constantinople before the Ottoman conquest; and the second largest and sometimes largest Christian minority thereafter. They were neither remotely foreign — was not John Tzimisces himself an Armenian? — nor native; neither Orthodox — the Armenian Church has not since early mediaeval times been in communion with the Greeks and Russians — nor mere unbelievers. They were to Byzantine Greeks the *nearest aliens*, the closest Other, inhabiting that dangerous liminal space where the foreign language heard was common enough for it to penetrate the unconscious of a Greek. But it was not a language one liked, or was likely to learn, so it could be the speech of one's demons — as the Turkish saying has it, *Rum ve Ermeni dost olmaz*, "Greeks and Armenians can never be friends." And although the good islanders of Naxos call some demons after Jews and Arabs, the Nereid called *Arménis*, "the Armenian woman", or *Armenída* in modern Greek, is perhaps most popularly known to this day. Demons often speak — or in spells, are spoken to — either in one's own sacred tongue, as in exorcistic rites, or, as in the case above, in the tongue of the near other, a language marked by perceptions of fear, power, and negativity. Yet it is apparent from the story in *De daemonibus* that an Armenian exorcist was sought and found by the woman's family and he agreed to help them: the borders between people of different groups tend to be much more porous in magic than in other religious situations, even where hostility between those groups is common.

There is no hard and fast rule in this, and it is hard to see how there could be, since we deal after all, not with phonological or morphological aspects of language susceptible to the application of scientific law, but highly subjective and emotional responses to the cultural aspects of language instead. Idris Shah, who comments upon Obizuth, she of the disheveled hair mentioned above (he describes her merely as a dark woman with green eyes), notes in connection with the *nomina sacra* and *barbara*, take your pick, in *Test. Sol.*, about which we will have more to say presently: "It is common, however, for 'Words of Power' to be apparently meaningless, and few occultists interest themselves in matters of research."¹⁵ He does say "apparently". Even if one cannot produce an infallible law, there must be a discoverable logic in any speech

¹³ See J.R. Russell, "A Scholium on Coleridge and an Armenian Demon," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 10, 1998-99, 2000, pp. 63-71, repr in J.R. Russell, *Armenian and Iranian Studies* (=AIS), Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9, Cambridge, MA, 2004, pp. 989-997.

¹⁴ Byron did something that would have horrified the pious Archbishop and confirmed the poet's Mekhitarist tutors in *grabar* at San Lazzaro, Venice, in their suspicions he was mad: he presented Eznik's Arhmn/Haramani, the Frightful Spirit and enemy of our Creator Ahura Mazda as a romantic hero! This sort of backfiring was typical of its time — the Romantics made of the Satan of *Paradise Lost* more of a positive figure than Milton meant him to be; and Russian Satanists canonized a translation from the English as their own anti-Scripture (see Neil Forsyth, *The Satanic Epic*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003; and Valentin Boss, *Milton and the Rise of Russian Satanism*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991, which Forsyth seems to have missed). In our own day, H.P. Lovecraft's fictional *Nekronomicon*, with its invocations in a guttural demonic speech to the dangerous extraterrestrial monsters Yog Sothoth, Cthulhu, and so on, is believed by hopeful or credulous readers of his fantasies to be authentic: I was once asked by the Harvard Library to field a query about the book from England, since Lovecraft mentions a copy in Widener. Others have invented and published "fake" *Nekronomika* (but what is a fake of a fiction?) meant to be used in satanic rites.

¹⁵ Sayed Idries Shah, *The Secret Lore of Magic: Books of the Sorcerers*, New York: Citadel, 1958, pp. 215, 221.

act, including glossolalia and written nonsense, and a poetics to texts of the same. (And, not being an occultist, I interest myself in matters of research!)

So, if one looks, for instance, at Arabic Muslim magic, there are plenty of meaningful words as well as phonetically interesting nonsense. Of the meaningful variety, the *Basmalah* formula, “In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate,” is the *incipit* of the canonical text in the sacred language, and plays a significant role in invocations. Mystic words, such as the names assigned to the seven sleepers of Ephesus, the *ahl al-kahf*, are often corruptions of Greek or pseudo-Greek: Doqīānōs, Kafšatīthios, Sūs, and their dog, Qiṭmīr. I find that others so identified are quite obviously Middle Persian, though: Marnōš and Šādnōš are men whose immortality (*-anōš*) belongs to Mithra (Mihr) and joy (*šadr*). Such Iranisms crop up in the Aramaic magical texts produced by Jews, Christians, and others in Sasanian Mesopotamia; so their presence in Arabic may be the persistence of the pre-Islamic pattern, allowing a sense of the sheer geographical and temporal range of the encounters of Muslim magicians.

Jews were to Muslims both a feared reminder that the religion of the latter in some sense was secondary, derivative of another; and, not infrequently, a degraded community of despised *dhimmis*. And of course Jews retained their old reputation around the Mediterranean as magicians. So Hebrew figures strongly in Arab magic: *Meṭaṭrōn* — a name assigned in Kabbala to Enoch — is hailed as the chief of the angels; and the unvowelled formula AHYA ŠRAHYA ADWNAY AŠBAWT AL ŠDAY is easily read as *Ehyeh Ašer Ehyeh, Adonai Šavā’ōt, El Šaddai*, “I am that I am, Lord of hosts, Almighty God.”¹⁶ Hebrew, and pseudo-Hebrew, is a common language of spells and *nomina sacra* from Late Antiquity on: one encounters often in Greek magical texts ΠΙΠΙΙ, a rough copy of the appearance in the square Hebrew characters of the Second Temple period of the Tetragrammaton; and the mystic syllable IAO is an approximation of the pronunciation of the same. Again there is a continuation of older patterns: as in other contexts, so in magic antiquity, or the semblance thereof, confers prestige and, what is more important since magic is supposed to work, credibility.

But another, perhaps more important reason for the particular popularity of Hebrew amongst magicians, must have been the cycle of legends about king Solomon, in which his magical seal and knowledge of and power over demons are the pre-eminent themes. The figure of Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd — Solomon — in the *Qur’ān*, for instance, derives from Rabbinic sources in which his magical exploits were fully formed: he compels the *jinn* to build shrines, he lapses into idolatry and is punished by having his throne occupied till his repentance by another being in his likeness, and so on (34.12, 13; 38.34, 35, 40). Later tradition fleshes out this lore: there are 72 demons, and it is a *jinn* named Šaxr who both usurps the throne and finds the pebble called Samur, that is the Hebrew Šamīr-worm to cut the stones of the Temple. For his magical prowess, his magnificence, and the hubristic behavior that leads to his fall, Solomon is compared, extra-canonically, to the ancient Iranian epic king Jamšīd, a figure who derives proximally from the Zoroastrian scripture, the Avesta.¹⁷ This is an important parallel; and we shall return to it presently.

One of the most important and widespread texts of demonology in general, and concerning Solomon’s intercourse with the demons in particular, is *Test. Sol.*, mentioned earlier.¹⁸ Since it will be seen

¹⁶ See Tewfik Canaan, “The Decipherment of Arabic Talismans,” in Emilie Savage-Smith, ed., *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004, pp. 125-177, pp. 129, 139, 145.

¹⁷ J. Walker, “Sulaymān ibn Dāwūd,” *Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd ed., Leiden: Brill, 2009, s.v.

¹⁸ On the text in the general context of magical literature, see most recently Owen Davies, *Grimoires: A History of Magical Books*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009; on the enduring popularity of the text in the West, see Sarah Iles Johnston, “The Testament of Solomon from Late Antiquity to the Renaissance,” in J. Bremmer and Veenstra, eds., *The Metamorphosis of Magic from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period*, Leuven, 2002. For a complete translation and commentary, see D.C. Duling, *Testament of Solomon*, in James H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, Vol. 1, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1983, pp. 935-987. On the development in literature of the image of Solomon, see Pablo A. Torijano, *Solomon the Esoteric King: From King to Magus, Development of a Tradition*, Leiden: Brill, 2007 (I am indebted for this very useful reference to the friend and colleague whom this volume felicitates: Professor Michael Stone of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel.)

to be of some importance in Armenian tradition, too, it merits detailed description here. The text is in Greek, composed probably around the third century AD, and the first papyrus fragment dates to the sixth century;¹⁹ but the roots are very much older and there was probably a Hebrew prototype. Hellenistic Judaism elaborated Solomon's status as an epic king, if not a holy man, and a thaumaturge; and he comes to be regarded as an exorcist by about the first century BC, perhaps because of his father David's ability by his music to expel evil spirits (1 Samuel 16.14-23). The formulaic question *Mt ata?* ("Who are you?") that introduces each colloquy with a demon in *Test. Sol.* goes back to apocryphal Psalms found in Qumran Cave 11. The text has been plausibly dated as far back as the third century AD, but Torijano prefers a fourth-century date.²⁰

It seems to consist of two original parts: a "complex and comprehensive demonology is inserted within the haggadic framework of the labors of the demons on the Temple."²¹ The framing narrative "in exorcisms and magical praxis usually furnishes an 'historical' context for the technique to be explained." Structurally it conforms, with some differences, to the narratives preceding incantations that state the mythical basis of the magical operation, its legitimizing and ennobling history, the testimony of its efficacy. These combinations of story and spell were called *Legendenzauber* by Grimm and later writers have retained this useful term of categorization. The story in *Test. Sol.* would seem, therefore, to have been added somewhat apologetically to a work whose primary purpose was practical magic; so "the wisdom tradition has been changed into a power tradition."²² And from the simple query "Who are you?" evolves the questionnaire: 1. Who are you?/ What is your calling? 2. Tell me in what sign of the Zodiac you reside. 3. What are your deeds?/ What is your business? 5. Which angel counteracts you?²³ The demon is then duly sealed and employed on the construction crew of the *Bet ha-Miqdāš*.

The *Test. Sol.* Begins, then, with a demon named Orniās sapping of energy an unnamed boy who somehow inspires the builders of the Temple. The archangel Michael gives Solomon a ring with which to summon and interrogate the demons and to force them to work on the Temple. Among these is Asmodeus, Heb. Ašmedai—the only Iranian demon named in Scripture, of Wrath: *Aēšma daēva*, Mr. *Xešm dēw*. The potent remedy against him, the burning liver and gall of a fish, is known from *Tobit*, an apocryphal book steeped in Iranian themes and related to *Jonah*.²⁴ And in *Test. Sol.* the demon avers that his principal function is to harm women's marriage and child-bearing, which is what he does in *Tobit*. Solomon then falls in love with a foreign woman, practices idolatry for her sake, loses his kingdom, and writes his testament thereafter, in a repentant mood. The details of the story are richly elaborated in Rabbinic lore. Asmodeus, for instance, is known to divide his time between visits to the academy on high (the *Yešiva šel Ma'ala*) and earthly Jewish houses of study. Upon arrival on this planet, he drinks from a mountain spring which he then caps with a big stone. Solomon sends Benaia ben Yehoiada to empty the well and refill it with wine. The demon comes, sniffs the spring suspiciously, but gives in to thirst and falls asleep drunk: he is chained with a magic seal and brought to the king, for whom he finds the tiny worm *Šamīr* to cut the stones for the Temple. When Solomon credulously lends the demon his ring, the latter promptly casts him hundreds of parasangs into the desert and sits on the throne of Israel till the king's Ammonite lover Na'ama (by the way, the Na'ama of Gen. 6.1-2, according to the *Zohar*, is Asmodeus' mother!) finds the ring in the belly of a fish: here is a Jonah-like detail, perhaps with the *topos* of the ring of Polycrates thrown in for good measure. She returns her Israelite paramour, who has been wandering as a beggar and praying for mercy in the interim, to power.

Asmodeus also comments upon human vanities with weary disgust: he sees, for instance, a man who he knows will die in a week's time asking a cobbler to make him shoes to last seven years; he overhears the prattling of a fortune-teller and clairvoyant who is unaware that he is sitting above buried

¹⁹ See Henry Maguire, ed., *Byzantine Magic*, Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1995, p. 127.

²⁰ Torijano, pp. 41-52.

²¹ Torijano, p. 54.

²² Torijano, p. 57.

²³ Torijano, p. 59.

²⁴ See J.R. Russell, "God is Good: On Tobit and Iran," *Iran and the Caucasus* V, Tehran and Erevan, 2001, pp. 1-6, repr. *AIS*, pp. 1129-1134.

treasure.²⁵ The demon comes across as an intelligent, grumpy but rather endearing supernatural being; and in Jewish tradition he is transformed into an entirely positive figure. A chronicler of the massacre of the Jews of Mainz by the Crusaders in 1095 mentions that according to an ancient book (*sefer yašān*) he read, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the guise of three old men walked the streets before the Christian murderers came, reciting *Kaddish*, the prayer for the dead. Ašmedai and some other demons decided to fight on the side of the innocent people of Israel, and in the ensuing pogrom the king of the demons was killed: *qibla 'aleihem dtn shomayim ū-fa'alā bā-sōd še-Ašmedai, mālka dā-šēdei, bā bā-ḥel gadōl liqrāt ha-sōn'im ū-lā-hilāhēm bā 'ad ha-Yehūdīm, vā-nātan lā-Yehūdīm sīman: im yihyeh ha-dam adom yihyeh tōv, ve-im yihyeh yārōq, mā še-hāyāh, hāyāh. Vā-xēn mās' ū lā-Ašmedai neherag 'imāhēm.* "They received upon themselves the judgment of Heaven and acted upon the secret that Ašmedai, king of the demons, comes with a great host against the enemy, to fight on the Jews' behalf; and he gave the Jews a sign: If the blood will be red then that is good; but if it is green, then what is done is done, and so they found Ašmedai slain with them [the Jews]."²⁶ *Adom*, "red", may be a pun on Edom, the code word for Rome: that is, if the Catholic Crusaders are defeated and cut down, it will be good; but if green blood, i.e., demonic ichor, is shed, then let God's will be done. Unfortunately, the host of Asmodeus was no match for the Crusaders. But in Jewish folklore he had children and grandchildren, who survived in the community of Israel.

The unusually sympathetic portrayals of Asmodeus in Jewish tradition, where the arch-demon can fairly be said to have been de-demonized—so fully was he assimilated into the cosmology of an omnipotent God and made a servant of the latter—may help us to understand a strange detail of Zoroastrian polemic. In the ninth-century religious compendium in Pahlavi known as the *Dēnkard*, or "Acts of the Faith", we are informed that the Zoroastrian dragon-man and exemplar of misrule, Aži Dahāka, Middle Persian Dahāg, Persian Zahhāk, who overthrew the great but hubristic king of the Iranians Yima Xšaeta, Persian Jamšīd, expressed ten bad desires—presumably, the Decalogue—in opposition to Yima's ten good counsels, and *ōraytā ī jahūdīh bun nibēg kardan, ud őrūšlem dēšīdan padeš dāštan, dahāg frādōm ō awrahām ī jahūdān dastwar, ud az awrahām ō mōše ī narm paywand*, "made the Torah, the fundamental Scripture of Judaism, and built Jerusalem to keep it in. Dahāg [gave it] to Abraham, the Jews' first chief; and from Abraham [it went] to Moses of the soft tradition."²⁷ The "soft tradition", Prof. Shaul Shaked suggests, is scornfully contrasted to the strong one of the Mazdeans; and we may extend this strategy of derisive oppositionalism also, one thinks, to the strange choice of a demonic being as the negative counterpart of Yima. If Solomon was in Muslim tradition to be likened to Jamšīd, and indeed had built the Temple at Jerusalem with the assistance of an arch-demon, then Jamšīd's adversary Dahāg would be the likely candidate for chief contractor, a stand-in for Asmodeus, Demon of Wrath. Wrath itself, *xēšm*, though personified, even in the *Gathās* of Zarathustra seems to be an abstract power that infects all the demons rather than a being around whom a mythological character can be constructed. In Georgian, the Iranian loan-word *hešmak-i* becomes the term for a demon in general; and demonolaters are called by Eznik (the Classical Armenian writer mentioned above, whom Byron translated) **hešmaka-pašt*. The Mazdean polemicist will perhaps have wanted someone more concrete; and Dahāg, regarded in any case as a *tāz*, an Arab, will have fit the bill well—for even though throughout the Sasanian period the Jews were the exemplars of the monism that the dualist Iranians disliked, an attack on them composed after the fall of the dynasty could also be read by the Zoroastrians of the ninth century as an oblique criticism of the Arab Muslim conquerors of their country.

One might perhaps propose yet another reason for the association of Dahāg with Jerusalem. After defeating the dragon-tyrant, Farēdūn imprisons him in mount Damāvand. In MS Ouseley Add. 176, the Bodleian Library, Oxford, fol. 30r, Dahāg, Pers. Zohhak, is shown, not being chained or tied up, but being

²⁵ See Hayim Nahman Bialik and Yehoshua Hana Ravnitzky, eds., *The Book of Legends: Sefer Ha-Aggadah*, tr. by William G. Braude, New York: Schocken, 1992, pp. 123-131; M. Hutter, "Asmodeus," in J. van der Toorn et al., eds., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Leiden: Brill, 1995, p. 199; Duling, pp. 948-949.

²⁶ See Gershom Shalom/Scholem, "*Perāqīm ḥadašīm me- 'inyānei Ašmedai ve-Liltit*," *Tarbiz* 19, p. 161.

²⁷ See Shaul Shaked, "Zoroastrian Polemics against Jews in the Sasanian and Early Islamic Period," in S. Shaked and A. Netzer, eds., *Irano-Judaica II*, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1990, pp. 85-104, esp. pp. 88-89, 93, cit. Dk. 3.227.15, 3.288.1.

crucified— with nails through each outstretched arm and in each hanging foot. This scene is not unique in Persian art.²⁸ Could not such a detail have been associated with the Crucifixion? Pagans regarded the divinization of Our Lord, Whom Jewish sources scornfully deride as “the Hanged One”, as worthy of scornful ridicule, not because of His Incarnation but because of the intensely humiliating manner of His execution. Crucifixion was a punishment for slaves and bandits— and did not Christ, crucified between two bandits, ask at Gethsemane why He was being arrested with swords and staves as though He were a bandit? Pre-Islamic Persians shared the same view as the pagans; and Muslim doctrine, borrowing from Docetist heresy, simply denies that Christ perished on the Cross at all. Another reason, too, for the association of Dahāg with Jerusalem, may be proposed. Although there are Iranisms in the Talmud, and anecdotes about affable relations between Sasanian kings and Jewish rabbis, the two forms of Gnosticism most strongly Iranian in their culture and historical setting, Manichaeism and Mandaeanism, are both intensely anti-Jewish, excluding Israel entirely from the tradition of wisdom and the process of human salvation. Judaism is to both religions unrelievedly demonic; so perhaps the legend of Dahāg and the Temple is an indication of an anti-Semitism rooted in the culture of late Zoroastrian Iran itself. One recognizes also that the Mandaeans, at least, seem to have been specifically rebelling against Second Temple Judaism, from whose ranks they parted; so their animus may betray the special bitterness of rejection of (and from) one to whom one was intimately close.

It should come as no surprise that Solomon figures prominently in Armenian magical spells, which invoke Solomon’s seal (*knik’*), ring (*matani*), throne (*at’or*), and temple (*tačar*). Some charms invoke the hair of the mane and the shoe of the hoof (*jioy jar, nal*) of his mount, as though he were a mounted warrior saint like George, Sergius, and Theodore, who ride down and lance dragons and demons.²⁹ The Classical Armenian pseudepigrapha include several short texts that belong to the Solomon cycle.³⁰ These include “From the commentary of the Paralipomena concerning the penitence of Solomon” (*I meknut’ enē mnac’ ordac’ vasn Sołomoni apašxarut’ ean*), “Concerning king Solomon” (*Vasn Sołomoni ark’ ayi*), “The questions of the queen and the replies of Solomon son of David” (*Harc’ munk’ dšxoyin ew patasxanik’ Sołomoni ordwoy Dawt’ i*), “Concerning Solomon’s books” (*Vasn greanc’ n Sołomoni*), and “About Solomon’s Books” (*Yačags greanc’ n Sołomoni*). These excerpts show that the tradition of Solomon’s truck with demons, his sinning, and all the rest, was well known to Armenians at an early date: “But he took other women, to the great outrage of the Children of Israel: not just to fornicate with them, but to take part also in their scandalous worship. For he was led astray by reason of his wisdom, and allowed his thoughts to wander down the paths of the women who collectively plotted the undoing of his soul, to the point that he erected idols on the mountaintops and fornicated in the open before the holy Temple and in plain view of his enemies...”³¹ “When the help of God was denied him, he ordered his chamberlain to burn his books.” Though fortunately the man hid the few that have come down to us, including the Song of Songs, there were so many others that the flames of the bonfire reached heaven. Solomon wept and God accounted it repentance (*apašxarut’ iwn*) to him.³² When his servants burnt his books, they reported back to Solomon that they had smelled a sweet aroma and seen a dove rising up to heaven and vanishing: the

²⁸ See Firuza Abdullaeva and Charles Melville, *The Persian Book of Kings: Ibrahim Sultan’s Shahnama*, Oxford: Bodleian Library, 2008, pp. 66–67, fig. 37. The first known portrayal of Zohhak as crucified seems to be MS. Per. 104.3, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, illus. in Abdullaeva and Melville, p. 35, fig. 17. The Bodleian miniature also adorns the dust-jacket of the volume; and Dr. Abdullaeva, to whom I am indebted for the gift of a copy, told me that at first the press objected to the illustration, fearing precisely that this scene of a crucifixion might horrify potential buyers. Zohhak’s name in Persian is enough like the Arabic of Isaac that conflation of the scene of the ‘*Aqedah*, the Binding of Isaac, with the Crucifixion might have played a role in the evolution of the scene at Damavand. And the Muslims, after all, were to claim descent from Abraham’s other son, Ishmael.

²⁹ Harut’yunyan, pp. 85, 113, 115, 117, 152, 153.

³⁰ See Michael Stone, “Concerning the Penitence of Solomon,” *Selected Studies in Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha*, Leiden: Brill, 1991, pp. 58–76; the translations of selected texts here are mine, from Sargis Yovsēp’ eanc’, ed., *T’angaran Hin ew Nor Ktakaranac’*, 1: *Ankanon girk’ Hin Ktakaranac’*, Venice: St. Lazarus, 1896.

³¹ *T’angaran*, pp. 228–229.

³² *T’angaran*, pp. 232–233.

penitent king flooded his chamber with tears.³³ *Test. Sol.* **itself** is missing from its expected place in the narrative cycle and corpus of known Clas. Arm. pseudepigrapha. But we should be in error, were we to infer from its absence in that corpus that it was never translated into Armenian at all, or known in Armenia— for we should be looking in the wrong place.

Some texts that belonged initially to sacred literature, but were so strongly magical in associations and content that they came to be used solely for magical purposes, resisted inclusion in the sacred canon and found a place instead in the texts of magic and of folk religion. Such is the case with the “Repentance of Cyprian”, used throughout Christendom as a magical manual even though it deals with the conversion of a magician, Cyprian of Antioch, ca. AD 300, to Christianity. There is indeed a long version in Clas. Arm., *Apašxarut’iwn Kiprianosi*;³⁴ but the text has become, overwhelmingly, a work of folk religion and thaumaturgy. It is often inscribed talismanically on the illuminated scrolls called in Armenian *hmayil*, from Arabic *ḥamāyil*, the broken pl. of *ḥamīlah*. These are kept near the bed to protect women from the Lilith or Al. Or the texts are printed in small booklets containing other prayers similarly believed to have power against the forces of darkness. The writer of the *hmayil* is often a *tirac’u*, a practitioner without priestly ordination with the Armenian Church; and in Christian Ethiopia the *debertera*, a similarly marginal figure, produces similar scrolls of licit magical content. Scholarly attention has been focused hitherto on the texts of these objects; but one has attempted to study their illustrations within the recently articulated category of “outsider art”.³⁵ If one looks, then, for *Test. Sol.* in Armenian, all one has to do is adjust one’s sight, seeking magical rather than canonical texts, and then, like the purloined letter, it is in plain view: the first complete Armenian magical MS ever published in facsimile, and translated. It is a typical 17th-century magical miscellany, Venice, Biblioteca Marciana no. 210, and includes a work in Armeno-Turkish— also common in Armenian magical collections.³⁶

The text, fol. 43-111, begins with a *historiola*: Solomon, wishing to cure his 24-year-old daughter of infertility, questions 74 demons (in most Armenian sources, he has dealings with the standard number, 72). Typically the *recto* page contains the text; the facing *verso*, a crude, inky-black depiction of the demon being interrogated. The perfunctory *Zauberlegende* omits boy, Orniās, Asmodeus, Shamir, and Temple, and occupies only a few lines. Armenian literature is not allergic to such details; but, if one may venture gingerly into an *argumentum ex silentio*, two possible reasons may be suggested for the change in plot. First, Solomon’s daughter’s complaint is exactly about what Asmodeus *does*, as we have seen earlier with reference to the apocryphal Book of Tobit, from which *Test. Sol.* draws also the remedy against Asmodeus. The second reason, though, seems to me the more compelling: Solomon, the archetypal good magician, is invoked very often in Armenian spells of various kinds, and, prominently, conjuring against an unnamed arch-demon, in compilations of spells whose main purpose is protection against the child-stealing witch Al/Lilith.³⁷ Helping women against barrenness, childbed fever, and similar problems, was an immediate

³³ *T’angaran*, pp. 233-234.

³⁴ For an edition of the long recension of the life of Cyprian in Armenian see Fr. N. Akinean, “*Apashkharut’iwn Kiprianosi*,” *Handes Amsoreay*, 75.1-4, Vienna, 1961, pp. 4-38. Akinean believes the Armenian text to be a fifth-century translation from the Greek of Eusebius of Emesa.

³⁵ J.R. Russell, “The Armenian Magical Scroll and Outsider Art,” lecture at the Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown, MA, Dec. 2008, in publication; see also J.S. Wingate, “The Scroll of Cyprian: an Armenian Family Amulet,” *Folk-Lore*, London, Vol. XLI, No. 2, June 1930, pp. 169-187; Frédéric Feydit, *Amulettes de l’Arménie Chrétienne*, Venice: St. Lazzaro, 1986; Gary Lind-Sinanian, *Armenian Magical Practices: Faith, Folk, and Fate, an Exhibition Catalog*, Watertown, MA: ALMA, 2003; Hermann Gollancz, *The Book of Protection*, London: Oxford University Press, 1912, on the Assyrian Christian magical MSS., which were produced in very close proximity to the Armenian ones; and on the Ethiopian material see Jacques Mercier, *Art That Heals: The Image as Medicine in Ethiopia*, New York: The Museum for African Art/ Prestel, 1997.

³⁶ Frédéric Macler, *L’enluminure arménienne profane*, Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1928, p. 30: “Sergii horoscopi de hominibus, turcice cum caracteribus armenis; des scientia Salomonis circa Talismanos; tractatus duo de lapidibus; de peonia, ac de ejus effectibus; codex exaratus est anno 1616.”

³⁷ An example, from a printed *hmayil* scroll, from a (MS?) version dated 1 November 1717: cat. no. 95-77, collection of the Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown, MA: “Prayer for the binding of

concern of pre-modern people, against which the curious details of pretty youths inspiring the builders of a long-vanished Temple whose construction required also the assistance of an odd worm and some three score and ten grumpy demons led by a wrathful and tipsy scholar-demon, will have seemed rather less practical. The text of Cyprian experiences an analogous abbreviation: details of the erstwhile sorcerer's initiation into various pagan cults, including Mithraism, which occupy page after page in the *Clas. Arm.*, disappear from the version that survives in magical scrolls and booklets. So our laconic preface on the matter of the king's efficacy against the demon *Al/Lilith* might have replaced the tale of Temple and boy, at the time when the text made its decisive transition from extra-canonical pseudepigraphon to magical grimoire. There are other significant changes. The Greek *Test. Sol.* speaks of seven vices, Deception, Strife, Fate, Distress, Error, Power, and "The Worst" as the rulers of "this world of darkness". Presumably these are the planets. Armenian magical texts, deriving proximally from Muslim works such as the *Ghayatu 'l-Hakim* and ultimately from Greek and Indian sources, use freely the decans and lunar mansions in demonology; but the *Test. Sol.* reflects a more radically negative view of the cosmos, of the sort associated generally with Gnostics—in the Gnostic *Testimony of Truth*, for instance, Solomon imprisons demons in seven water pots at Jerusalem—³⁸ and specifically with Manichaeans. No Christian Armenian, even a practitioner of magic, could subscribe to a Gnostic or Manichaean view of the world, one thinks; and the seven planetary prison wardens embodying their depressing vices are absent from the *Arm. list*.

There are numerous variants of this much-changed *Test. Sol.* in *Arm.* with diverse names, the theme of child birth and the number of demons interrogated seeming to be the most stable features of the text: *Harc'munk' Sotomoni t'agaworin eot'anasunerku dewerac'* "The questions of Solomon the king to the seventy-two demons", *Eot'anasun ew erku harc'munk' Sotomoni* "The seventy-two questions of Solomon", and *Harc'munk' Sotomoni i p'erinerun vasn amul kananc' cnaneloy, zawakn me'aneloy ew kam apreloy* "The questions of Solomon to the *peris* concerning a barren woman giving birth, and the child perishing or surviving".³⁹ Let us examine an example of the *Arm.* text taken at random from *Venice Bibl. Marc. 210*:⁴⁰ "The fifth demon. Fifth the demon came [*arek*, for Middle *Arm.* *erek*, *Clas. Arm.* *ekn*, "came"?] whose name was *afretun*, seated on a *black [*eavi*, for *seaw-i*?] horse, with the head of a sheep and the feet of a bird [*tuš*, l-w from *Tk. kuš*], a snake in his hand [*jerum*, loc. sg. in *Mod. E. Arm.*]. Solomon saith: What is your operation [*hasiat'n*, *Arm* l-w *via Pers.*]. Saith the demon: I ramble [*man ku gam*, a mixed E/W *Arm.* vernacular expression] that I see who remembers the name of God. I bring sorrow [*mazarab*] upon him that he fall ill [*nač'atay*] throughout [*t'amam*] his body and pain come all over [*paham*, i.e., *Pers. lba ham*] him. Solomon said: what is the remedy of this? Saith the demon: They mix the bile of a hare with the bile of a black chicken and drip it into one's nose, and write these names and bind them to one's back: *ofleum leum leum uray marar buam ta't'ia yut' bray fualhay heum*. This is the name."

demons and *als.*/ Solomon the wise saw the prince of the demons of darkness, who roared like a cloud and screeched like a dragon. Solomon says: O foul and accursed one, what are you? The demon says: I am the prince of the demons and mother of all evils and sins. I am the one who kindles enmity between brothers, contention and quarrel and disturbance and fornication. I enter into the hearts of men, bringing and sowing the seed of wicked desire. Solomon says: Arise, that I may see you. And he arose, greater than a mountain, and wished to fall upon him. Solomon says: Become small! And he became smaller than a mustard seed. And Solomon trapped him, and put him in a ring on his right hand, and put a piece of the tablets of Sinai on top, with a piece also of Noah's Ark, and of Jacob's Ladder, and of Aaron's staff: and by the prayers of Kononos may all evil demons and wicked satanic contrivances be banished and frustrated, may they be released and cast out afar for this servant of God (N.N.)/ Lord, show me your ways, and teach me your paths./ Prayer of the *t'pgha* and *al.*/ Holy Siovn holy Sisi and holy Sisianē and holy Noviēl and holy Tañēl, angels are they, by Christ's command. They went out hunting and heard a child's cry. They went and saw the *Al* in her wickedness, and seized and held fast and bound the *Al* on the rock of *Al*. The mother of the *Al* came, and says: What might this be? They say: What is this, that you go in, to a mother's womb, and eat her child's flesh, drink the blood, and darken the light of its eyes? The mother of the *Al* says: spare my son, and we will not go near to that house where they recall your names, to the servant of God (N.N.): in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever, and unto ages of ages, Amen."

³⁸ Duling, pp. 950-951.

³⁹ Harut'yunyan, p. 215, citing Erevan Matenadaran MSS 8423, 6677, 6678, and 8428.

⁴⁰ Macler, fig. 314.

The drawing on the facing page depicts a bird-footed, animal-headed figure on horseback, using a snake as a quirt.

The language is late vernacular Middle Armenian, suffused with Turkish and Arabo-Persian loan words, with a few formulaic pretensions to Classicism. The demon bears the name Afretun, apparently a combination of the Pers. l-w in Arm. *afret*, “demon”, lit. “creation”, with the name of Farīdūn, the Iranian epic hero. The *voces magicae* form a sonorous rhyme with several possibly pseudo-Arabic words marked by the distinctly non-Armenian, exotic sound *f*.⁴¹ In subsequent sections Arabic words and formulae are common: *rahim* (Ar. *rahīm* “merciful”), *ismhu* (Ar. *ismu-hu*, “His Name”), *filarzi* (Ar. *fr* ’l-ardi “in the Earth”, as pronounced by Persians), *inay humn stmnin* (perhaps Ar. *innahum al-muslimīn*, “For they, the Muslims...” with the intrusive name of Solomon), *hu pislayərahman* (perhaps Ar. *Hu! Bi-šalahi* ’r-*Rahman*, “He! In prayer to the Compassionate”), *mismillahi fir bismilay* and *mismillahi rahman rahim* (rhymes upon the Bismalah), *vlay hovl vlay tuat’ ilay bilay* (Ar. *Wa-lā hawla wa-lā quwwata ilā bi-’llāh*, “Nought availeth without God!”), and, finally *axrat’* (Ar.-Pers. *āxtrah*, This is The End...). These terms and phrases appear in long, sonorous, sing-song, rhyming formulas, most of whose words are strongly vocalic, non-Armenian-sounding nonsense— an Armenian listener’s impression of what Muslim conjurors chant. Though we find a lion here, a dog there, as in the Greek, the demons of the Arm. text are also local, later, and fanciful, with names such as Maṭnay, Maros, Katur, Malul, and Zvi. Recognizable names are few. One demon is said to appear like an *aṭjū baṭjū*, i.e., Ar. Yajūj Majūj, “Gog and Magog”!⁴² But what this doubtless alarming and unpleasant phenomenon looks like is not explained.

Medieval Christians viewed the prophet Mohammed as an arch-heretic: his name was deformed into either Baphomet, the name of a satanic demon, or *mawmet*, the generic term for a little golden statue of Mercury that Muslims supposedly worshipped. In the *Inferno* of Dante, the city of Dis in the pit is dotted with mosques, the Prophet himself rends his own body for having divided the Church, and the damned jabber in a kind of pseudo-Arabic. Armenian polemics against Islam are extremely harsh, and there are even spells against it:⁴³ but one finds also at times, as for instance in the introduction to the 12th-century *credo* of St. Nersēs Šnorhali, a grudging admiration of the Muslims’ courage and steadfast devotion to their faith.⁴⁴ In the case of the Arm. *Test. Sol.* we seem to deal with Arabic not so much as a language demons use— their spoken Armenian is irreproachable— as one that, as the sacred tongue of the near Other, is ambiguous in its value, and thus marked with both power and danger.

We have noted the importance in Armenian magic of the child-stealing witch Al. She is called also the “mother of Al” in both Armenian and Persian (*mādar-e Āl*), and several Arm. spells contain lists of the names of her twelve offspring. These are fairly consistent:⁴⁵

1. *Cneloc* “of those born”/ *Cnaneloy* “of giving birth”/ *Cnaneloc’n* “of those to give birth”/ *Cnaneloy*
2. *Atlazol’ Azlazol’ Batlatul’ Azlazoy*: “of *Azazel”(?)
3. *Mayroyēl’ Maroc’/ ---/ Maroy*: possibly related to *mar-em* “extinguish”?
4. *Aṭk’atē* “poor” + fem. suffix *-ē* of Gk. names in Arm./ *Datak’ōtēl’ Gezagastēl’ Daygātay gōtē*
5. *Aysmē* “from this”/ *Aslumēl’ Aslasumēl’ Aslumē*
6. *Ayszin* “of this kind(?)”/ *Ayilinēl’ Ayilin’ Ayiline*

⁴¹ Though Arm. dialects have the phoneme, and modern native speakers of Arm. employ, universally and without difficulty, the Turco-Pers. exclamation *Āfertn!* (“Bravo!” lit. “Blessing!”), the letter was added to the alphabet only in the 12th century; and foreign words containing *f* are still often “standardized” by the alteration to *p*.

⁴² Macler, fig. 318, fol. 51v.

⁴³ Harut’yunyan, p. 211: *Histos K’ristos/ K’o’rna Mart’iros/ Pzri haxen/ Ktri karen/ Xap’ani čluli Połos/ He’rana mer erkren/ Hām šeyx, hām mollen:/ El k’[ak’, om. by ed.] k’rdu dřen* “Jesus Christ/ ? Martyr/ ? ?/ The strength be cut off(?) / ? be defeated... Paul/ From our land be driven far away/ Both Sheikh and Mollah/ And shit at the Kurd’s gate!”

⁴⁴ See J.R. Russell, “The Credal Poem *Hawatov xostovanim* (“I confess in faith”) of St. Nerses the Graceful,” in J.J. van Ginkel et al., eds., *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*, Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta 134, Leuven, 2005, pp. 185-236.

⁴⁵ Harut’yunyan, pp. 131, 137, 139.

7. *Marmaroyel/ Mairmarayl/ Mairmaroyel/ Marmaroy*: possible from Gk. toponym Marmara, with base *mar-* again understood as reduplicated?
 8. *Ayroy* “of a widow (*ayri*)?”/ *Ašioyl/ Ayēuel/ Ašioy*
 9. *Kališt* “of a wolf (*gayl*) and ass (*ēš*)?” or perhaps based on *kal-* aor. stem of *un-im*, “have, seize”/ *Kalelil/ Kalalil/ Kalile*
 10. *Yulic’al/ Homizanl/ Hovizanl/ Homizan*
 11. *Ekitun* “I came home”/ *Eki tunl/ Ekisanl/ Homitun*
 12. *Ankanes* “Thou fallest down”/ *Ankeanisl/ Ankenesl/ Ankanis*

Although some of the names in the list above are strange, most are not very mysterious constructions with the familiar feminine Greek ending *-ē* that was long ago fully assimilated into Arm. onomastics; and others, “Of birth”, “Of this”, “I came home”, and, at the end, “You fall down!” are as homely as a child’s rhyme, the rhyming pairs just on the edge of sense, like Lewis Carroll’s *Jabberwocky*.⁴⁶ When I sang “Ring around the rosy, a pocket full of posies, ashes, ashes, we all fall down!” I did not know anything about primitive beliefs that flowers protected one from a consuming plague. As we have seen, Jakobson connected the patterns of children’s magic rhymes to the deeper structures of the language of folk religion and of spells, as part of a single process in poetry.

The language of the demons, then, is like that of the gods in that it is often intelligible but variously marked. It is rarely meant to sound pleasant to the ear; and when it is a foreign language, that tongue often belongs to an alien neighbor, a near other whose faith is experienced at once as potent and dangerous. “I speak three languages, English, Yiddish, and Rubbish!” declared a music hall comedian cited by the late Prof. Neil Mackenzie as he delightedly demolished a forgery.⁴⁷ Demons speak nonsense, too, as we might expect of the mendacious enemies of Adam, he who gave their true names to all the beings in Creation. This distinguishes them from the gods, except perhaps those of Jorge Luis Borges, whose works constantly return to the problem that infinity of anything makes a nonsense of it: immortality reduces divinities to idiocy. I do not believe this. There is nothing good about nonsense; and I would conclude with another idea about language that is different from the phenomena described by Prof. Watkins altogether.

One of my teachers, now a dear friend of many years as well, is Prof. Nina Georgievna Garsoian, the great Armenologist; and one of her ancestors through the Armenian, Russophone Saparov family of the north Caucasus was the great Russian Orthodox mystic Father Pavel Florensky. He was a spiritual leader of the mystical school known as *imiaslavie*, “name-glorification”, whose essential proposition is: The name of God is God. God in *any* language, that is: Russian, Avestan, Armenian, or Hebrew. That is, God by His prevenient grace endows any prayerful locution of human language with the transcendent power of the Divine *logos* of truth, much in the way that He by *kenosis*, the act of love and self-abnegation, enclosed the unencompassable within the Incarnation. Magic, and magical language, are an entangling and sterile web; but when we part company also with the self-indulgent rhetoric of *mantra*, we find a refreshingly different experience of thought and being. To name something, as Loren Graham explains the assertions of the **imiaslavists*, the “glorifiers of the name”, is to individuate it: the Moscow mathematicians, associated with Fr. Florensky and his teachings, can thus assert reasonably a “set of all sets” since they can *name* it. That set is our Lord.⁴⁸ When human knowledge and thought touch the face of Heaven, Al and her children, Asmodeus and the 72 demons, the seven dolorous planets, tear like a thin sheet of paper covered with vain scribbles. “They who have had contempt for the Word of God, from them the word of man, too, shall be taken away!” thunders Merlin. But for those who love the Word of God, then the humblest word of man is filled with truth and light. And then there is neither the language of gods nor the language of demons, but

⁴⁶ On the lexicon of the poem of “Through the Looking-Glass” (1872), which is a fully-formed *Drachenkampf* with perfect ring composition, see Eric Partridge, “The Nonsense Words of Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll,” *Here, There and Everywhere*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1950, pp. 162-188. There may be more than a hint of the demonological in Carroll’s inventions: Partridge thinks the “*ipwergis-pudding*” of “A Tangled Tale” (1885) may combine Walpurgis and haggis.

⁴⁷ D.N. Mackenzie, “Pseudoprotokurtica,” *BSOAS* 26.1, 1963, pp. 170-173.

⁴⁸ See Loren Graham and Jean-Michel Kantor, *Naming Infinity: A True Story of Religious Mysticism and Mathematical Creativity*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.

simply language itself, the language of man and of the man Christ, meaningful and sonorous and full of strength and truth, the *Logos*.

APPENDIX

As a contribution to the corpus of material on king Solomon's books, questions, and career, I append this study of a manuscript recently acquired by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research in Belmont, MA, USA.

"Un document est un témoin; comme la plupart des témoins, il ne parle guère que lorsqu'on l'interroge."
("A document is a witness; like most witnesses it barely says a word until it is questioned.")

— Marc Bloch, "Pour un histoire comparée des sociétés européennes," *Mélanges historiques* I, Paris, 1969, 16-40, 20.

II.

In the summer of 2009, Dr. Levon Boyajian of New Jersey, born in Washington Heights, a neighborhood in upper Manhattan, New York City, in 1929, donated several old and rare Armenian books, including a manuscript, to the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), in Belmont, MA.⁴⁹ They were brought to the USA shortly after his birth by his maternal grandfather, Levon Nazarian, the youngest of three brothers, and a native of Chemishgezek. The family had moved in Nazarian's childhood from western Armenia to Aleppo, Syria, where he grew up; he emigrated to New York in 1930, worked as a confectioner to help support the family during the hard times of the Great Depression, and died three years later. The books were part of a larger collection, most of which Mr. Nazarian donated to libraries in the new republic of Soviet Armenia when he left Syria. He had run an inn— described as a *khan* or *caravansarai*— where he sheltered relatives left destitute in the wake of the Armenian Genocide. His best friend had been a rebel fighter from Zeitun, where Armenians had defended themselves against the depredations and extortions of the Ottoman rulers and their Kurdish enforcers; and he always maintained an interest in progressive politics.

Grandfather Nazarian's wide-ranging interests embraced also the occult. This is not surprising, considering that esotericism challenges the bounds of conventional belief about the order of the universe much as political radicalism questions the smug assumptions of the prevailing social order. And Dr. Boyajian said he had compiled a notebook containing esoteric symbols. Dr. Boyajian when we last corresponded was unaware of its whereabouts, even whether it was still extant. He passed away in 2010; and the notebook has turned up in a collection of the family's Armenian books donated to the library of NAASR by his son. Mr. Nazarian was a well educated and civilized man: he raised his daughter Verkin, the woman who was to be Dr. Boyajian's mother, in an environment of comfort, enlightenment, and respect. She came to America in 1923. Dr. Boyajian's father Apkar was born in Chemishgezek in 1890 and came to the US before the outbreak of World War I. His was the itinerary of many Armenians: he worked in a New England textile mill, then as a photoengraver in New York City.

The ancient town of Chemishgezek (Armenian *Č'mškacag*), home of the Byzantine emperor John Tzimiskes, is NNE of Malatya, SE of Akn, and NNW of Kharpert; Aleppo is SSW, twice the distance of Malatya. The city is in the Dersim (now called by the Turkish occupation state Tunceli) region of Western Armenia, a stronghold of the Zaza people, who are speakers of the dialect of Dailam in northern Iran and call their speech *dilmi*; but they are identified culturally and politically with the Kurds. Legend has it that Dersim got its name from Der Simon, an Armenian priest who accepted the Alevi Shi'a sect of Islam to save his flock, during the Jalali uprisings of the 17th century that convulsed all of Anatolia. There were close ties between the Armenians and Zazas of the region, which is still in sporadic rebellion against

⁴⁹ A version of the first part of this study was published as "Collection of Books Donated to NAASR by Dr. Levon Boyajian" in the NAASR *Newsletter*, Belmont, MA, Fall-Winter 2009-2010, pp. 1-3.

Turkish control. The history of the town⁵⁰ mentions both the Boyajian and Nazarian families, whose children united in wedlock. Others there were bibliophiles: Harut' iun Ajemian, a priest from the nearby village of Sisna, "died a very old man and left many manuscripts".⁵¹

Dr. Boyajian's family memoir, *Hayots Badeevuh* [i.e., *Hayoc' patiwa*, "Armenian honor"]: *Reminiscences of Armenian Life in New York City*, Reading, UK: Taderon, 2004, provides a vivid picture of Armenian life in uptown Manhattan in the years of the Great Depression. Times were hard, but the photoengravers' union to which his father belonged helped struggling members of its brotherhood and gave workers a sense of dignity. In their spare time, men sat around debating politics on the sidewalk of Wadsworth Ave., or at coffee houses and clubs, and played *tavlu* (backgammon). Friends visited each other's homes back and forth, and there was always a *jezve* — a pot of Turkish coffee — on the stove. Toasts were offered in homemade *oghi* (the anisette liqueur also called *arak* or *raki*). The center of social life was, thus, the family; the center of communal life was the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Holy Cross Church of Armenia on West 187th St. east of St. Nicholas Ave. sponsored an annual picnic in June and a bazaar in November; so church events and family life, shared meals, picnics, and the cultural-social-national luncheon-dinner-reception called the *hantes* (Arm. *handēs*, "gathering, occasion, encounter") held the community together and determined the rhythm and pattern of life outside the workplace. Other outings might include breakfast at the Horn & Hardart automat on 181st St. on Saturday after the cashing of Dad's paycheck. The neighborhood had a half dozen Armenian groceries;⁵² and "Doc" Cohen, the local pharmacist, had the young Levon write out for him in English transliteration the Armenian of the six hundred words that, according to the *New York Times*, were basic to any language. There were many single men in the community who had either never married, or who had lost their families in the Genocide; and their fellow Armenians took care of them.

The life that Levon Boyajian recalled is not very different from that of other ethnic enclaves in New York then. My mother grew up in Bensonhurst, an Italian and Jewish neighborhood of Brooklyn. Times were hard, and a nickel or dime was a treat went a long way on a weekend trip to the automat, or the movies, or even Manhattan. Home and family were the anchor of existence: my grandmother Marguerite cooked the Moroccan Sabbath stew called *adafina*, baked *kadayif*, and served guests little cups of Turkish coffee with homemade candied orange peel. By shopping for groceries wholesale and finding chicken wings and necks cheap, and God knows what other strategies, Grandma managed to put food on the table every night for parents, grandparents, and four daughters, several sisters and their families, and friends. The hard *rosocas* and *fijuelas* I remember from my childhood were made with recipes brought to Salonica from the Spain of Ferdinand, Isabella, and the Inquisition five centuries earlier. During Prohibition my grandfather made wine and *raki* at home; and our edification and entertainment was tales of Djuha, the crafty dervish Hoca Nasrettin. And though I was too young to have heard him, Uncle Jack played the *oud*. As for the occult, my great grandmother Rachel, whose nickname was Manachi, used to offer the blood of a black cock to the dead at midnight when somebody was ill. I don't know the other aspects of her witchcraft; but she was an austere and bony woman of immense power who got around on a great staff till she passed at ninety six, having foretold her own death to the day. She loved me and used to say to me when I was little *Camina, pasha!* "Walk, O king!" in Ladino. I inherited her ring of twined snakes with diamond and ruby eyes. The family had escaped from the famine and great fire of 1917 in Greece, and from the filth and ignorance of Morocco: America despite the Depression, still meant freedom, goodness, and opportunity in those days; and President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and New York Mayor Fiorello La Guardia enjoyed the status of living saints.

I first met Dr. Boyajian when we worked together on the organizing committee of a two-day conference on the *sequelae* of trauma — the experiences of children of Genocide survivors — that was held at the Armenian Diocese on Second Ave. and 34th St. in New York in April 1980. He was then a vigorous man of middle years, a respected physician and psychiatrist, a pillar of the Church, and very friendly and

⁵⁰ Haykazn G. Łazarean, *Patmagirk' Ć'mšcacagi*, Beirut: Hamazgayin, 1971, p. 575.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 502.

⁵² In my teenage years, around 1970-71, only one was left, the *Hay Nparavačar*, on St. Nicholas Ave. The neighborhood is just as lively and cheerful as ever, but now the crowds are largely Dominican.

forthright. I was twenty-six, and coordinating cultural affairs for the Diocese was my first job; but His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian and our Director, Syraun Palvetzian, treated me with kindness and courtesy, and the Diocesan staff was a supportive, hard-working, fun family. The conference, which touched upon the Holocaust and Cambodia as well as the Armenian Genocide, was attended by hundreds; and the proceedings, with Levon's study of the sequelae of genocidal trauma, was prepared for publication. It remains still in manuscript, though, and is now in the NAASR archives. Levon and I had a lot in common, for I grew up in Washington Heights, too; and when I interviewed him a few months before his passing we discovered that there were more than a few memories of the old neighborhood we shared and treasured: listening to the Texaco broadcast of the Metropolitan Opera on Saturday afternoons on WQXR through every radio in every window uninterruptedly as we walked down the street, not missing a note. I remember the wonderful *hantes* in the hall below Holy Cross, where my Armenian teacher, Vart Tarpinian, taught Sunday school. There was a feast of salad, pilaf and roast beef, ice cream and coffee, then impressively intoned prayers and flowery speeches and songs with a lady of a certain age on the piano playing awfully well and dances by kids in lovely costumes and poems, and a lot of loud socializing and good cheer. In mid-afternoon you would stagger out of Haik Kavukjian hall with the strong conviction, Armenia lives! When I was young, Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, a great scholar, lived in the parish house attached to the church; and Levon remembers Fr. Yeghishe Simonian, who served from 1935 to 1965: he was a survivor of the burning and massacre of Smyrna, as was Abp. Leon Tourian, whose murder in the church by leaders of the New York chapter of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (the Tashnag or Dašnak party) in December 1933 created a rift in the community that lasted for generations and whose echo is still felt.⁵³ Indeed the echoes of the grisly crime reached far beyond the confines of the Armenian community: in his first novel *And The Hippos Boiled In Their Tanks*, a *roman à clef* about a murder within the social circle of the nascent Beat movement in the mid-1940's, William S. Burroughs named one of his fictionalized characters Tourian.

Washington Heights was not just a big Armenian neighborhood— my teacher, Fr. Krikor Maksoudian, remembered the pun Washington *Hayoc*, “of the Armenians”— but a center of arts and learning. The scholar and translator of Persian poetry, Mihrdat Tiryakian, whose translation of *dāstāns* from the *Šah-nāme* of Ferdōsī was published in 1951, lived in the neighborhood: he followed in the path of his father Harut'iun, whose Armenian translation of sections of the same epic was printed in New York in 1909. The graphic designer Minas Minasian, who died in 1981, born in the village of Chengiler near Nicomedia, lived on Pinehurst Avenue. His Armenian typefaces and designs defined the poster, periodical, and book arts of the American Armenian community for decades. Harut'iun Hazarian, who lived on Ft. Washington Avenue and 170th Street, died at the same time. He had devoted his considerable wealth to buying Armenian manuscripts and donating them to the Matenadaran in Erevan, and to leading the Gesaria (Caesarea of Cappadocia, Kayseri) Compatriotic Union. The neighborhood became dangerous, the children went to college, and most moved away to the suburbs— Fort Lee in New Jersey, Westchester in New York.⁵⁴

The 1930's saw not only the great schism in the Armenian community, which began at the little parish church in Washington Heights, but also the rise of fascism overseas and the eclipse of the Soviet Union by Stalinist tyranny. The convulsions beyond the sea affected Armenian-Americans. Levon averred that widespread anti-Semitism in the Armenian community sometimes precluded sympathy for the Jews in

⁵³ Marjorie Housepian Dobkin, author of the groundbreaking historical masterpiece *Smyrna 1922*, about the Turkish massacre and destruction of a great and ancient city, published a memoir of her own Armenian-American childhood in New York, *A Houseful of Love*, that became a bestseller and was serialized in *Reader's Digest*. Although overly sentimental and sanitized, in my view, the book presents a faithful picture similar to Boyajian's. Marge is the mother of my old friend and Columbia classmate Stephen Andrew Johnson of New York, who told me she answered the phone the day of Abp. Tourian's murder: her family lived a few minutes away from Holy Cross, and her father, a physician who had served as a medical relief volunteer in Armenia in World War I, attended the Primate, who died in the parish house of his wounds shortly after the attack.

⁵⁴ See James Russell, “The Calligrapher of Washington Hayotz,” *Ararat Quarterly*, New York, Autumn 1981, pp. 24-26.

Nazi Germany, but this was by no means a majority sentiment and one member of the community reacted quite differently indeed. Avedis Derounian, a Genocide survivor growing up in Washington Heights, witnessed Abp. Tourian's horrible murder in the church and perceived a connection between the Armenian Genocide, that crime, and the fascist movements gaining strength in Europe and here. Using the *nom de plume* John Roy Carlson, he wrote a bestseller, *Under Cover*, about fascist organizations in America. His articles in *Fortune* on the subject spurred Congress to form the House Un-American Activities Committee. After the war, Derounian traveled to the Middle East to cover the Israel War of Independence and published with Knopf in New York a few years later *From Cairo to Damascus*, in which he detailed the transplantation of Nazism into the Islamic world and presciently argued that Islamic political fanaticism would prove to be a far deadlier and longer-lasting threat to freedom than Communism. And meanwhile, as the world surged and darkened and ignorant armies clashed by night and the Armenians of New York worked and ate and prayed and cooked and raised their children, the books waited...

Mr. Nazarian's books were kept with respect in a cabinet, and the family had a Bible and a *Narek* (that is, the *Book of Lamentations* of the tenth-century St. Grigor Narekats'i, a cycle of 95 mystical prayers), as most Christian Armenian homes did. It would appear from the notations that Mr. Nazarian read his books carefully. The seven vowels of Armenian were the subject of a magical text, the *Eōt'nagreank'*, or "(Book of) the seven letters"; and perhaps Mr. Nazarian's interests in esoterica led him to the only manuscript in the initial collection donated by Dr. Boyajian, a seventeenth-century miscellany that contains two grammatical treatises. One notes that the probable origin of the term "grimoire", the standard word for a manual of magic, is French *grammaire*, "grammar"! The manuscript contains also Aristotle's letter to Alexander; and this, too, has magical overtones; for their fictional correspondence, which includes advice on the preparation of talismans, is the matter of the magical book known in the West as *Secretum secretorum*, "The Secret of Secrets". The occult notebook of Mr. Nazarian was donated posthumously to NAASR, as noted above, by his son. But the principal books donated by Dr. Boyajian shortly before his death are these:

1. A manuscript on paper of roughly octavo size, containing texts in several hands. The first, with title in purple and red and text in black, is, "Definition of Grammar: Grammar is an art comprised of speech and writing and its parts are four: letter, syllable, word, saying..." in an attenuated notary, Arm. *notrgir*, of the early 17th century, concluding with an undated colophon, "Remember this sinner in Christ." The next text is in a considerably cruder semi-cursive *šetagir* hand of the 17th century: "Grammar is a skill, those matters of the poets and of oft repeated utterances, and its parts are six: first, writing..." There follows in a neater, mixed *notrgir* and *šetagir* of the same period, "The letter of Aristotle the Philosopher to king Alexander. History concerning the world [*ašxari* for *ašxarhi*]. Alexander often seemed to me to be something truly divine..."

The book is completed in this same hand but with less space between the words, and concludes with a colophon: "And now God, as the saying of the ancients goes, is the beginning and the end. And, having within Him all beings, He completes their paths in a straight way, causing them to follow the various kinds of their natures. Falling short of justice they are punished by God; and likewise whoever is favored will be blessed with His grace. Eternal glory, Amen. This was written in the Armenian year 1096 in the month of May, at a time when one Sultan Epram [Ibrahim] reigned, who fought a war against the Cretans and all the land of the Ottomans endured great suffering. And all the more so this city of Halap [Aleppo], for the Pasha was particularly lawless. They called him by the name Tali Huseyn [i.e., *dali*, Mod. Tk. *delli*, Huseyn, "Crazy Hussein", a typical Jalali sobriquet]. If only God might free all faithful Christians from the hands of these people by the intercession of the Holy Mother of God, Amen." There follows in Arabic language and script: *Al-faqr qasīs [kešrš?] Markar*. "The poor man, the *priest Markar."

The surface leaves of the cartonnage from which the hard cover was made were manufactured using an older MS in very fine *bolorgir* script of a type found in Cilician MSS of the early 14th century; but as the thin, polished paper feels to me more recent, I am inclined to date it to the 17th century or not much earlier. The text has a superscription in modern cursive Armenian, perhaps belonging to Mr. Nazarian: "Menologium, martyrology of our holy father Gregory the Armenian of the family of the Illuminator and a most select martyr. History." The book bears two stamp seals, one of which seems to have the Armenian name Kirakos; and on the flyleaf in purple ink is this note in the same flowery hand as the superscription on

the cartonnage: "I took (this) from Brutean (the potter?) Kir[a]kos in the monastery of St. Sargis, abbot of the Armenians, 1882 February 20 *yitisia* [in Edessa?] *Arewin* [?]." The text of the *Menologium*, which is evidently the martyrdom of the Apostle Bartholomew, is as follows: "... who went after him. Take those deceivers there outside. And the executioners went... apostles... took Philip and Bartholomew, and Mary, and dragged them outside. And when the tyrant beheld them he began to gnash his teeth, and said, Pull away those witches, who are leading astray many women and virgins. And they said, We are worshippers of God. And he commanded.../ ... your deeds. And let go your life full of pain. And abandon your fleeting joys. For it passes like a shadow. See that which endures, and forget these transient things. And give up your savage ways, that is, the deeds of foulness, that..." And at the other end, "She went outside and saw them. She made bold [*hamarjec'aw* for *hamarjakec'aw*] before them all and said, I am a Hebrew and the daughter of a Hebrew [*ebraec'o* for *ebayec'woy*]. Speak to me in the speech of my fathers. For I have listened before to your preaching and was healed of my disease. And now I glorify and bow down to the beneficence of your God even in this distant land, for the precious stone of one's own that the great dragon swallowed. But Lord, make alive the true stone..." Next page, "... they led astray the multitudes. For after that they went in to him. This city was full of useless people. The slew also the serpents, the sons of the viper, who were our gods [i.e., false gods, Arm. *ack'* with a *patiw* below the abbreviation, as is done with the name of Satan]. They destroyed our temple and our worship perished. Our table, too, was ruined, and no longer do we find wine to place before us. For having drunk of the..."

2. A printed *Šaraknoc*, "Hymnal" illustrated with woodcuts, as of Adam and Eve deceived by the serpent (p. 130). Following the table of contents on p. 240, the endpaper contains a fragmentary inscription, "May there arrive.../ Xumxabu [Kum kapu in Constantinople, site of the Armenian Patriarchate]/ Khan and/ Lord Grigor/ *T(i)r(a)c'(o)w* [a cleric without ordination]..." Following p. 716, *Es em č'imiš/ kezakc'i/ terac'ul arut'iw?/n/ girec'i/ t'win* "I, the *tirac'u* Harut'iun of Chimishkezek wrote this in the year..." In pencil there follow the numbers, in Arabic:

1928
1096
832

1096 is the Armenian date of the MS described above, to which one adds 551 to obtain the date *Anno Domini*; but it would seem Mr. Nazarian subtracted it from AD 1928— two years before his departure for the US from Aleppo— in what appears to have been a misguided attempt to ascertain when the colophon was written.

3. *P'elik's ew Pawlinē kam Žuray leṛan taki gerezmanē*, "Felix and Pauline, or, the tomb below Mt. Jura," translated from Italian (into Western Armenian) by Grigor T'orosean, Paris, 1859. It is inscribed, *Aṛ nazeli ṛ. Zmruxt Nazarean, i nšan buṛn zgac'manc' nuiṛē sirakarōt khōsec'ealn iwr V. M. K'iwrk'čean*, "V.M. Kurkjian, her intended, pining for love, offers this in token of his ardent feelings to the charming Miss Zmruxt Nazarian" with the date 1887 March 2, Constantinople. Dr. Boyajian does not know who the swain and his lady were; though perhaps Ms. Nazarian was a relative. The novel was written by Pierre Blanchard (1772-1856). Ms. Shushan Teager of Belmont, MA, a native of Beirut whose family were from Aintab, has identified the ardent swain as none other than Vahan M. Kurkjian, the author of *A History of Armenia*, *Aspet Liparit*, and other books. The young lady, whose family settled on the form Nazaretian of their surname, was first cousin to Ms. Teager's grandmother, Zarman Nazaretian. The Nazaretians settled in New York City.

4. A collection of miscellaneous political tracts bound together:

1. *Sots'ializmā ew soc'ialakan šaržumā 19-rd darum*, "Socialism and the socialist movement in the 19th century", translated from (Werner Sombart's study in) German and published by the Armenian students of Geneva, press of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, 1898, with the epigraph *Oč'inč' č'em araġarkum, Oč'inč' č'em ent'adrum, patmum em* "I propose nothing, and I suppose nothing: I merely relate."

2. John Stuart Mill, *Azatur'ean masin (On Liberty)*, translated from the Russian translation, with a brief account of Mill's life, Moscow: Herbek press, 1898.

3. S.S. Zak, *Hoġ ew kapitalizm (Land and capitalism)*, translated from Russian, Tiflis, 1907.

4. Yovhannēs X. Nazarean, *Krt'akan veracnut'iwn (The renaissance in education)*, Constantinople, 1909.

5. H. T'. Bokl (Buckle), *Angliayi k'atak'akrt'ut'ean patmut'iwnā (The history of the civilization of England)*, Tiflis, 1909.

The latter miscellany suggests that Mr. Nazarian was interested in economic history and in progressive politics in particular. This was not at all uncommon: Karl Marx, in a preface to a late edition of his *Communist Manifesto*, mentioned two Armenian translations of his work. Both Western and Eastern Armenian printed versions of the Manifesto are known; and Armenian socialist and revolutionary activity is coextensive with that of the Russians themselves. In the US, especially during the 1930's when so many people were out of work, the *Hnč'ak* party ("Bell", named after Alexander Herzen's *Kolokol*) and the Communist *Yarajdimakan* ("Progressive") league were active in calling for reform or even overthrow of the capitalist system. There were even Armenian translations of Trotsky's tracts of the Fourth International published in New York. And when the American Lincoln Battalion fought with the International Brigades against fascism in the Spanish Civil War, one of several Armenian Americans who died in battle was Ashod Antreassian on New York. His brother named the Ashod Press, which served the Armenian Diocese for decades, after the fallen hero.

So as the fledgling Armenian-American community weathered the storms of political assassination and economic depression while building its thriving, vital culture in New York City, a cabinet in an apartment held a manuscript whose scribe evokes the cataclysmic events of the Jalali uprisings of the 1600's, decades before New York received its present name. A printed hymnal records its acquisition by a man of Chimishkezek from a lay priest. A romantic novel gives a brief insight into a romantic engagement in late 19th-century Constantinople. The latest text in a collection of political studies and tracts is bound in 1909—the terminus date for the miscellany, i.e., in the turbulent period of revolution in Russia, Iran, and Ottoman Turkey and the portentous year of the Adana massacres, scarcely half a decade away from the holocaust that was to destroy the millennial life of the Armenians in most of their homeland and scatter the survivors across the globe, as far as upper Manhattan and New England.

For decades, the books brought to the shores of the New World from Aleppo were kept carefully as life roiled around them. Men worked, women cooked and brewed coffee, there was laughter and conversation, and sorrow and longing. Children played, grew up, studied and became professionals, Americans. The neighborhood changed and most of the Armenians moved away from St. Nicholas Ave., from Audubon Ave., from 187th St., to the wealthier suburbs around Manhattan: north to Westchester, west to Fort Lee and Englewood, NJ. Holy Cross Church of Armenia still stands, and most of its parishioners come to Sunday services by car from suburban homes. And the grocery stores, the large Sunday crowds, the inviting smells, all belong now to the past. Though the bloodstained vestments of Abp. Tourian are still stored near his tomb in the church, and the dark tale of his grisly murder still can shock one, it is swiftly fading away to ancient history now, and as the Soviet era itself recedes into memory and an independent Armenia confronts new challenges, the wounds of old political feuds are healing. But the old Armenian books, like folded flowers waiting through the night for dawn, waited patiently on their shelves. And now the books open, and speak to us again.

2.

One of these is Dr. Nazarian's newly discovered notebook containing those esoteric symbols that his grandson thought was lost. Its title-page calls it *bžškarān*, a book of medicine or healing; but it is perhaps better described as a magico-medical miscellany. The manuscript is inscribed in a small, sturdy hardbound brown notebook, probably of late 19th or early 20th-century manufacture. The pages, about 100, of which 89 are inscribed, are ruled in squares like graph paper and measure 3.8 inches (19 cm) by 4.8 inches (24 cm). There are four sections: a collection of remedies (pp. 1-49), a series of spells (pp. 50-64), a list of Psalms to be recited as magical texts for various purposes (pp. 66-73 and 81-88), a long disquisition

on the medicinal and magical uses of parts of the stork (*aragil*) (pp. 74-78), and two loose inserts. The latter section, following instructions on using the liver mixed with oil to cure the possessed and keeping the wing to chase depression from one's heart, concludes with the laconic instruction to keep the "inner beak" (*znergin ktuc'n*) with one: *bavē imastnoc*: "to the wise it is sufficient." *Verbum sapienti* indeed.

The phrase reminds one at once of the title *Angitac' anpēt*, "Useless to the ignorant", that the great fifteenth-century Armenian physician Amirdovlat' of Amasia assigned to one of his tracts. Medicine requires skill and knowledge, many of its methods and ingredients are not indeed to be disclosed to those who might foolishly or maliciously misuse them, and some of its operations seem magical still. But Amirdovlat' did not intend his craft to be esoteric; as other compositions, *Usumn bžškut'ean*, "The study of healing" and *Ogut bžškut'ean* "The usefulness of healing", demonstrate. He believed the physician's art was useful to the body as prayer was, to the soul; and closed a tract with a brief poem: *Yoržam šaržmunk' lini c'awoc' / Ew astacem ast pitoyic' / Ew Astuac tay zarořjut' iwn ast hačoyic*: "When the symptoms of pains appear/ Then I provide the needed care;/ And God bestows health, if it pleases Him." In his manuals for treatment, Amirdovlat' lists each disease, then its cause, its signs, its treatment (*statsum*), and the opinions of various previous Greek, Arab, Persian, and Armenian experts. The famous Mkhitar' Herats'i figures among the latter. The title *bžškan* or an Arabic equivalent in Armenian, *Akhrapatin*, is fairly common in Armenian medical books, such as that of Grigoris, late fifteenth century, each chapter of whose book is called a "door" (*duřn*), suggesting a Muslim source: Arabic *bab* or Persian *dar*. Armenian doctors were prominent in the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere, and the tradition is long: in the late 18th century, for instance, Petros K'alant'arean, born at New Julfa in Isfahan, traveled to Moscow to study medicine. His "concise" (*hamarōt*) *bžškan* contains sections on emetics and laxatives, fever, stomach ache, liver ailments, problems of urination and ejaculation (*sermnakat'ut' iwn*), headache, cuts and wounds, skin diseases, and problems of the eyes, ears, teeth, and musculature. He frequently transcribes Latin terminology in Armenian script, and uses some Russian, too (*petrushka*, *romashka*) for herbal matters.⁵⁵ It is easy to imagine him taking a walk in the forests outside Moscow with a Russian friend on a beautiful bygone day, learning about plants and probably picking berries and mushrooms.

So Armenian medicine and medical books as such have a long pedigree; and it is likely that the copyist of our text worked from one or more of these, adding French words where a modern source indicated them or as he himself knew them. But the manuscript has two other sections, on spells and the magical employment of Psalms. These suggest still deeper, more ancient, springs. And such a mixture of relatively modern medicine, medieval magic, and magical use of Biblical texts is actually not at all strange or surprising, any more than was the interest of the compiler of our *bžškan* in these subjects. For in fact little in human culture is older than the association of magic and medicine. One of the spells in our manuscript invokes Solomon, the ancient king of Israel whom Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike regard as the greatest magician in history. Jewish tradition attributes to Solomon's authorship a book (*sefer*) or table (*tabla*) of remedies (*refu'ot*) for every disease. Towards the end of his life Solomon is said to have repented of his errant ways and consigned many of his writings to a great bonfire; but Hezekiah is supposed to have "concealed" the *Sefer Refu'ot*: the verb used is *ganaz*, an Iranian loan meaning "treasure" (Pers. *ganj*, Arm. *ganj*, etc.); and one recalls the derivative *geniza*, a storeroom for worn-out sacred texts. The Church Father Hippolytus cites an old tradition, repeated later and independently by Maimonides, to the effect that Hezekiah consigned the book to occultation because people had come to rely on it, rather than on God, for healing.⁵⁶ Just as for centuries magicians have produced magical books purporting to be the Seal of Solomon, which probably never existed; so the original of the book with which we deal now might have purported to be a revealed text of the *Sefer refu'ot*, whose actuality is likewise doubtful. Myths are inherently impossible, though meaningful; but legends can have a plausible basis in reality. It is at least possible that the sick sought the aid of king Solomon; for since time immemorial in diverse countries people have believed that the touch of a monarch can cure such tellingly-named ailments as the skin disease

⁵⁵ See Arak'el G. Arak'elyan, *Hay žořovrdi mtavor mšakuyt'i zargac'man patmut'yun*, Vol. 2, Erevan: Haypethrat, 1964, p. 374 ff.

⁵⁶ See David J. Halperin, "The Book of Remedies, the canonization of the Solomonic writings, and the riddle of Ps.-Eusebius," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 76.4 (Apr. 1982), pp. 269-292.

called in English “the king’s evil”. From there, the claim to be able to cure all diseases is but a hubristic expansion, to which would then be attached Solomon’s reputation as the author of thousands of books.

Solomon is often identified in Iranian and Islamic lore with the primordial king Jamshid (Avestan Yima *khshaeta* “the shining”, the equivalent of the Vedic lord of the dead, Yama), to whose hubris and fall from grace Zarathustra referred enigmatically in his hymns, the *Gathas*, probably in the late second millennium B.C. In later tradition, though, it is made quite clear that Jamshid demanded men worship him as God since he could cure every disease. Though one may dispute who inspired whom in the development of the legend, the Hebrew God is often death-dealing while the Persian Ahura Mazda, an entirely benevolent being, never is. So although both divinities are healers, the source of this particular detail of the Solomonic cycle may just be Iranian. Solomon’s legendary medicine had a magical aspect, too— yet another reason for remedies and spells to rub shoulders in the Armenian *Bžškaran*. Josephus reports that in the presence of the Roman emperor Vespasian a Jew named Eleazar employed an incantation (Gk. *epōdē*), Solomon’s name, and a root (probably the famous *baaras*) prescribed by the latter, to draw demons out of possessed men. And as for the third portion of our manuscript, the list of Psalms and their magical uses, one need only recall Josephus again: David was able to heal and exorcize Saul because he could charm away (Gk. *psallein*, cf. the word Psalm) spirits with his harp (*Ant.* 6.166-169).⁵⁷ One can scarcely criticize a pious Armenian for employing the Psalms to magical ends when their proto-Orphic author did the same himself.

The title page, with the single word *Bžškaran*, “Compendium of remedies”, is followed by 46 pages listing diseases, their symptoms, and treatment, written in purple ink with a *šetagir* cursive hand. Three additional pages of the same in pencil and black ink by the same hand follow. The language is Modern Western Armenian; and the names of diseases and medications are given also in French in parentheses. This would suggest that the manuscript was compiled at Aleppo: Syria after the first World War was French mandate territory according to the terms of the wartime Sykes-Picot agreement that divided the Arab spoils of the Ottoman Empire between Britain and France. Since Dr. Boyajian claimed the notebook was compiled by his grandfather, one can assert beyond reasonable doubt that the hand Mr. Nazarian’s own; and he wrote the notebook most likely in the 1920’s, in Aleppo.

The remedies in the first section are generally of the sort available at home (strong coffee and the like) or easily obtained at an apothecary shop in the days before sulfa drugs and antibiotics were discovered; and one supposes that the laboriously copied text was put to practical use. The first sickness addressed is migraine (*gluxin kēs c’aw*), for which sitting in the dark is recommended as the cure (*darman*), with a cachet of antipyrine or quinine sulfate. Treatments follow for various complaints including hemorrhoids (with the Turkish *mayasil* helpfully appended), constipation (*pndut’iwn*), drowsiness, drug-overdose (cocaine, morphine, belladonna, and laudanum), arsenic-poisoning, fish-poisoning, mushroom-poisoning, tuberculosis (with progressive symptoms carefully listed), epilepsy, colic, seasickness, cholera, hair loss, skin disease, rheumatism, shortness of breath, brain fever, brain hemorrhage, abscesses, neuralgia, stomach ailments, bronchitis, chills, cystitis, angina pectoris, athlete’s foot, and a fever called “snake disease” (*ojakht*, Tk. *ilanjik*) whose symptoms include trembling, vomiting, and redness of the nose. For the latter ailment *bžškin c’oyc’ tal*— a visit to the doctor— is recommended. The added pages in pencil and black ink address eye problems, toothache, and cuts: An example from p. 4: *Belladone* [French, i.e., Belladonna]: *nšan— beranē č’or ew ač’k’in biberē mecc’ac k’alan, ew hiwandā kə zāranc’ē. Darman— p’sxotakan, ařanc’ šak’ari zorawor surč talā ew hiwandā tak’c’nel.* “Belladonna: symptom— mouth dry and pupils of the eye dilated. The patient is raving. Treatment— emetic, keep the patient warm and give him strong coffee without sugar.” On p. 9, one is advised to administer “Bromhydrate de quinine, antipyrine” to treat a fever; and if the patient is spitting up blood, *sařoyc’i pok’ri(k) ktorner kllel tal* “have him swallow little bits of ice”. As a cynical Scottish convert to Orthodoxy swinging a censer in a Moscow church was once heard to mutter in between verses of the Old Slavonic liturgy, “If it does ye nie goud, it’ll do ye nie harm!”

⁵⁷ See Dennis Duling, “The Eleazar Miracle and Solomon’s Magical Wisdom in Flavius Josephus’ *Antiquitates Judaicae* 8.42-49,” *Harvard Theological Review* 78.1/2, 1985, pp. 1-25, esp. pp. 2, 4, 22.

Pages 50-64, in pencil and black ink, contain a series of magical spells in semi-Classical and Modern Armenian interspersed with lines of magical symbols or grids of the same that resemble magic squares but have only a few actual numbers (in Arabo-Muslim numerals, with occasional Western ones) in each example. These numbers don't add up; so the magical squares were either copied wrong or were gibberish from the start. The medical portion of the book is written in somewhat smaller letters, but the hand seems to be the same.

“(50) By the command of God Elijah the prophet lived in heaven 7 years and 6 months.⁵⁸ Solomon the wise bound the (fiery red?) giant⁵⁹ and all the (legions?)⁶⁰ of the demons he submerged and bound in the depths of the sea. Joshua bound the feet of the (son's king?) the sun;⁶¹ Daniel the prophet bound the mouths of the lions; (51) and as Moses the prophet parted the Red Sea and bound the same with fetters, I bind you, evil *t'pghas*,⁶² with the three nails and the milk of Mary the virgin, and as (52) the Lord Jesus Christ bound the evil Satan, so bound with the same fetters stand you before the keeper of this holy writing, NN,⁶³ in immovable fetters, in seven chains, and by the name of the holy tree of life of the Cross of Christ and of the Father and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. The holy Mother of God came and brought 300 (legions?) of iron. (53) Keep this writing with you: your fortune will open and you will be beloved before every man. The name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen. God the Father, creation of Adam. The beauty of Joseph was sweetened before Pharaoh. The Sole-Begotten Son was sweetened, salvation of the world was sweetened as at the love of Solomon for wisdom the bee was sweetened at its labor. So sweet before all men be (this person's name). God had mercy on us and blessed us as his heaven in us, and have mercy on us. (54) End. [Magical symbols] (55) For stomach ache write, God, strengthen a pure heart within me and renew the soul in my breast straightly. Write it all, then this [magic square]. Save me from sickness, God, God of my salvation and so on. (56) This writing is for a journey and a robber and the sea and harm done by witches. [Magical symbols] (57) [Blank] (58) [Blank] (59) Write for falling in love: Take red copper, write this talisman on it and write the name of the person desired, then cast it into fire, and say, May the heart of N of N burn for my love like this talisman. It will burn. By God⁶⁴ he will get up and come. [Magical symbols] Write this on a stone also and cast it into fire. [Magical symbols] And say, May the heart of N of N burn for my love. By God he will get up and come. (60) Write this and put it on your forehead. [Magical symbols] In order to kill your enemy, write these 6 letters on an egg and bury them in a field. The hour of your ill-wisher's death will be the hour he looks upon it. [Six magical symbols] And with (?)⁶⁵ incense burn for its *star⁶⁶. (61) If they want somebody's daughter and they do not give her away,

⁵⁸ I have not found another version of this spell; but in general it resembles other binding spells that list Biblical precedents; cf. Frédéric Feydit, *Amulettes de l'Arménie Chrétienne*, Venice: St. Lazarus, 1986, no. XCI (p. 256 f.).

⁵⁹ The text is unclear but seems to read **hrašēk k'ajñ*. There are Armenian spells against the *šēk mard* “red (haired) man” or *šēk ač'k'awor* “red-eyed man”: see Sargis Harut'yunyan, *Hay hmayakan ev žotovrdakan ašot'k'ner*, cited above, p. 84. According to the superstitions of many peoples red-haired people are dangerous or unlucky; and mediaeval Germans believed that demonic *rote Juden*, “red Jews” living outside the wall Alexander built to confine Gog and Magog were to burst forth as the army of the invading Antichrist.

⁶⁰ Arm. **gunds*, indistinct and crossed out before gen. pl. *divac*.

⁶¹ This refers to the miracle at Gibeon, *Joshua* 10.12-13.

⁶² The *t'pta* and *al* are mythical beings, the “child stealing witches” of Armenian and general Ancient Near Eastern mythology who make women sick in childbirth.

⁶³ Arm. *filan*, i.e., the Turkish form of a loan from Arabic, *fulān* “somebody, so-and-so”.

⁶⁴ Arm. inst. sg. *A(stuvc)*, that is, “with God's help”. This abbreviated, pious formula is repeated throughout.

⁶⁵ Arm. *u cac*.

⁶⁶ A symbol meaning “star”— an X with a dot in each angle (see Ašot Abrahamyan, *Hay gri ev grč'ut'yan patmut'yun*, Erevan: Haypethrat, 1959, table on p. 169)— is the only one used in the body of the text, as opposed to the separate talismans that follow each spell (one of which, on p. 54, includes it); and this is the only instruction to burn incense, presumably at a time indicated by an astrological calculation.

write this talisman, write the names of the people in that house along with it in a green bowl.⁶⁷ Then pour water over it till it is full. Let the boy who wants the girl wash in it, then take the water he has washed with, and pour it at the girl's door. By God, the desired girl [magical symbols]. (62) [Crossed out: If you want somebody to...] Releasing the binding of a bridegroom...⁶⁸ Clap your hands: Heavenly God, the 'Render power' and write the name next to it on two pieces of paper. Let the groom and his bride wash with the first piece. Let the groom bind the second to his right arm and by God he will be released. Here they are: *Hasaviṭ, mat'um, marum, mat'eumn, mariun, mahk'on, avasi, azavmi, marut*.⁶⁹ By God he is released. (63) [Magical symbol] Write this on your beloved's [crossed out: she will come] threshold on the first Wednesday of the moon [=month?] and bury it there. By God, she will come. Keep it on you and you will be beloved of all men. [Magical symbols] (64) [Magical symbols] End."

Page 65 is blank and the text resumes with the third section on p. 66, a list of Psalms and their uses written hastily in large letters in pencil: "(Vol.?) 1 ch.⁷⁰ For going to court; Vol. (?) 6 ch. For not being harmed. (67) Psalm 58, 3, 8, to be rescued from an enemy. 'The heavens relate...' To cross the sea or a river ch. 68, read on the sea." The main text begins with a heading on p. 68 and is in clear black ink, with dividing lines between each Psalm, which I identify according to the numeration of the Armenian Bible in curved brackets {}. The verses cited are sometimes corrupt, sometimes different from the Classical text, so the translations are direct and my own, rather than from the KJV or other standard translation:

"Chapter of the Psalm(s) of David. 'Blessed is the man who did not go' {1}. It is for planting trees and plants that they are not harmed, by God. 'Why are the heathens disturbed.' {2} For when you go into court your cause will succeed. 'Lord, for many are they who have oppressed me.' {3} For counteracting ill will: read it and by God you will be free of all evil. 'When I called you heard me, God.' {4} When you fall into straitened circumstances, read it and by God you will be freed. (69) 'Give ear to my words, O Lord.' {4} For pain in the eyes. Read it over hot water and wash your face. You will be freed by God. 'Lord, do not oppose me with your anger.' {6} Concerning a witch. Read it 5 times over water for 3 days. Then wash yourself, and you will be freed by God. 'Lord my God, I have hoped in you, save.' For being afraid of a man. You will be freed by God. 'Lord, our Lord, for wondrous is the name.' {8} For evil will against a man. You will be saved from him and he will not bother you anymore, by God. 'I will thank⁷¹ you Lord in all.' {9} For other evil read this and you will be freed by God. (70) 'I hoped in you as you will say to my soul.' {10} For an insane person. Read it over him or write it on a piece of raw canvas and keep it on his head: he will be freed by God. 'Save my life O Lord for I grow faint.' {11} For a man deprived. When they deprive you, read it over rose oil and anoint your face and hands and you will be freed by God.

⁶⁷ Arm. *č'anaxi*; variant *č'ank'i* partially erased. The first form is a Central or Eastern Anatolian pronunciation of standard Turkish *çanak*, "bowl". The second form might have been erased as it could be confused with Tk. *çünkü*, "because". Aside from a particular color, the type of bowl is never specified in these spells; nor am I aware of the existence of Armenian inscribed magic bowls of the sort found in ancient and late antique Mesopotamia and, for instance, in modern Iran.

⁶⁸ Followed by unclear words: *zay erig tun ev abmun* (?)

⁶⁹ This rhyming concatenation of vaguely Arabic magical words is mostly nonsense save perhaps for the final one, which may be the name Marut. Harut and Marut are the Armenian (or Sogdian, though distance makes this less likely) forms of the Middle Iranian names of the Zoroastrian Amesha Spentas ("Holy Immortal" archangels) that preside over the plants and waters, Haurvatāt and Amərətāt. They replace in the *Qur'an* the twin angels Shemhazai and Azazel of Jewish demonology, who dwell in a cave and teach magic to all comers. What is interesting is the appropriateness of the name to the magical rite, for on Ascension Eve, Armenian girls take petals of the flower *horot-morot* and place them, with various personal possessions, in a bowl of water that is then guarded beneath the stars. Heaven opens that night, it is believed; and on the morn a girl takes each possession and reads out to its owner a quatrain predicting her fortunes in love and wedlock. This *vičakaxat*, or "game of lots", is here distilled into a magical rite. (See J.R. Russell, "Hārūt and Mārūt: The Armenian Zoroastrian Demonic Twins in the *Qur'an* Who Invented Fiction," Irano-Judaica conference, Hebrew Univ., Jerusalem, Oct. 2010, forthcoming in *Proceedings*.)

⁷⁰ Arm *h.* may abbreviate *hator*, "volume"; *gl.* abbreviates *glux*, "chapter".

⁷¹ *Gohac'uc'* for Clas. Arm. *gohac'ayc'*, would be a Modern Arm. 3rd pers. sg. factitive "he satisfied" in place of a forgotten Clas. Arm. "I will thank"!

'Till when, O Lord, do you forget me?' {12} For robbers; and read it aloud that you be freed by God. 'The insensate one has said in his heart' {13} is for matters of witchcraft of a man. Read it over water and give it to him to drink; he will be freed by God.⁷² {71} 'Lord, who will stand in your canopy?' {14} This is for a crazed demon-possessed person.⁷³ Set down a vessel of water, read this over it, warm it and wash that man: he will be freed by God. 'Listen, Lord of righteousness, and look' {16} is for all snares and evil mischances. Read it and you will be freed by God. 'I will love you my Lord of power' {17} is for all snares and harm. Read it and you will be freed by God. 'The Lord will hear you on the day of sorrow.' {19} For success by God's command. 'Lord may he be glad in your power.' {20} For enemies, that you may be freed by God. Renew.⁷⁴ {72} 'God, my God, look upon me.' {21} Against weapon and poisonous snake. Read it every morning that your affairs may prosper by God. 'God the earth with its fullness.' {23}⁷⁵ For snakes and scorpions, that they do not go and harm any man, by God. 'I called to you, Lord God' {27} is for success and the day of evils. Read it 4 times: you will be freed by God from every evil. 'Judge for me, Lord, for I am accursed.' {25}⁷⁶ For a court case. It will succeed. Lord God. {73} 'The Lord is my light and my life.' {26} For a thief. Read it five times a day to turn the thief away, by God's will. 'I called to you, Lord God.' {27} For evil-wishers: write it on a goatskin. Hang it over the house and the evil-wisher will flee or go crazy by God. 'Approach the Lord God' {28} is for wasting disease. Recite it over olive oil and smear it: he will be healed by God.⁷⁷ 'I exalt you Lord for receive.' {29} For the sea: read it 3 times every day and travel fearlessly, by God."

The list resumes on p. 81 in scrawled pencil:

"Ch. 137, 'I will confess.' For trade and profit, read 7 times a day for 7 days. (82) Ch. 122, 'To you, Lord, I raised,' 2 times till 'Have mercy on us, O Lord, and have mercy' is for headaches that happen on one side.⁷⁸ And write the talisman and keep it on your head. [Magical symbols] (83) Ch. 41, 'As he longs for the bride' till 'I said to God, I am acceptable.' Read 50 times and keep the talisman. [Magical symbols] (84) Ch. 59, 'God, you have rejected.' Recite till 'By your right hand and hear us.' Write the talisman. [Magical symbols] (85) Ch. 19, 'May God hear you.' Read 3 times and count your demands. They will be fulfilled immediately; and for headache read till 'We will greatly...' and keep this talis(man) on you. [Magical symbols] (86) Ch. 39, 'Rejoice.' [Magical symbols] Amen, amen. (87) Ch. 22, 'The Lord is my shepherd.' Read 7 times: sadness will turn to gladness and if you have business with a great man⁷⁹ read it 7 times and go and ask and immediately he will fulfill or give. (88) Ch. 24, 'To you, Lord.' Read 3 times for a prisoner. He will be freed of all oppression. Take soil from beneath your foot and read over it 40 times, drop and scatter it. He will be freed."

Two loose, small pieces of paper were found inserted into the notebook. One, evidently in Mr. Nazarian's hand, is a slightly ungrammatical Classical Armenian Biblical imprecation, perhaps employed for magical purposes to ward off an enemy: *Xawaresc'ē ač'k' noc'ay zi mi tesanic'en* "He will darken their eyes that they not see." This is in black pencil; on the reverse, in the purple ink of the section on remedies,

⁷² Arm. *vasn kaxardut'ean irac' mardoy* "for matters of witchcraft of a man" is an awkward construction, perhaps meaning that the Psalm has power over any manner of things caused by devilry. The full verse of the Psalm protests that the fool in his heart says there is no God; so perhaps Armenians associated the black arts with atheist disbelief or belief only in powers other than the Almighty.

⁷³ Arm. *vasn xewi ew diwahari*: *xew* is an epithet employed sometimes by *ashughs*, minstrels, with the specific sense of love-crazed (see J.R. Russell, *Yovhannes T'lkuranc'i and the Mediaeval Armenian Lyric Tradition*, Armenian Texts & Studies Series, Univ. of Pennsylvania, Scholars Press, Atlanta, GA, 1987).

⁷⁴ Arm. *Norogo* stands alone on the last line of the page. My instinct was that the copyist had begun to write the hymn *Norogot tiezerac'*, "Renewer of the universe." But one cannot know.

⁷⁵ Arm. *Tērn*, nom., instead of the gen. *Teārn*, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof..."

⁷⁶ Arm. *yanēcs*, "in curses", is a startling misreading of *yanbcut'ean* "in unblemishedness!"

⁷⁷ The citation of the verse omits *ordik'* "sons (of God)", whose literal meaning outside its idiomatic Hebrew context would surely have scandalized a believer in the *Miacin*, Sole-Begotten, Christ. *Barak c'aw* is literally "thin pain"; and I read *zeyt' eal(in)* as Tk. *zeytinyaḡi*, "olive oil".

⁷⁸ That is, hemispheric: migraine.

⁷⁹ The Arm. here mixes the pseudo-Classical with the thoroughly idiomatic: *Ew mec mardoy het xndirk' ma unisnē*. The last word would be in "standard" Modern Western, *et'ē unenas*, "if you have".

is a more mundane text: a cure for hemorrhoids, with the ingredients of the medicine to be compounded listed in grams.

On another scrap of paper, in a careful but crude hand, is a short love poem that reminds one strongly of the *hayrens* attributed to the late mediaeval bard Nahapet K'uč'ak. It was probably originally a quatrain of ancient Armenian octosyllabic lines with a caesura at each hemistich; but the text is corrupt and full of misspellings: *Du vard unis/ yawēt garun/ k'u kieank'n i tel mənayun/ es i ayrunim im hok'ul mēj var mənau* "You have a rose that is/ Eternal spring; your life/ Forever in your heart./ But I have fire in my soul/ That can never be put out." On the reverse of the slip is a recipe for a popular dessert called *hat hat p'al luzayz* ("piece by piece" followed by unfamiliar words) calling for two cups each of cornstarch (*nišē*) and sugar, and three of water. This mixture is stirred in such a way that the resulting sweet, which is still popular in the Armenian community, crumbles like grains of rice.

To conclude, we may observe that the medical portion of the manuscript deals mostly with everyday complaints: constipation and hemorrhoids, migraine and stomach ache, and different kinds of poisoning; and the remedies prescribed are of the sort that would have been easily and inexpensively available. Consultation of a physician is recommended only once; and every cure can be done at home. There is no reference to surgery, no recourse to specialized medical instruments. So this part of the manuscript probably was used. The two magical sections of spells and Psalms focus on love and marriage, court cases and one's reputation and image, counteracting the ill will and machinations of enemies, head and chest pain again, and the thieves and perilous conditions at sea or on the road that beset the traveler. From the urbane, sophisticated image of Mr. Nazarian that we have, it is most unlikely that having copied the talismans, he employed them to concoct potions, mutter dire spells to destroy foes, or perform lecanomantic rites to woo women. Use of a magic bowl for such a purpose, one imagines, might have earned him a smart bat on the head from an irate wife wielding a wholly unmagical frying pan. His curiosity about the occult is of a diffident sort many of an intellectual bent share— I am writing this study, am I not— so it was sufficient to engage his writing hand; but one thinks he kept the darker forces of the supernatural at arm's length.

Recitation of the Psalms was probably another matter. It is common for printed editions of the *Narek*, the *Book of Lamentations* of St. Grigor Narekac'i, the tenth-century mystical poet-theologian, to contain a list of chapters to be prayed for this or that purpose; and owners of these books frequently added lists of their own. I have several such, large and small, from the 18th to the 20th century, in my own collection. Christian and Jewish believers resort to the help of the Psalms for comfort in grief, help in healing, relief from fear, and reassurance in the face of enmity. I have done so myself, in sickness and in health. So Mr. Nazarian might have used this list, too. Again, one would imagine that he did not employ everything he copied; and he mentions only a quarter or so of the hundred-and-fifty Psalms; so perhaps he had only a partial manuscript, or his notebook was coming to an end, or he was just tired.

It is not clear what the magical symbols he copied, sometimes assiduously, sometimes it would seem a bit more playfully or carelessly, meant to him. He uses only one symbol or abbreviation, an X with four dots, one in each angle, in the text itself. He surely understood the Arabic numbers and individual letters of the Arabic alphabet that appear; but the rest of the symbols, whether rising from a base line or inscribed freely in space, do not seem to have any translatable meaning and never did, although many of them have been systematically employed in Armenian cryptograms. The bulk of them, with the obvious exception of permuted letters of the Armenian alphabet, seem to derive from Muslim magical texts, where they have no linguist sense either.

None of the spells touch upon any achievement of technology of the last two centuries; though the medical portion does mention cocaine, a recent import to the Near East. Although recent editions of the Armenian *Erazahan*, or book of interpretation of dreams, incorporate the images of recent inventions: telephones, trains, air travel, electric lights, and so on— we do not find them here. Travel is only by sea. The setting seems to be that of a rural village: one buries magic bowls in fields, not on the crossroads of

187th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue.⁸⁰ Still, not much has changed in the human condition, perhaps. Travel is more common, and faster; but it still has its dangers. A number of Psalms are addressed to the insane, the lovesick, the possessed, the depressed. Sigmund Freud died in 1939, less than a decade after our manuscript made its sea journey to the New World; but most people beset by the sorrows of life still confided their troubles, not to a psychiatrist, but to God or loving friends and family. Society was kinder, and more respectful, to the elderly; but the young still clamored for excitement and passion. I close the book, return to these latter days, and wonder whether we have really come so far. Genocide did not end with the Armenians and the Jews, but became an increasingly common instrument of state policy; and people were as indifferent to the Rwandan slaughter as it was happening as they were to Auschwitz. Have texting, Prozac, and Ritalin really ameliorated human loneliness and sorrow? The warm kitchen, the cup of coffee, the actual and not virtual face of a trusted friend or loved relative, seem to me more authentic and less alienating.

To read a manuscript, to read this manuscript, in the intricate blending of Classical and Modern language and the delicate script of an ancient and noble literary tradition, is to read both the long and complex civilization of the Armenian people— from Solomonic legend to Amirdovlat' and beyond— the epochs and peregrinations of its history, and the particular, recent past of my Manhattan neighborhood, and to hear loved voices. A manuscript has a pedigree but it is a unique object, a primary source. It has the complete integrity of a physical object. It has being; it is a witness. A witness, when questioned, speaks; and a manuscript is an enduring witness. So I have asked questions of this manuscript that must first of all establish its time and origin and content, the translated facts of the text. These require the tools of language, of Armenian philology. But one also asks about its ancestry, what a book of both healing and magic was historically intended to represent, how its parts were seen to come together, in Solomonic legend and in healing practice. And other questions address its context: its copyist and owner, his motives, his times, his peregrinations, the uses to which he and perhaps others might have put the manuscript. I wonder at its durability in its long journey across lands and seas of time and space, of the way the world around it has changed. These questions require a background in the humanities, an awareness of the depth and breadth of the sea of our civilization. And since the world and our perception, changes so much, sometimes we think we read an ancient witness right and cannot know we are in fact mistaken. It is no minor pitfall in scholarship, that; and I am reminded, in this last regard, of the English poet Philip Larkin's "An Arundel Tomb", which explains how the nearly unintended symbolism of a monument over the ages may become the main thing that later generations think they have understood about it. It enjoins humility, and poignancy of feeling, and wonder, and reminds us that we are connected, a part of that we study in the common enterprise of life, of which one result is human culture. *Verba volant, scripta manent*: spoken words fly away, writings endure. The living voices that sounded round the book in its journey through the 20th century are faint, and most are gone. Those voices seem sometimes gentler than the stridor of these times. They blend together: the Sephardic sounds of Brooklyn, my grandmother and her kitchen and her stories, my Armenian teachers Vart Tarpinian and Mary Tsaggos, Levon Boyajian, the enchanting sounds of Washington *Hayots*, the place where I grew up, the Armenia on the Hudson River, that is gone forever and where I am now a stranger who can never go home again, wandering in an unfamiliar age, speaking of an old book of magic that has survived and will outlive me. If the book is a witness, it sees us too: Nietzsche reminded one that when you stare long enough into the abyss, the abyss stares back. So if the book, fragile and enduring witness, that I cradle in my hands spoke back to me, in this onrushing flood of time that carries its maker and its keepers all away, what might it say? Perhaps an echo of the meditation upon Tithonus of another British poet, Alfred, Lord Tennyson:

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,
The vapors weep their burthen to the ground,
Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,
And after many a summer dies the swan.
Me only cruel immortality

⁸⁰ Ironically, perhaps, a different kind of witchcraft, as a part of the Afro-Caribbean Santería religion, does thrive in the neighborhood; and implements of the craft can be purchased at numerous shops called *botanicas*.

The Cross and the Lotus:

The Armenian Miscellany *Patmut' iwn plnjē k'alak'i* ("History of the City of Brass") on the Periphery of the Iranian *Oikoumene*

James R. Russell
(Harvard University, Cambridge MA)

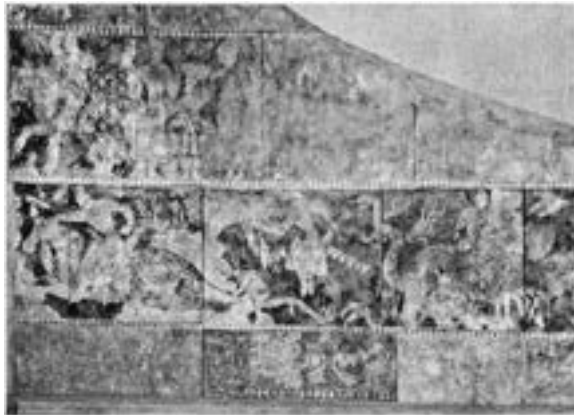
Persian, literature as a didactic tool, a source of common reference in discourse, an embellishment of the art of living speech, is as central to the idea of Iran as Chaucer, Shakespeare, Austen, and Dickens are to the idea of England. Every morning, in September of 2000, a niece or nephew of my friend Professor Azhideh Moqaddam would stop on the way to school at my hotel in Tehran with a scrap of paper: an illuminated calligraphic verse of Sa'di or Hāfez they had memorized. I collected these; and they bind together the album (NP *muraqqa'*) of my cherished memories, of what I learned of Iranian life. They are — and we shall pursue this metaphor presently — part of the patched cloak of one's journey through life. Surely the glory of classical Persian literature had a native ancestor, but who is it? For most of the texts extant in Zoroastrian Book Pahlavi — the indigenous literature of the Sasanian era — are theological in content, with little pretense to aesthetic effect. They achieved the form in which they have come down to us only in the ninth century CE, three centuries after the end of the dynasty and at a point when it was obvious that, barring supernatural intervention, Iran was to turn decisively to Islam. The major works of this Middle Persian corpus deal directly with the *Avesta* and its *Zand*, elucidate points of Mazdean dogma and ritual, or engage in theological polemic — the Pahlavi *zand* of the Avestan *Yasna*, *Vispered* and *Videvdad*, the *Bundahišn* ["Creation", with an account of the confrontation of the primordial spirits of good and evil, followed by lists of the various creations], *Dēnkard* ["Acts of the Faith", sometimes described as a kind of *summa theologica*], *Dādestān ī dēnīg* ["Religious Judgment"], *Herbedestān* and *Nirangestān* [treatises of sacerdotal training and practice, in a concise shorthand style], *Šāyest ne šāyest* ["Do and Don't"], *Mēnōg ī Xrad* ["The Spirit of Wisdom"], *Škand-gumānīg wizār* ["Doubt-dispelling Exposition", a polemic against other faiths]. The same priestly collection preserves various compositions attributed to the revered fourth-century high priest Ādurbād ī

Amahraspandān: *Čīdag andarz ī pōryōtkēšān* ["Select Counsels of the Ancient Sages", a catechism composed perhaps in response to such Christian texts as the Nicene Creed], prayers in the *Khordeh Avesta* such as the credal *Nām stāyišn* ["Praise by name is meet to Ohrmazd"], etc. A very few are episodes from the epic past of Zoroastrian Iran (*Ayādgār ī Zarērān* ["The Memorial of Zarer"], *Kārnāmag ī Ardešīr ī Pābagān* ["Acts of Ardešir son of Papak"]) or wisdom tales (*Draxt ī Asūrīg* ["The Assyrian Tree", a wisdom text in which the benefits to man of the date-palm and the goat are compared], *Jōišť ī Friyān* ["Youngest of the Friya Clan", in which a Mazdean youth defeats the sorcerer Akht, "Vice" in a riddle contest]); and some deal with apocalyptic hopes (*Madan ī Varahrān ī Varzāvand* ["The Coming of Verethraghna the Thaumaturge", with vengeful predictions of the doom of Islam], *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* ["The Memorial of Jamaspa", used by Parsis for divination], and probably in this category too the *Ardā Wirāz Nāmag* ["The Book of Wiraz the Righteous", the account of an out-of-body visit to the infernal and heavenly realms, and thus a remote precursor of Dante]). The writings dealing with such secular topics as epistolary style (*Nāmag nibēsišn*), postprandial speeches (*Sūr saxwan*), chess (*Wizārišn ī čatrang*), and the pleasures of life at court (*Khusrō ud rēdag*), are few and concise. Even where they deal with eloquence, their style is cramped. Sasanian epigraphy is generally limited to political matters — as was the case with the Achaemenians, the Prophet Zarathustra himself is not mentioned once in the corpus, though Ohrmazd, the *yazatas*, and the sacred fire are. The several inscriptions of the third-century CE high priest Kirdēr, who checked the growth of Manichaeism in the empire, are an exception, and describe a visionary journey of the soul probably patterned on that of *Ardā Wiraz*. And although the discovery a century ago of the Manichaean Middle Persian and Parthian corpus has enlarged our understanding of language and belief, the contribution of these texts to our knowledge of secular, artistic culture is, again, fairly meagre.¹

Yet we know, notably from the catalogue (*Fihrist*) of the books in his father's shop composed by Ibn an-Nadīm — thank God for men of leisure — that there was a rich Sasanian secular literature alongside the writings of divines, and what we now possess seems to be, *grosso modo*, material that was deemed worthy of rescue and swiftly compiled for the purposes of survival of the Mazdean community in reduced circumstances. In rare cases, outside testimonia can be corroborated with surviving texts: Athenaeus in his *Deipnosophists* asserts that Persians paint scenes from the romance of Zariadris and Odatis in their temples — and the *Memorial of Zarēr*, mentioned above, exists in Pahlavi though its content is more religious than romantic. Other epic narratives in the lost Sasanian *Khwadāy nāmag* were the source from which Daqīqī drew material that Firdausi/ was in turn to incorporate into the *Šāhnāme*. But it is mainly to the translation activity of Ibn al-Muqaffa' and the *shu'ubīya* — the newly-converted Persian Muslims who committed themselves to preserving their old cultural treasures in a new tongue — that we owe the counsels attributed to king Khusrau Anushirvan and his vizier Wuzurgmihr,

the animal fables of the Indian *Panchatantra* that became, via Pahlavi transmission, the *Kalila wa Dimna*, the strands of tales threaded together in the story of the maiden Shahrizād that were to be assembled into the Arabic *One Thousand Nights and a Night*, and references to the lyrics of Barbad and other *gōsāns*. The mention of Indian storytelling reminds one that pre-Islamic Iranian literature was also a conduit for Buddhist texts: through Manichaean and Persian translations the teaching of the life of the Buddha and the *bodhisattva* doctrine outlined in the *Lalitavistara* became Christianized in the Georgian *Balavariani* and then through the Greek *Barlaam and Ioasaph* (falsely attributed to John Damascenus) was diffused through the European literatures.² The subsequent history of this text alone demonstrates the importance of this Silk Road of the intellect, as it were, to the fortunes of mankind: Leo Tolstoy in his *Ispoved'* ("Confession") avows that a parable in the book inspired him to turn away from wealth and worldly vanity and to craft the theory of non-violence; and Mahatma Gandhi and, following him, the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King put the theory into practice.

Though the Persian-speaking centre was nearly always the core of power, one must look also to the regions upon which political history imposes the somewhat misleading but still useful designation "peripheral Iran"—one might call it also, and more equitably, the Iranian *oikoumene* — to acquire a fuller picture of the literary heritage that was carried over into the Islamic period and to appreciate the rich, cosmopolitan diversity that informed it. Though my teacher Professor Nicholas Sims-Williams once opined that a word is worth a thousand pictures, I would like to approach my task beginning, at least, with pictures—the frescoes found in homes of Sogdian Panjikant, most of which date from the mid-eighth century CE, that is, shortly after the Arab conquest of the region.



Panjikant frescoes, Sogd, ca. 8th cent.; Muraqqa', Iran and Central Asia, ca. late 14th cent.; Church of the Holy Cross, south elevation, Alt'amar, Vaspurakan, Armenia, A.D. 920.

These are well known from the studies of the late Boris Marshak and others; so a brief survey of significant points should suffice. They were done by painters who executed also performance scrolls; and from written captions it would seem reciters of epics, fables, and romances entertained the master of the house and his guests much as the *Šāh-nāme-khān* (a reader of the “Book of Kings”) does in a Tehran *qahveh-khāne* (lit. “coffee-house”, actually a restaurant serving tea) to this day, gesturing to the pictures and adding interactive commentary to his text to involve the audience. The frescoes are in vertical registers; and when there are three, the order of subjects from the top down is divine, heroic, and human. The subjects are drawn from the same array of texts we have seen that are sparsely attested in Pahlavi but abundantly, in Arabic and New Persian: the exploits of Rostam the Saka, the *Panchatantra* and the fables of Aesop, and other sources such as local tales: indeed, in Marshak’s words, “we find illustrations to a whole library of the secular books so poorly represented among Sogdian and other Middle Iranian literary texts which have come down to us.”³ The frescoes, while expensive, did not belong to royalty; rather, they suggest upward mobility and imitation by a mercantile class. Accordingly, a setting of travel thematically unifies many pictures of didactic character.⁴ Presumably allegories about the acquisition of wisdom couched in the narrative framework of travel existed in other media used for social entertainment, such as painted scrolls and books: one argued long ago for the authenticity of a Sogdian bas-relief with a Zoroastrian funerary scene of the Northern Qi period in China that probably also tells the life story of a traveling merchant; since then, several other such narrative bas-reliefs have come to light.⁵

Another important feature of the Panjikant frescoes is their eclecticism: Rostam rubs shoulders, almost literally, with fictional characters from perhaps as far away as Rome — if indeed the scene of a child suckled by a wolf is not of more locally Turkic or Hyrcanian provenance. Translated into literary terms, what we deal with is a miscellany; so, while negotiating the way back from pictures to text, we may consider briefly the genre of the *muraqqa’*. This Arabic term, which referred originally to the heavily-patched cloak worn by Sufis, came to be applied to the Persian albums in which choice samples of calligraphy, drawings, and paintings were compiled for



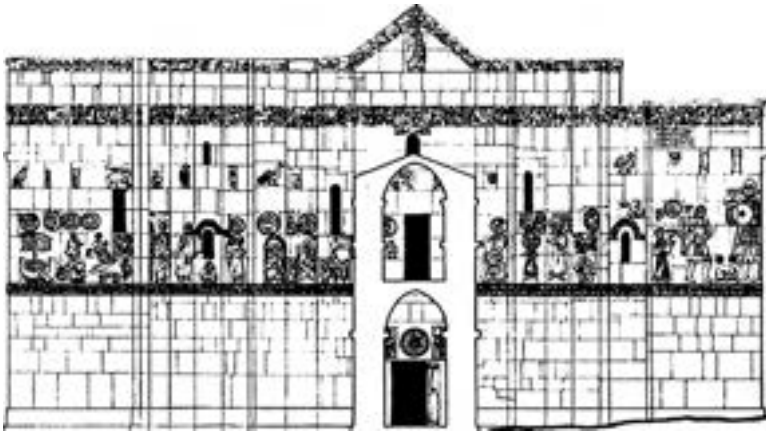
Panjikant frescoes, Sogd, ca. 8th cent.; Muraqqa’, Iran and Central Asia, ca. late 14th cent.; Church of the Holy Cross, south elevation, Alt’amar,

noblemen. The purpose of these “gatherings of like material” both the systematization of knowledge and the provision of edification: they came out of what David Roxburgh has characterized as “a long and venerated tradition of making compilations for the purpose of giving advice.”⁶ The pre-Islamic Iranian component is strong: the calligraphy album of Baysonghur, for instance, contains aphorisms attributed to the Sasanian kings Ardešīr and Khusrau and the latter’s vizier Wuzurgmihr, with the latter repeatedly quoted as saying “*adab* is the best legacy.”⁷ This maxim, which one might easily pass over as a commonplace remark, deserves some attention, as it points to one of the main reasons why miscellanies of *moralia* were compiled and frescoes with manifold parallel scenes painted. *Paideia*, *farhang*, *adab*: the concept of civility of values and manners rooted in a general education in the humane classics, as Peter Brown demonstrated in his taut, brilliant work *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity*, was the invisible binding force of society, the unwritten law, the tacit constitution that enfranchised the holy man, the wise counsellor, the learned orator to speak fearlessly to the powerful and that ideally prevented the arbitrary abuse of power by the latter. The social and semantic distance, then, from the patched *khirqā* of the dervish to the sumptuous royal album of precious works of art, is not that great; for what better lesson could civility impress upon king and commoner than the human common denominator of the evanescence of wealth, the transience of condition, the inevitability of mortality? That lesson might be clearest in fables and tales of itinerant Sufis and merchants, but it resounds through epic as well: *Et in Arcadia ego*.

And now to Armenia. Imagining the rim of the shield of Aeneas, Virgil did not think of Homer’s Ocean stream but of “the Araxes that suffers no bridges”, a stock phrase — Tacitus knows it, too — for in Roman eyes the riparian frontier of Armenia was that of Iran as well: more than the watery wastes beyond the Pillars of Hercules, the Araxes was the impassable *eschaton* of the Empire. From the East it is less clear whether Armenia was considered *Ērān* or *Anērān*; yet Armenian culture, with its Zoroastrian substratum and huge linguistic fund of Iranian loans, can be fruitfully be viewed as the Iranian *chrétienté* — the particular expression of an Iranized Christianity that might have arisen in the metropolis itself, had the gravitational pull of the temperate Mediterranean — of the Biblical, Greco-Roman, and Orthodox cultures — exceeded the fierce, hot winds of the Arabian desert. Armenia is on the western periphery of the *oikoumene*; Sogdia, on the eastern — and the two display some structural affinities. Power in Artaxiad and Arsacid Armenia was largely decentralized in the hands of the hereditary dynastic clans of the different mountainous cantons, designated by the Parthian loan *naxarar*; while the country’s cities were points of international commerce. Yuri Slezkine in a recent monograph⁸ introduced the categories of Mercurians and Apollonians to distinguish cosmopolitan peoples whose strength derives from the movement of goods and services and the exploitation and development of information technology from nations that maintain themselves on defined territories, are ruled by landed hierarchies rooted in an agricultural economy, and rely upon

military might. The Sogdians developed a far-flung commercial diaspora that reached its apogee in the post-Sasanian era; in the Armenian case, the diasporan pattern does not reach its fullness until the Ottoman centuries. But in literature and the graphic arts we can observe parallel developments, *mutatis mutandis* for the Christianized Armenian forms, that speak for a cultural kinship across the *oikoumene*.

Canonical scenes of the Gospels dominate pictorial narrative, with the important exception of portrayals in bas relief on memorial *xač'k'ars* "cross-stones" of the typically Iranian royal hunt, the triumph during which the mounted nobleman bears aloft the ring of *khwarānah* (Arm. *p'ark'*), and of course fighting and feasting (*razm* yields Arm. *razm-ik*, "warlike", and *pate-razm* "war"; *bazm* is loaned into Arm. *bazmem* "sit [for a feast]").⁹



Panjikant frescoes, Sogd, ca. 8th cent.; Muraqqa', Iran and Central Asia, ca. late 14th cent.; Church of the Holy Cross, south elevation, Alt'amar, Vaspurakan, Armenia, A.D. 920.

The outer walls of the tenth-century church of the Holy Cross on Alt'amar island are decorated with bands of narrative scenes in successive registers of bas relief; and at times the animals gambolling in the vine scroll may mock the serious deeds of kings and prophets below. (Such satire is common in book illumination elsewhere in Christendom, as Michel Camille showed in his *Image on the Edge* and other studies; and it is known on churches as well.) We may have here a parallel to the stacked, linear narratives of Panjikant; and since perambulations of churches were done in consecration and ritual in Armenia, the bas reliefs might not have been merely mute tales, but visual support to a verbal narrative, in a sacralized variant of the entertainments enjoyed by the rich Sogdian merchant and his guests at a wine party. In any event the Armenians called their minstrels by the loaned Iranian term *gusan* (it has been largely superseded by Arabic *ashugh* now); and one of them, Kostandin of

Erznka (Tk. Erzincan), was asked by his “brethren” (apparently members of a *fuṭuwwa*-like order) to compose and sing an Armenian poem in the meter of the *Šāhnāme*, suggesting they had some knowledge of the epic in the Persian original. He obliged them, and the result is a fair emulation.¹⁰

The first Biblical verse St. Mesrop Maštoc’ rendered into Armenian in the fifth century CE, employing the new alphabet he had devised, was *Čanač’el zimastut’iwnn ew zxrāt, imanal zbans hančaroy*, “To know wisdom and instruction; to perceive the words of understanding” (Prov. 1.1, KJV), with at least one Iranian loan, from *khrađ* “wisdom”— and the practice of compilation of miscellanies of *moralia* seems to go back very far. Although MSS. containing a fair proportion of the contents of the miscellany that became popular under the designation of its title story, *Patmut’iwn plnjē k’alak’i* (PPK), go back to the sixteenth century, the separate texts comprising the collection are known directly and from references centuries earlier.¹¹ Many of these have been individually edited, and have been studied with reference to other secular works of the Classical and Middle Armenian corpus, particularly the *Alexander Romance*.¹² The stable PPK text was printed first at Constantinople the 18th cent.; and after subsequent editions there and at Tiflis, with some subtractions and editions, the last publication seems to have been a translation into Western Modern Armenian printed at Constantinople after World War I. The contents of the Tiflis edition of 1857 are: 1. “The History of the City of Brass, which is an example of this world” (*Patmut’iwn plnjē k’alak’i or ē ōrinak ašxarhis*), 2. “History concerning P’ahlul the king” (*Patmut’iwn yalags P’ahlul t’agaworin*), 3. “Helpful counsels made by the poet king whose name is Nušrēvan” (*Xratk’ ōgtakark’ arareal banastelc’ t’agaworin oroy anunn ē Nušrēvan*), 4. “Useful and helpful counsels that Xikar the Wise made” (*Xratk’ pitanik’ ew ōgtakark’ zor arareal ē Xikaray imastnoy*), 5. “History of the girl and the boy and their questions to each other” (*Patmut’iwn aljkan ew mankan ew harc’ munk’ noc’a and mimeans*), 6. “Life and history of Alexianos the ascetic” (*Vark’ ew patmut’iwn Alēk’sianosi čgnaworin*), 7. “History of lord Yusik and his son Step’annos” (*Patmut’iwn tēr Yuskan ew ordwoy norin Step’annosin*), 8. “Children’s amusements” (*Zbōsank’ tlayoc’*). Peter Schäfer suggested that one study the contents of variant MSS. by identifying macroforms, that is, large, shifting, but relatively stable units of text, composed of microforms, smaller blocks of tradition that appear in different places in different MSS. or in other works entirely as well.¹³ That is a good general method for studying the PPK: all editions have the title story, but most do not have the *Life* St. Stephen of Artamet; many versions of the famous pan-Christian story of St. Alexis the voluntary pauper exist in Armenian prose and verse; the counsels of Anushirvan are found in translation elsewhere, as is the tale of king Bahlōl, who abandoned his throne to become a dervish; and the Armenian translation of *Aḫiqar*, which must date back to the fifth century, is an apocryphal text of the Bible. The chapter called “Children’s amusements” is in Tiflis and Constantinople editions of the 19th century and consists of two tables, the 36 letters of the Classical Armenian alphabet and the twelve signs of the

Zodiac, each letter or sign accompanied by a sententious moral admonition.

The title story, of the City of Brass, is well known from the corpus of the *One Thousand Nights and a Night*; and of several extant Armenian versions the earliest translation, from Arabic, was made for David the Curopalate c. A.D. 1000.¹⁴ Though the contents of individual collections of the *PPK* shift, the City of Brass carries the message of the macroform, and the other texts echo it: life is a road with many illusory temptations and reversals of fortune, earthly rank is meaningless, the quest for glory is vain, and true wisdom is to be found in prayerful submission to God, penitence, and renunciation.



Patmut'iwn plnjē k'alak'i, *Constantinople*, 1803, *frontispiece showing the travelers entering the City of Brass*.

In the story, the caliph dispatches a party to find the jars in which Solomon had imprisoned the *jinn*. They travel past ruined cities, as well as domes or pavilions (*kubba*), where they read inscriptions about the vanity of life or are swallowed up by lethal mirages. At the end of their quest, on the shore of the ocean, they receive the jars and return; but when casks are uncorked in the throne room and the *jinn* are released from their millennial captivity, all they have to say is "Repentance, O Prophet of God." The chastened ruler renounces his throne and assumes the patched cloak of the dervish. The story belongs in general to the type of speculation about the ends of the earth, the confinement by Alexander of the barbarous nations Gog and Magog, and maybe also to the Iranian cycle about the mythical fortress of Kang. In its prosimetric style, with brief stanzas of verse recapitulating the action of the prose narrative, it reminds one of the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance*; but, more importantly, the printed text indicates different spoken parts. That is, we deal with a

performance, and are reminded of the uses to which the frescoes of Panjikant were put.

The theme of life's transient and evanescent qualities, together with this form of narrative interrupted by verse, places the City of Brass in the specific genre of the Buddhist stories studied by Victor Mair of T'ang China called "transformation texts".¹⁵ One may perhaps mention more specifically as a source, maybe the ultimate one, the parable of the Phantom City in the most important cluster of transformation texts of Mahayana Buddhism in East Asia, the Lotus Sutra of the Good Law (*Saddharmapundarikasutra*): here, the Buddha creates an illusory town to provide rest for his traveling band, then erases it when it is time for them to move on.



Patmut'iwn plnjē k'atak'i, Constantinople, 1803; Parable of the Phantom City. Mogaoku. Dunhuang.

The story was understood specifically as a reference to the "voice-hearers" who "conceive an idea of extinction and enter into what they believe to be nirvana," though it is in fact only a station on the way.¹⁶ It is possible this text was composed in Central Asia, that is, in the milieu of travelling merchants who spoke Iranian languages — and the appeal of its selection of metaphors should be obvious. In only altered form, it was to prove equally popular to Armenians of a similar social and economic position, thousands of miles away and for over a millennium into the future. The 1803 edition of *PPK*, Constantinople, has a woodcut frontispiece displaying the scene of the travelers approaching the City of Brass; and there is a rather similar narrative fresco depicting the same climactic moment, but from the parable of the Phantom City at Mogaoku, Dunhuang, at the Chinese end of the Silk Road.¹⁷ In the Chinese painting the Phantom City contains a *stupa*, or domed reliquary monument; and perhaps rendering of ruins in the desert as *kubba*, "domes", of the Arabic and Armenian is a remote attempt to understand this.

What we have, then, in Christian Armenia, is a miscellany that endured for perhaps a millennium in popular culture, a *muraqqa'* of *moralia* in which a Buddhist transformation tale that probably took shape in Iranian Central Asia rubs shoulders with the counsels of a Sasanian king, the tale of another monarch who became a Sufi, and the hagiographies of hermits from as close as Van and as far away as Rome. If my suggestion that the Lotus Sutra is the source of the main story is right, then we find similar illustrations of the narrative at both ends of the Silk Road, with ample evidence from Sogd in between and in the Armenian text itself that the story was enacted as interactive performance. And now vignettes of the cultural life of the vast Iranian *oikoumene* assume shape, sound, color: a festive gathering, the *gusan* with his lute, bright pictures on the wall, narrations of wisdom and epic, lyric and romance interspersed with improvisatory verses, interpolations of wit. From there, forward across dark abysms of time, emerge the *muraqqa'* album, the lively frescoes of a Tehrani *qahveh-khāne*, and Professor Moqaddam's nephew with a verse from a classical *Dīvān*.

The multiple programs of Sogdian narrative frescoes, the vertical registers of the bas reliefs at Alt'amar, the Persian scrapbooks of *moralia* and art, and the miscellany of Armenian tales with its unifying thematic structure, all create a dense pattern of contacts between diverse people and concerns, in which *adab/farhang/paideia* discerns common features and forges fellow feeling. But these stacked and parallel narratives by virtue of their very structure create something else, too: a polyphony in the presentation of literary characters, one that is neither linear nor hieratic, with a din of different social, ethnic, and religious voices acting upon each other. The result, even in a book of didactic intent, remains negotiation and dialogue between characters, rather than unified and normative statement. And in this aspect of the storytelling of the larger Iranian world that made its way westwards, and combined with the narrative devices of the cultures it encountered, one may perhaps discern the beginnings of a literary technique in which different kinds of voices meet, subjecting cliché subjects to satirical regard and probing new psychological insights — the first stirrings of those literary strategies that Mikhail Bakhtin, in his investigations of the phenomenon of literary *heteroglossia*, was to plot from Rabelais' deployment of the carnivalesque to the poetics of Dostoyevsky — the embryo of that primary vehicle of modernity itself, the novel.

Still at risk of putting one too many patches on the cloak of the dervish, one offers in conclusion a smaller observation, on the term *muraqqa'* itself, that word for album which originally meant scraps sewn together. At the Sasanian and Armenian Arsacid courts the royal counselor was called (*dar*) *andarzbed*, Arm., *handerjapet*. Arm. *han-derj* "clothing", cf. Arm. *derjak*, NP *darzī*, "tailor", derived from OIr. **ham-darz-* "bind or load together",¹⁸ is clearly the same as. MP and NP *andarz*, "precept, advice": clothes and counsel both indicate the proper form in which to be seen and in which to act; and it is wisdom that binds people together. Should this extension of the metaphor of clothing to the imperial counsel seem farfetched, one need but recall the

observation by the Indo-Europeanist Joshua Katz that the words *vespers*, Rus. *večer* ("evening"), Arm. *gišer* ("night"), etc. all derive from the same base as *vestment*: dusk is when the Sun and sky don evening dress. So the books of instruction for nobles and merchants proceed from the *andarz* of proper court attire to what may be then a linguistic calque on the Persian term or a parallel semantic result: the *muraqqa'*, the patched cloak of the itinerant holy man entertaining, advising, guiding the enchanted reader past *stupas* and ancient ruins, past the City of Brass to the sea.

Notes:

1. The best descriptive essay on the subject remains Boyce 1968: 31-66; see also the chapters on the various literatures of the Middle Iranian languages in Yarshater 1983: 1151-1258. Since then numerous Bactrian documents have been discovered and published by Nicholas Sims-Williams. Iranists have not devoted sufficient attention to the Armenian literature of the Sasanian era and later, where the Iranian content is important, particularly in the epic genre; but see the studies of this writer and of Nina Garsoïan (*infra*). This writer has discussed the literary and philosophical connections and influences of a number of Pahlavi works in articles: "The Platonic Myth of Er, Armenian Ara, and Iranian Arda Viraz", "The Sage in Ancient Iranian Literature", "Kartir and Mani: a Shamanistic Model of their Conflict", "The *Do 'a-ye Nam Stayishn*", "On Mysticism and Esotericism among the Zoroastrians", "A Parthian *Bhagavad Gita* and its Echoes", and other studies reprinted in Russell, 2004.
2. See Abuladze 1962 and Lang, 1966.
3. Marshak 2002: 105.
4. In one of these, according to Marshak's interpretation, a merchant encounters the spirit of the sea. This is an Indian oikotype of the theme encountered as the Biblical story of Jephthah, and is attested in Manichaean literature. Marshak elsewhere refers to the kinship of these tales to the rich heritage of Russian folklore; and one is reminded in this instance of the numerous variants of the famous ballad (Rus. *bylina*) of the seafaring merchant Sadko, and his encounters with the spirit of the deep. The source of the story is a place strikingly different from other Russian towns but structurally very similar to Sogd: the socially fluid, politically independent trading city of Novgorod. As is well known, early medieval Russia had strong commercial and cultural connections to Iran; so it may be that the ballad of Sadko itself is of Indian origin and came to Russia *via* a Central Asian or Iranian intermediary version, as I have argued was the case for the *bylina* of Il'ya Muromets and the Nightingale-Robber (*solovei razboinik*) in (Russell 2005: 77-139 also published in Russian in *Rossiia XXI* 4, 2006: 156-197. On Sadko, Novgorodian democracy, and the transmission to Rus' of material from the *Bundahišn* and "Zurvanite" cosmogonic myth, see Russell, *forthcoming*.
5. See Russell, "Zoroastrianism and the Northern Qi Panels," lectures at Harvard, March 1994 and University of California (Berkeley), April 1994, and published in Russell 1997 and reprinted in Russell 2004: 1445-1450.
6. Roxburgh 2005: 63.
7. Roxburgh *loc. cit.*
8. Slezkine 2004; see particularly ch. 1, "Mercury's Sandals: The Jews and Other Nomads".
9. Most of these were in Karabagh and Nakhichevan; for a study of several see this writer in Russell 2001: 187-215 reprinted in Russell 2004: 1135-1163. In recent years, cameramen on the Iranian side of the unbridgeable Araxes have documented the destruction by the Azerbaijan authorities of perhaps twenty thousand monuments in the cemetery of Julfa alone: see Ayvazyan 2007.
10. See Russell 1987: 6-7.
11. Examples include Brit. Mus. Or. Ms. 6990 (Conybeare, *Catalogue*, p. 269): dated A.D. 1587. Contains songs of T'lkuranc'i; prayer; the City of Bronze; "History of the rustic and the matter of the acre," in most of which a girl asks a boy riddles; "Question of Gregory the Illuminator", in which the patron saint of Armenia fasts in

church forty days, till an angel appears to inform him about the future, heaven, and hell; the history of king P'ahlul; the hymn "Morning of Light", by St. Nersēs Šnorhali; prayers of Narekac'i; a hymn to St. Sergius; and spells to be written on paper and swallowed, or consumed with bread and cheese. Brit. Mus. Or. Ms. 4580 (*Cat.*, p. 277): The history of Alexander of Macedon; the City of Bronze; king P'ahlul; the History of the Boy and the Girl; the History of king Zarmanazan of Assyria and a sequel on Farman, by Yakob of Arckē; the History of Barlaam and Josaphat; the History of Aḫiqar "History of the spawning and rearing of Mohammed, servant of the Antichrist, and his reign"; History of the Antichrist, attributed to Agathangelos; songs of Arak'el *vardapet*, the Rose and Nightingale, by Catholicos Grigoris Ałt'amarac'i, of Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i, of exile; prayers; the ballad of Narek; and a ballad about Alexianos. Brit. Mus. Or. Ms. 4548 (*Cat.*, p. 287): The History of the Boy and Girl; the City of Bronze; king P'ahlul; Alexianos; Aḫiqar; Portents of different days according to the phases of the Moon; prayers; and Turkish recipes. Brit. Mus. Or. Ms. 2624 (*Cat.*, p. 281): The City of Bronze; the History of the Boy and the Girl.

12. See Simonyan 1989 and her monograph on the poems composed to accompany such prose texts in *eadem*, 1975. Armenuhi Srapyan edited two of the texts found in most PPK miscellanies for which see Srapyan 1983.
13. Discussed by Davila 2001: 7.
14. See Russell 1983: 250-261.
15. For a discussion of this aspect, see J.R. Russell, "Zhizn' dorogi i doroga zhizni: otrazhenie odnoi metafor' v zhivopisi i literature sredneaziatskikh kul'tur i armyanskogo srednevekov'ya," ["Life on the Road and the Road of Life: The Reflection of a Metaphor in the Painting and Literature of Central Asian Cultures and the Armenian Middle Ages"], in Nikonorov 2004: 292-294.
16. See Watson 1993: 117-142.
17. See Wang 2005: 112-114 and figs. 2.20 and 2.21.
18. Bailey 1979: 166-167; on the Arm. usage see Garsoïan 1989: 530.

¹ The best descriptive essay on the subject remains Boyce 1968: 31-66; see also the chapters on the various literatures of the Middle Iranian languages in Yarshater 1983: 1151-1258. Since then numerous Bactrian documents have been discovered and published by Nicholas Sims-Williams. Iranists have not devoted sufficient attention to the Armenian literature of the Sasanian era and later, where the Iranian content is important, particularly in the epic genre; but see the studies of this writer and of Nina Garsoïan (*infra*). This writer has discussed the literary and philosophical connections and influences of a number of Pahlavi works in articles: "The Platonic Myth of Er, Armenian Ara, and Iranian Arda Viraz", "The Sage in Ancient Iranian Literature", "Kartir and Mani: a Shamanistic Model of their Conflict", "The *Do 'a-ye Nam Stayishn*", "On Mysticism and Esotericism among the Zoroastrians", "A Parthian *Bhagavad Gita* and its Echoes", and other studies reprinted in Russell, 2004.

² See Abuladze 1962 and Lang, 1966.

³ Marshak 2002: 105.

⁴ In one of these, according to Marshak's interpretation, a merchant encounters the spirit of the sea. This is an Indian oikotype of the theme encountered as the Biblical story of Jephthah, and is attested in Manichaean literature. Marshak elsewhere refers to the kinship of these tales to the rich heritage of Russian folklore; and one is reminded in this instance of the numerous variants of the famous ballad (Rus. *bylina*) of the seafaring merchant Sadko, and his encounters with the spirit of the deep. The source of the story is a place strikingly different from other Russian towns but structurally very similar to Sogd: the socially fluid, politically independent trading city of Novgorod. As is well known, early medieval Russia had strong commercial and cultural connections to Iran; so it may be that the ballad of Sadko itself is of Indian origin and came to Russia *via* a Central Asian or Iranian intermediary version, as I have argued was the case for the *bylina* of Il'ya Muromets and the Nightingale-Robber (*solovei razboinik*) in (Russell 2005: 77-139 also published in Russian in *Rossiia XXI* 4, 2006: 156-197. On Sadko, Novgorodian democracy, and the transmission to Rus' of material from the *Bundahišn* and "Zurvanite" cosmogonic myth, see Russell, *forthcoming*.

⁵ See Russell, "Zoroastrianism and the Northern Qi Panels," lectures at Harvard, March 1994 and University of California (Berkeley), April 1994, and published in Russell 1997 and reprinted in Russell 2004: 1445-1450.

⁶ Roxburgh 2005: 63.

⁷ Roxburgh *loc. cit.*

⁸ Slezkine 2004; see particularly ch. 1, "Mercury's Sandals: The Jews and Other Nomads".

⁹ Most of these were in Karabagh and Nakhichevan; for a study of several see this writer in Russell 2001: 187-215 reprinted in Russell 2004: 1135-1163. In recent years, cameramen on the Iranian side of the unbridgeable Araxes have documented the destruction by the Azerbaijan authorities of perhaps twenty thousand monuments in the cemetery of Julfa alone: see Ayvazyan 2007.

¹⁰ See Russell 1987: 6-7.

¹¹ Examples include Brit. Mus. Or. Ms. 6990 (Conybeare, *Catalogue*, p. 269): dated A.D. 1587. Contains songs of T'lkuranc'i; prayer; the City of Bronze; "History of the rustic and the matter of the acre," in most of which a girl asks a boy riddles; "Question of Gregory the Illuminator", in which the patron saint of Armenia fasts in church forty days, till an angel appears to inform him about the future, heaven, and hell; the history of king P'ahlul; the hymn "Morning of Light", by St. Nersēs Šnorhali; prayers of Narekac'i; a hymn to St. Sergius; and spells to be written on paper and swallowed, or consumed with bread and cheese. Brit. Mus. Or. Ms. 4580 (*Cat.*, p. 277): The history of Alexander of Macedon; the City of Bronze; king P'ahlul; the History of the Boy and the Girl; the History of king Zarmanazan of Assyria and a sequel on Farman, by Yakob of Arkē; the History of Barlaam and Josaphat; the History of Ahiqar [letter h with subscript dot] "History of the spawning and rearing of Mohammed, servant of the Antichrist, and his reign"; History of the Antichrist, attributed to Agathangelos; songs of Arak'el vardapet, the Rose and Nightingale, by Catholicos Grigoris Aht'amarc'i, of Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i, of exile; prayers [letter r with superscript dot]; the ballad of Narek; and a ballad about Alexianos. Brit. Mus. Or. Ms. 4548 (*Cat.*, p. 287): The History of the Boy and Girl; the City of Bronze; king P'ahlul; Alexianos; Ahiqar [letter h with subscript dot]; Portents of different days according to the phases of the Moon; prayers; and Turkish recipes. Brit. Mus. Or. Ms. 2624 (*Cat.*, p. 281): The City of Bronze; the History of the Boy and the Girl.

¹² See Simonyan 1989 and her monograph on the poems composed to accompany such prose texts in *eadem*, 1975. Armenuhi Srapyan edited two of the texts found in most PPK miscellanies for which see Srapyan 1983.

¹³ Discussed by Davila 2001: 7.

¹⁴ See Russell 1983: 250-261.

¹⁵ For a discussion of this aspect, see J.R. Russell, "Zhizn' dorogi i doroga zhizni: otrazhenie odnoi metafory v zhivopisi i literature sredneaziatskikh kul'tur i armyanskogo srednevekov'ya," ["Life on the Road and the Road of Life: The Reflection of a Metaphor in the Painting and Literature of Central Asian Cultures and the Armenian Middle Ages"], in Nikonov 2004: 292-294.

¹⁶ See Watson 1993: 117-142.

¹⁷ See Wang 2005: 112-114 and figs. 2.20 and 2.21.

¹⁸ Bailey 1979: 166-167; on the Arm. usage see Garsoïan 1989: 530.

On an Armenian Word List from the Cairo Geniza*

James R. Russell
Harvard University

Abstract

This study deals with a short text on a small piece of paper, a conversational glossary, found in the Cairo Geniza. It is likely to be nearly a millennium old, and consists of a list of twenty Judaeo-Arabic words and phrases with their equivalents in Armenian written in Hebrew script. It suggests that members of the two communities met in a convivial setting, possibly a Barekandan (Mardi Gras) party where an official was parodied as a goat in effigy—a custom encountered in other Armenian celebrations of the holiday at Lvov in the 16th century; and Tiflis, in the 19th. The other words in the list reflect economic and cultural realia of the 11th–13th centuries.

Keywords

Geniza, Judeo-Arabic, Cilician Armenian, Mardi Gras, Medieval Cairo, Goat-man

“... No one in the world except Armenians.
No European can ever really understand or speak your language.”
(Gabriel Bagratian’s French wife Juliette, Werfel 1934: 178)

*T’eguz əlim, t’eguz č’əlim, meflisnerun saz č’i paksi,
T’e ku paksim, k’iz ku paksim, ašxaris me maz č’i paksi,
Sayat’ Novu gerezmanən Hind, Habaš, Arab mi ani.*

“To be or not to be, no party will lack for a lute because of me;
This world lacks not for a hair; if I lack, I lack for thee—
Let not a Hindu, Ethiop, or Arab Sayat’ Nova’s gravedigger be.”
(Hasrat’yan 1963: 20, no. 10: final stanza of *Dun ən glxen*, AD 1753)

This study deals with a short text on a small piece of paper found in the Cairo Geniza. It is likely to be nearly a millennium old, and consists of a list of twenty Judaeo-Arabic words and phrases with their equivalents in

* This paper was presented at the international conference organized on the occasion of the 15th anniversary of *Iran and the Caucasus*, Yerevan, Armenia, July 2011.

Armenian written in Hebrew script. Very few such documents are known and there are good reasons that they are highly unusual. For although small numbers of Jews have lived in Armenia over the centuries, the country has no indigenous Jewish community in the sense that all the nations surrounding it do.¹ There are Judaeo-Georgian, Judaeo-Persian, Judaeo-Kurdish, Mountain Jewish Turkic, and other ethnolects, but there is no dialect that can properly be called Judaeo-Armenian. Tigran II ("the Great") brought Jewish settlers to Armenian towns in the first century B.C., and P'awstos Buzand records the presence of large numbers of Jews in Armenia in Sasanian times. Iranian invading armies, notably in the reign of Shapur II in the fourth century A.D., drove most of these communities, it seems, into exile. In Diaspora settings, such as Constantinople, where the two communities have lived in close proximity to each other, Armeno-Jewish relations have been sometimes cordial, but at other times those of minorities in tense competition. Traditional Christian anti-Semitism sometimes mars Armenian attitudes towards Jews and is evident in

¹ In the Soviet period, between one and two thousand Russian-speaking Jews settled in Armenia—the most ethnically homogeneous of all the Soviet Republics—mostly in Yerevan. Dimitri Slivnyak became an Armenologist and worked in the Matenadaran, where I first met him; later he migrated to Israel and Hebraized his name to Mordechai Even-Vered. Some local Armenians married Jews: my friend Ruben Malayan, who has lived in both Armenia and Israel, is the offspring of such a union. In Israel itself there are Arabic-speaking Armenian communities in Galilee; Hebrew-speaking Armenians in Haifa; Russian- and Armenian-speaking Soviet immigrants from Armenia in the Tel Aviv area; and in the Armenian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem and environs, both the centuries-old *k'talak'ac'i* "city" people with their dialect and the descendants of Genocide-era refugees speaking Western Armenian dialects. The State of Israel, like the United States, has for the sake of relations with Turkey refused officially to recognize the Armenian Genocide, though the Hebrew University of Jerusalem holds an official commemoration of 24 April every year (this writer was its keynote speaker in 2009). Armenia in turn, also for justifiable, even vital political and economic reasons, maintains good relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran, whose present *régime* officially denies the Holocaust, advocates the destruction of Israel, is implicated in acts of terrorism against Israeli and Diaspora Jews, and disseminates at state expense such anti-Semitic propaganda as the notorious forgery, *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Many Armenians in the Near East are politically anti-Israel and pro-Arab. Social contacts and even marriages between Armenians and Jews are frequent and happy, but communal and official relations are often not very close. However, there are no natural reasons for enmity between the national entities of the Jews, Armenians, and Iranians. One hopes for a much brighter future.

such works as Eremia Çelebi Kömurciyan's *The Jewish Wife*. The contempt seems to have been mutual: one popular Jewish belief has branded Armenians, astonishingly, as the descendants of the Amalekites of the Bible, the very embodiment of human evil whom God Himself cursed. In Yiddish, for instance, the Hebrew word *timkhe*, half of the emphatically repetitive phrase *yemakh timkhe*—God's command that the Amalekites be utterly blotted out—was a code name for Armenians. So a list of Armenian words and phrases in Hebrew script is of great intrinsic linguistic interest; but it richly deserves to be mined also for its social and cultural content and context, and its rarity warrants even imaginative speculation about its purpose. The rarity of documents may suggest that Armeno-Jewish interaction was correspondingly sparse, but these two dynamic, versatile peoples of the Near and Middle East often paralleled and overlapped each other in location and social station, in craft and profession, in travel and trade; so the written evidence may hint, in fact, of a much richer reality.

With the important exception of "Assyrian" Christians, some of whom are still bilingual in Neo-Aramaic and Armenian, Armenian Gypsies, and to a lesser extent, some Kurds, Yazidis, and Greeks living in the Armenian highlands, few foreigners except for scholars and a poet or two, and it would seem, still fewer Jews of the Near East, have needed, wanted, or troubled in most recent times to learn Armenian.² But that was not always the case; and one indication is another manuscript whose data will be cited presently to corroborate the Geniza fragment. This is a dictionary in Arabic script of six different languages—a hexaglot—compiled in the fourteenth century for a king at Aden, in southern Yemen. The languages are Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Greek, Armenian, and Mongol; and it is reasonably inferred that these six were considered particularly important and useful in the 1300's, the zenith of the Mongol Empire. At that time the political center of Armenia was the Cilician kingdom, on the northeastern

² Lord Byron famously learnt Armenian at the Mekhitarist monastery of S. Lazzaro in Venice and opined that it was a difficult language, but one that repaid the effort of learning it. Some of the Russian poets who collaborated with Valery Bryusov on the 1916 Anthology took a superficial interest in the language; and it intrigued Osip Mandelstam, who tried to learn a bit more, and as the Acmeist author of the cycle *Kamen'*, "Stone", liked the phonetic collocation, evocative of the hardness and inner air of the skull, of Armenian *glux*, "head", and Russian *gluxoj*, "hollow".

coast of the Mediterranean, whose form of the spoken Armenian language is, indeed, the closest to both the Geniza fragment and the hexaglot. One recalls that a Cilician prince, Het'um, had completed in 1307 his narrative, in Old French, of a trip some decades earlier to the Mongol capital, Karakorum—the Middle English translation, *A Lytell Chronicle*, with its author's name quaintly rendered as Haithon, was rather a bestseller in the British Isles. The Armenians of the centuries embraced by these two glossaries were a nation of political and economic importance who inhabited a homeland that encompassed large parts of modern Georgia, Shirvan and Arran, and Iran on the north and east, parts of northern Iraq and Syria on the south, and much of the Anatolian peninsula. Armenians were a major presence in Constantinople, from the imperial court on down, in Jerusalem and most other cities, holy places, and monastic centers of the land of Israel, and, as we shall see presently, in Egypt. The only surviving remnant of that homeland is the Transcaucasian survivor state in the northeast; and the Armenian people are scattered to remote diasporas, playing a modest role in world affairs. But in the period under discussion, Armenia was neither small nor peripheral to the Near and Middle East but central to it in demography, politics, and economy; its language, of corresponding importance. To see Armenia as small is to peer through the wrong end of the telescope; but historical myopia can warp one's perceptions, and such distortions can affect more than scholarship.

For instance, it is known from the *Vita* of Maštoc' by Koriwn that the Armenian saint created first the Armenian alphabet, then at the invitation of Georgians and Albanians and in collaboration with them invented also the alphabets of the two other Christian peoples. But lately the invention of the scripts is attributed to a "pan-Caucasian effort", a term as vague as it is imprecise—ancient Armenia was very much more and other than a "Caucasian" land. Most of the loan-words in Georgian from Middle Iranian—terms that are of considerable religious, administrative, military, and culture significance—were not borrowed directly from the Parthians or Persians, but through the intermediary of Armenian. Yet Georgian scholars who certainly ought to know better tend to cite the Armenian forms as parallels, rather than sources. If a British scholar were to insist that the numerous Romance vocabulary in English derived, not from Old French, but directly from Roman Imperial Latin we should view the dis-

tortion as an extension of the old animus against that pleasant land across the Channel of snails, garlic, red wine, and, well the conquering Normans, into scholarship. The absurdity is less amusing when one considers that the Georgian diminution of Armenia proceeds together with the de-Armenization of Tiflis, cultural and physical ethnic cleansing rubbing each other's hands, as it were. There are further overtones: at the conference of the *Association Internationale des Etudes Arméniennes*, the great Georgian scholar Zaza Aleksidze devoted his plenary lecture to a call to Armenians for pan-Caucasian unity. Though the lecture had an eirenic purpose and stressed the many things the two peoples have in common, its designation of Armenia as Caucasian distorts and diminishes the country, while the political result of such a summons would be to set Armenia alongside Georgia in the latter's dispute with the Russian Federation—to Georgia's benefit, perhaps, but to Armenia's peril. It is not one's purpose here to inaugurate a polemic or to advance a counter-agenda, only to insist firmly upon the integrity and accuracy of scholarly method in the basic premises of historical geography and linguistics. So, I invite the readers a thousand years into the past, to listen to a kind of Armenian very like the standard Western Armenian today, but in a Middle East where Armenia was a major presence, a world that was in many other ways, too, radically different from our own.

But first, what is the Cairo Geniza? Jewish law prohibits the disposal of any writing with the Hebrew name of God, such as a Torah scroll or prayer book too worn or damaged for licit liturgical use. It must be ceremonially buried or confined to a receptacle for storage; and tradition gradually extended the prohibition to any document in the Hebrew script, which was sacred because it was employed to write the Bible. Depositing papers in a storeroom at the back of a synagogue was cheaper than carting them off to the graveyard, though burial was done sometimes, too. Such a place of storage is called a *geniza*, from the Hebrew root *g-n-z*, "to conceal", itself a loan from the Iranian word for a treasure (cf. Persian *ganj*, the Armenian loan-word *ganj*, the toponym *Ganjak* or *Ganja*, Hebrew *gizbar* from **ganzabara*, "treasurer", etc.). The most famous *geniza* is that of the Ibn Ezra synagogue of Fustat, old Cairo, which was discovered by scholars in the late nineteenth century. Its many thousands of fragments, most of which belong to the Fatimid and early Ayyubid peri-

ods—roughly the first quarter of the second Christian millennium, though there are also documents of much later date—deal with every aspect of the economic, legal, religious, cultural, and material life of Jewish communities in Egypt, North Africa, the Land of Israel, and Spain in particular, but with many other regions and peoples as well. It is thus a treasure house, indeed, and Geniza studies have transformed our understanding of Jewish life and letters in the Middle Ages. The principal languages of these documents are Hebrew and Aramaic and the Judaeo-Arabic ethnolect, with much material also in other languages including Judaeo-Persian, Judaeo-Spanish (Ladino), Judaeo-Greek, and even Judaeo-German (Yiddish). Most of the Geniza documents were removed to Cambridge University, though smaller collections exist in many other places, not all of them edited; and Solomon Schechter, S.D. Goitein, Shaul Shaked, and other titans of scholarship have pored over and published them for over a century. Very many still remain to be studied; and the fragment to be discussed here, which was read and published only recently, affords an idea of the treasures the Geniza has yielded and of the new discoveries its riches may yet make possible.³

In 2005, the Geniza scholar and eminent professor of Arabic, Dr. Avihai Shvitiel, in collaboration with Prof. James Clackson of Cambridge University, a Classicist and Armenologist perhaps best known for his lucid work on the important but vexed question of the kinship of early Armenian to Greek, published a brief article on the fragment T-S NS 38.79.⁴ This is a

³ For a good survey of the history of the discovery of the collection and its contents and researchers, see Hoffman/Cole 2011. The Cairo Geniza has inspired also Amitav Ghosh (1992). Perhaps this paper is in its way cultural history in the guise of a study of language.

⁴ Shvitiel 2005, and see also Clackson 2008. I am indebted for this reference to my dear friend and valued colleague Prof. Firuza Abdullaeva and to Prof. Geoffrey Khan, both of Cambridge University; and for his provision of references on Armenians in Egypt, to Marc Mamigonian, director of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Belmont, MA. I have the pleasure also to acknowledge a most friendly and informative reply to my query by Dr. Ben Outhwaite of the Taylor-Schechter Geniza Research Unit of the Cambridge University Library; and I thank the Syndics of the Library for kind permission to publish the fragment, whose classification number is T-S NS 176.2. The existence of the Geniza fragment was helpfully brought to my attention, though in general terms and without specific reference or description, by a most learned anonymous reader of my article (Russell 2011): I record here my thanks for his valuable observation. The JTS manuscript, which can be dated to ca. A.D. 1892, has annotations in Hebrew and Judaeo-Spanish

document from the Geniza of twenty words and phrases in Judaeo-Arabic with their equivalents in Armenian transliterated into the same semi-cursive, square-character Hebrew letters employed for the Arabic. The fragment, which measures 17 x 6.5 cm, is dated on the basis of the type of paper and the palaeography to the tenth-twelfth centuries A.D. The language is not identified in the text itself as Armenian; and Shvitiel speculates that the fragment may have been part of a larger phrase book. The latter would, I think, have been polyglottic, rather than a continuation of the Armenian list; for the range and arrangement of the latter suggests it is self-contained and is not likely to have been a part of a longer glossary with more and other Armenian words on diverse topics. The list of the Judaeo-Arabic words and phrases to be translated is as follows: "bread" (*al-khubz*), "meat" (*al-laḥm*), "water" (*al-mā*), "wine" (*al-nabid*), "rose" (*al-ward*), "apple" (*al-tuffāḥ*), "pear" (*al-kummathrā*), "woman" (*al-mar'ah*), "virgin" (*al-bint al-bikr*), "your mother" (*ummak*), "your father" (*abūk*), "beautiful [lit., "salty"] face" (*al-wajḥ al-maliḥ*), "female singer" (*al-mughanniyah*), "white" (*al-abyaḍ*), "black" (*al-aswad*), "tax collector" (*jilwa'az*), "come!" (*ta'āl*), "go!" (*imḍi*), "sit!" (*ijlis*), and "how are you" (*kīfant*). The corresponding Armenian forms are: *hads* (for *hac*'),

(Ladino), as well as a list of the Armenian names of the signs of the Zodiac transliterated in Western Armenian pronunciation into square-character Hebrew. Both the Geniza and JTS MSS are examples of transliteration of a foreign language. As we have seen, there is no evidence, however, of a particular form of Armenian spoken by Jews analogous to such hyphenatable ethnolects as Yiddish, Ladino, Judaeo-Persian, etc. Some Jewish graves have been found in Armenia from roughly the same period as the Geniza text, and Prof. Michael Stone has studied and published them. But these are inscribed in Hebrew/Aramaic only, and there is no context for the community to which they belonged. On the existing meager evidence one is inclined to think they were relatively transient Iranian Jews who employed Armenian stonemasons. There is no historical evidence of a long-term, indigenous Jewish community in Armenia after the Sasanian period; and there is no Jewish literature in Armenian, which is exclusively and entirely Christian. From what we can glean from studies by Avraham Galante and others, Jews who lived in Armenian areas of Ottoman Anatolia spoke Arabic, Neo-Aramaic, Kurdish, and Turkish, but never Armenian. The designation "Judaeo-Armenian" is at best imprecise and at worst misleading, and should, consequently, be set aside. This is not meant in any way to detract from the immense value of Shvitiel's contribution or of Clackson's remarks, which are all the more remarkable and praiseworthy for the remoteness of this material from the latter's branch of Armenology.



The Cairo Geniza Judaeo-Arabic and Armenian word list, T-S NS 38.79 (T-S NS 176.2).

mis, shur (for either *jur* or “Western Armenian” /čʷr/), *kini* (for *gini*), *vart* (for *vard* or /vart/), *khnzor* (for *xnjor*), *danz* (for *danj*), *khugnigh* (probably

k'u "thy", with diminutive *knik* or */gnig/* "wife, little woman"), *kays* (for *koy*s), *mayr* (without possessive suffix), *dad* (instead of *hayr*, and without possessive suffix), *aghya akhshkin* (*ateay*, "salty", with gen. of *afjik*, "girl"), *kusan* (for *gusan* or */kusan/*, "minstrel, bard" without gender suffix), *aspidag* (for *spitak* or */spidag/*, with on-glide: */əspidag/*), *siyav* (Classical Armenian *seaw*), **atstpan mart* (a difficult word to decipher, perhaps Middle Armenian *acpan mard*, "goat-herd man", cf. Arm. *aycapan* "goat-herd"), *ariyag* (cf. Middle Armenian *arek*), *aknah* (*gnay* or */knay/*, either prefaced by an exclamatory *Ah!* or else with on-glide: */əkná/*), *nist* (Classical Armenian *nist*), and *in shkurnas* (thus, as two words with Hebrew final *nun* delineating the first, perhaps to indicate stress on the first syllable; so possibly from a form *inč' ku ařnes*, "What are you doing?", like modern American "How ya doin'?).

A number of these forms are paralleled by the Rasūlid hexaglot, the 14th century dictionary in Arabic from Yemen, to which one referred above. We find there *h's* */hats/* for "bread", *mys* */mīs/* for "meat", *ṭ'nz* */tandz/* for "pear", *v'rt* */vārt/* for "rose", *khnzwr* */khndzōr/* for "apple", *'ghyk* */aghēk/* for "good", and *syw* */sēv/* for "black". "Sit!" is *nyst* */nīst/* as in the Geniza fragment, but "Go!" is simply *kn'* */knā/* without prothetic *a*. "Come!" is *'ryk* */arēk/* rather than *ariyag*, a development to be expected after two centuries. The word for woman in the hexaglot, *knyk* */knīk/*, has the same diminutive ending as in the Geniza, rather than *kin*. (For *al-ṭāhir*, "pure", the Armenian of the hexaglot again employs a diminutive, *srbkyk* */sərbkūk/*.) The hexaglot has an exhaustive hippological section, so it distinguishes finely between Armenian *jrm'k* */jermak/* "white" in the sense of a white horse, the kind that horse people nowadays call a "gray" (Arabic *al-ašhab*), and the generic word for "white" (Arabic *al-abyaḍ*), *sbyd'k* */əsbīdāk/*. Among the deficiencies of the Arabic script are the use of *k* for both *k* and *g* and the use of *matres lectionis*—place-holding vowel-letters like *alif* and *ya*—to represent either a long *a* or *i* or simply a place where another language has that vowel, either short or long (and in the case of *ya*, *i* or *e*, too). Arabic has no *ts* or *dz*, so we can only suppose *h's* is */hats'/*. It has no *p*, so it is only on the strength of the *d* in place of *t* in the word for white, *'sbydk*, that we can infer the scribe meant to render *əsbidak* (or, indeed, *əsbidag*?)—Classical and Modern Eastern Armenian *spitak*. The late great Hungarian Armenologist, Prof. Edmund Schütz,

opted rightly, I think, to render Cilician forms where the Arabic posed such ambiguities. The Geniza fragment with its more precise Hebrew, published several years after the hexaglot, vindicates his judgment.⁵

I have transliterated or explained a number of the Armenian words differently at points from Clackson, who in his notes also distinguishes this or that form, on the basis of the voicing or lack thereof of the unvoiced stops of Classical Armenian, as “Western” or “Eastern”. These voiced forms are, indeed, important and worthy of attention, since they attest vividly to dialect variation in Armenian, a feature of the language that undoubtedly existed from very early times. The political division of Persian and Roman spheres of influence in Armenia could have set in motion the processes that resulted in the sharper, later distinctions between the dialects of the Ottoman-ruled and Russo-Persian parts of the country. It is by now generally accepted that the division of a preponderance of the dialects of the language into reasonably delineable Western and Eastern categories as we now know them can be dated to about the 17th century. Rather we deal, as the imperative for “Come!” suggests, with an early attestation of Middle Armenian, the language typified by the documentation of the Cilician kingdom, displaying the characteristically fluid phonology of that stage of the language. Moreover, the Hebrew transliteration of the form as *ariyag* suggests a transitional stage between an original *ari ek* and the later *arek* attested in Armenian manuscripts (Łazaryan/Avetisyan 1987: 89). Similarly transitional is the use of *ateay*, “made of salt” (ibid.: 27), for “pretty”, before or alongside the addition of the diminutive that produced Middle and Modern Armenian *atek*. There are distinctly “Classical” forms, such as *sīyav* (rather than modern *sev*) for “black” and *nist* (instead of *nstē* or *nstir*) for “Sit!” The word for “white”, */əspidag/*, voices the unvoiced stops as the later Western dialects do; but the Middle Iranian loan-word *spitak* itself would now be characteristic of Eastern Armenian, the common term in Western being instead */jermag/*. The latter is a specialized and, therefore, secondary form, a particular shade of white, that has become general. It displays the demotion to common usage of a previously noble, hippological term, cf. Persian *čarmeh*, “a gray”

⁵ See Golden 2000. I am most grateful to Prof. Sebouh Aslanian of the University of California, Los Angeles, who called my attention to this valuable resource.

(i.e., a white horse), as we have seen in the Rasūlid hexaglot, above. (For another example of the process, compare the change in Persian of the word *dehqān* from “landed nobleman” to “peasant”. The wear and tear of usage tends to drag words down.) So an “Eastern” word, *spitak*, for white with “Western” pronunciation *spidag* is neither “Eastern” nor “Western” but truly *Middle* Armenian in every way. The possessive second person singular *k’u* is typical of Western dialects today, cf. Classical and Eastern *k’o*. The pronunciation of *koy*s, “virgin”, as *kays* (the diphthong rendered by a Hebrew double *yod*) reflects a dialect variation, unless the double *yy* is a *lapsus calami* for the slightly rarer (in Hebrew) *waw-yod*, the downstroke of the *waw* in the Hebrew script of this period being only slightly longer than that of the *yod* (whose downstroke then was longer than it is now). But in support of dialect variation one may cite the name, Nairuz (for an original Nowrūz, lit. “New Light”), of an Armenian convert to Islam who fought to reconquer Antioch from the Crusaders in 1098, squarely in the middle, that is, of the period to which the word list is dated (Dadoyan 1997: 133).⁶ The ancient Zoroastrian new year feast of Nowrūz, as we will see presently, was extremely popular in medieval Cairo and its observances may be of relevance to an understanding of the Armenian word list under discussion as well. Another possible dialect form is *hads* for *hac’*, “bread”, suggesting the anomalous voicing of the aspirate *ts’*—unless the Hebrew writer meant simply for the sake of clarity to avoid use of the letter *tsaddi*, which was often used in the Judaeo-Arabic of the time not only to represent the sound *ts*, which exists in Hebrew and Aramaic but not Arabic proper, but also for the Arabic sounds *ṣad* or *ḍad* (Daniels/Bright 1996: 729).

Writing Armenian in foreign alphabets is not unprecedented. According to the hagiography of Koriwn, St. Mesrop Maštoc’ himself, when inventing the Armenian script early in the fifth century, experimented with the enigmatic “Danielian” letters—perhaps a variant of Syriac adapted to Armenian, or the remnants of the old Aramaic heterographic system that was to endure in Zoroastrian Book Pahlavi. There are short transliterations of names and phrases into Greek, in both manuscripts and epigraphy (as well as a papyrus in Greek, written in Armenian letters): an un-

⁶ The Arabic term for “virgin” in the hexaglot lacks an Armenian equivalent.

dated bas-relief on the outer wall of Echmiadzin cathedral begs God's mercy on Daniël, Tirēr (i.e., Tirayr), and Garikinos (i.e., Garegin). All these forms correspond to the phonology of Classical Armenian. In the eleventh century, a bronze caster left his name in Greek and Estrangela Syriac letters on the doors he had made, which now greet the visitor to the church of San Paolo fuori le Mura, at Rome: Staurakios, lit. "little Cross", and *k-t-š-g*, i.e., Armenian Xaç'ik, which means the same thing. The final unvoiced stop in the diminutive suffix, *-ik*, is voiced as a *g*, just as in later Western dialects and just as in several cases on our list from the Geniza! (Russell 1994: 235 n. 1 with refs).⁷

Who spoke the Armenian of the word list? Armenians had traveled to Egypt for many centuries, though from the evidence they were royal captives or tourists. Poor king Artawazd II was captured by Marc Antony in 34 B.C., paraded in a triumph through Alexandria, and murdered three years later (Russell 1987: 94). Around A.D. 202, the Armenian king Xosrov I accompanied the emperor Septimius Severus (r. 193–211) to Egypt, and left a Greek inscription at Thebes: *Khosroēs armenios idōn ethaumasa*, "Xosrov the Armenian, seeing (this), I was amazed" (ibid.: 119). Prof. Clackson has studied the Greek-in-Armenian papyrus mentioned above: found in the 19th century and probably in the Fayyūm, it now reposes in the Bibliothèque nationale de France. Clackson places it in the context of Greek educational papyri found in Egypt: it contains some seventeen lines of short conversational phrases, conjugations of verbs, word-lists by subject, and some short stories and maxims. Scholarly speculation about the author is divided: he could have been a merchant, maybe a soldier.⁸ But it seems that Armenians in Egypt before the Muslim conquest in A.D. 640, such as the man who wrote the papyrus, were numerous enough, and resident long enough, to take a serious interest in the Greek culture of the Byzantine rulers.

⁷ On texts in other languages written in Armenian letters, see P'ap'azyan 1964. In recent centuries, it has been very common for Armenians in Georgia to write their own language in Georgian script: the 18th century polyglot minstrel of Tiflis, Sayat' Nova, wrote Armenian in Georgian *mkhedruli* letters while using Armenian script to write Tatar (Azeri Turkic).

⁸ Kouymjian 2002: 59–63, especially p. 60, n. 226 with references to Clackson's several articles on the papyrus; and p. 63, illustration 16, the papyrus.

In the first centuries of the second millennium there were Armenians in Egypt from the heartland of the country around Van, many others still would have come from Syria, and Armenian converts to Islam were prominent in the Fatimid hierarchy, though the latter were by reason of their station less likely to mix socially with middle-class Jews, nor, indeed, to need words of greeting and the like translated from Arabic for them. The Armenian written by the eleventh-century bronze caster Khach'ig is phonetically like the kind we encounter in the word list; and since he used Estrangela Syriac script it is reasonable to suppose he was born and learnt his craft in a city with a substantial Armenian population where Syriac was dominant at the time. The obvious candidate is of course Edessa, modern Urfa, whose fall to the Muslims about a century later St. Nersēs Šnorhali (d. 1173) was to chronicle in the long poetic lament, *Otb Edesioy*: St. Nersēs, who lived not very far away at Hromkla near Aintab (modern Turkish Gaziantep), relied on eyewitness accounts. He is known to have written in the *ašxarhakan*, “secular” Armenian speech—that is, the Middle Armenian equivalent of the vernacular we now call, with reference to Modern Armenian, *ašxarhabar*, “vernacular”—in distinction to *grabar* “book language”, i.e., the Classical Armenian that was then still very much alive as a literary medium. This would have been the language Khach'ig spoke; and if the Catholicos wrote it, then it was the common speech of the noble and the wealthy as well. One might hazard the guess, therefore, that the Armenian informant whose pronunciation of his native tongue our writer of Judaeo-Arabic transliterated on an *ad hoc* basis, had arrived at Cairo from Syria: from Edessa, or perhaps Antioch. Whatever his own origin, the number of his compatriots in the Fatimid metropolis was, as we have seen, heterogeneous. It had recently become much larger, though it was already of long standing. Two Armenian Cross-stones (*xač'k'ar*) found in Cairo are dated to the tenth century; and the huge fresco at Deir al-Abyad, the “White Monastery” near Sohag, dated 1124–1125, has Armenian inscriptions and was the work of an Armenian artist. By the late eleventh century, a number of Armenian converts to Islam were prominent in the Fatimid state. In the period of mass migration and chaos following the battle of Manazkert (Manzikert, to Byzantinists) in 1071, some thirty thousand Armenians fled the Byzantines and Seljuks to settle in Egypt. Armenian architects and builders constructed

the walls and gates of the capital under the supervision of Badr al-Jamālī (1075-1094), an Armenian who served as vizier of the Caliph al-Mustansir (1036-1094). In the late 1070's the Armenian Catholicos Gregory II Martirophilus (*Vkayasēr*), son of the scholar and Armeno-Byzantine administrator Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni (d. 1058), made his famous journey to Egypt and, with the approval of the Muslim authorities, appointed his nephew Grigoris primate of the newly established diocese of the country.⁹ By the twelfth century, when a Muslim Armenian named Bahrām served as vizier, some thirty Armenian churches and monasteries are known to have existed at Cairo and in other major cities of Egypt (Dadoyan 1997: 9, 82, 87, 94, 105). Thus there were both prominent Muslim converts and numerous Christian Armenians in Egypt at the time the word list was compiled.

What did Armenians of the period in Egypt do? The Geniza documents themselves mention Armenian craftsmen and merchants in Cairo who traded in carpets, curtains, silk, and mother of pearl; one Nahray b. Nissīm mentions "half an Arjishī robe", i.e., from Arčēš, an Armenian city on the north shore of lake Van.¹⁰ A letter requests various carpets including a "red Armenian rug (*bisāt*)" (Goitein 1983: 119, 123, 126, 197) Close attention to the many shades of color is a salient feature of Geniza texts dealing with *realia*, and of all hues it is the distinctive Armenian red that others have noted and prized through history. In the United States and other modern Western countries, the Armenian or Persian rug merchant is something of a stereotype; and the Oriental carpet is a superfluous, luxury item. One must resist such myopia in attempting to understand Fatimid Egypt: there, as S.D. Goitein demonstrated, such items of furniture as tables, chairs, and beds, so common in Greco-Roman antiquity and in the West today, were few. Domestic arrangements bore the mark of an Arab

⁹ Kapoian-Kouymjian 1988: 2-15, plates 1-IVa for the fresco. The visit of the Catholicos was important enough to merit mention by the major Armenian chroniclers over the next two centuries, including Matthew of Edessa, St. Nersēs Šnorhali, Kirakos of Ganjak, and Smbat.

¹⁰ Arčēš, an ancient Urartean foundation, was partly submerged in the Middle Ages and acquired the same sort of legends that accreted around other sunken cities, such as Atlantis, Russian Kitezh, and East Anglian Dunwich (see Russell 2007: 136-156; on the robe, see Goitein 1983: 182).

desert culture, not an ancient urban one. Rugs, mats, curtains, and hangings of all kinds played a correspondingly greater role in household furnishings than they do now. And the Muslim and Jewish faiths, while enjoining abstemiousness at table, urged their adherents to be lavish in their clothing, which was as rich in color and material as its wearer could afford: the tailor's profession was not a lowly one. Shelomo Goitein, after an exhaustive study of fabrics, colors, and garments mentioned in the Geniza documents, exclaimed that "medieval males... must have looked like tropical singing birds"! The role of the Armenians in the rug and textile trade was vital and central to the economy. It is to be imagined that the Armenian whom the Jewish owner of the word list was seeking to impress with a few words of the former's own tongue was a fellow tradesman, possibly a merchant of means and importance whose friendship was worth the effort, one whom he might encounter at a social gathering.

It is apparent from the contents of the word list that it was intended for social purposes, rather than, say, a legal case, a purely business transaction, or a religious disputation. What would such a social event involve? Let us attempt a sort of rough deduction. While working on this paper I wrote to a wide range of friends and colleagues, without telling them the contents of the word list from the Cairo Geniza but explaining my work on it, and asked that they compile for me a list of the twenty most important words and phrases they would want to know in a foreign language for a social encounter. Only a few were so courteous as to respond; but they and their replies are sufficiently diverse for the data they provide to be of some interest. Michele Moramarco, in his fifties, a friend in Reggio Emilia, Italy, writes: 1. Who are you? 2. Where do you come from? 3. I am... 4. I come from... 5. Do you like? 6. I like... 7. Health, 8. Food, 9. Water, 10. Music, 11. Family, 12. Friendship, 13. Love, 14. Goal, 15. Time, 16. God, 17. Ideas, 18. Job, 19. Hobby, 20. Future. Dr. Sergio La Porta, forty, a native of New York City and Professor of Armenian Studies at Fresno State University, California, offered the following list, with a witty 21st item: 1. Hello, 2. Goodbye, 3. How are you? 4. How much does it cost? 5. Nice to meet you, 6. My name is... 7. Bread, 8. Water, 9. Market, 10. Where is, 11. River, 12. Center, 13. Gate, 14. Church, 15. Street, 16. Sun, 17. Moon, 18. Up, 19. Down, 20. Excuse me, 21. Toilet. Dr. Peter Manuelian, also in his forties, a native of Boston and Professor of Egyptology at Harvard, suggests: 1. Greetings, 2.

How are you? 3. Yes/no, 4. Where is...? 5. Do you have...? 6. I want... 7. Water, 8. Food, 9. Please give me... 10. My name is... 11. Your name is... 12. He, 13. She, 14. We, 15. They, 16. Sleep, 17. House, 18. Mother/father, 19. Sister/brother, 20. Son/daughter. Kristina Arakilyan, a native of Uzbekistan now resident in Brooklyn, New York, and an undergraduate at Harvard, has this list: 1. Hello, 2. My name is X, 3. I am from X, 4. It is nice to meet you, 5. Yes, 6. No, 7. Morning, 8. Afternoon, 9. Evening, 10. Night, 11. Please help me, 12. Thank you, 13. Where is X? 14. Inn, 15. Transportation, 16. Water, 17. I don't understand, 18. How much is it? 19. I'm sorry, 20. Goodbye.

Where is it? How much does it cost? Help! Excuse me, I'm sorry, goodbye! The younger the source, the more the list seems to be influenced by phrase books for travelers: more Kafka looking anxiously for the railway station early in the morning in an unfamiliar city than a traveler breaking bread with a stranger. All include some form of introductory greeting; two mention food in general, one specifies bread, and all the lists have water. One mentions family; another, more specific family relationships. None mentions any colors, fruits, or flowers. And only one of my four interlocutors, perhaps not surprisingly the eldest (remembering better days than this unarmorial age) and the one living closest to the Mediterranean, includes the items "love" and "music" on his list: we recall the little woman, pretty face, and (female) singer of the Geniza manuscript. Khach'ig and Avraham meet, and the latter trots out the basic pleasantries: *Ariyag, nist, inšurnas*? Would you care for *hads, mis*, a cup of *šur*? What are the names of your *dad* and *māyṛ*? How is *k'u knig*? That's a nice *əspidag* coat and *siyav* hat.¹¹

But the occasion and the vocabulary appropriate to it are not so perfunctory, for nine more items in the Geniza list stand out: wine, rose, apple, pear, virgin, woman, pretty face, musician, and the equivalent of *jilwa'az*, "tax collector". We shall leave this enigmatic item for last, after painting a picture around it, as it were, with the first eight. *Kini*. "What is life to a man without wine?" wonders Ben Sira, the literary sophisticate whose work in its Hebrew original the pioneer of Geniza studies, Solomon

¹¹ Goitein 1983: 174, 176 notes that white is the color most frequently mentioned in trousseaus (83 times); black (16 times). But the latter did not have the funereal associations of the West of the present day, and was considered "festive and dressy".

Schechter, was so elated to discover in the Cairene treasure trove (Hoffman/Cole 2011: 59).¹² Readers of the Fatimid period would have appreciated the sentiment: “it is known”, writes Paul Fenton, a modern researcher, “that drinking parties were a common feature of social life, and the Genizah has even preserved some ancient drinking songs”. People of different faiths mingled at drinking parties in the period, and there was music: a Muslim musician of thirteenth-century Aden reported his three noble Jewish employers to the local *qāḍī* after an Eid al-Fitr celebration they hosted. The Israeli poet Dan Pagis published a number of the songs found in the Geniza (Fenton 2002: 155; Pagis 1977: 245-255). A wealthy Cairene Jewish home had a large central room, the *maǰlis*, which could accommodate as many as four hundred guests: one entered through a hall called in Arabic by the Persian loan-word *dahlīz* (cf. Armenian *dahlīč*). It might have marble walls, water flowing down a slab into a marble basin (called in Arabic, as in Armenian, by another Persian loan-word *šādir-wān*), and a wind-tower for cooling like the Iranian *bādgīr*. The *maǰlis* of the wealthy was illuminated at night hundreds of large and small candles, chandeliers, and oil lamps. *Vart*. A rose is a rose. We offer them as gifts, maybe grow them in gardens, and that’s all: soap, after shave, and spray cans do the rest. But Cairenes used rose water in vast quantities—to rinse, freshen up, and cleanse a place of odors. The ubiquitous long-necked *golābdān*, rose-water dispenser, of repoussé silver one finds in modern India and Iran is a remote echo of those times. Geniza texts also mention such vessels as part of the basic furnishings of a good home. Our word list dutifully mentions bread and water: Cairenes had their drinking water from the Nile delivered by porters; and though homes had large storage jars and measuring cups for wheat, flour was ground at mills and the local baker’s hot ovens were often employed for bread. Meat was a luxury item: fruits and vegetables were eaten in large quantities. Khach’ig has had a bite to eat, and they have begun drinking; Avraham offers him a sprinkle of rose water and some fruit. *Danz*, *khnzor*. Pears and apples are fruits of the north—locally, specialties of the Armenian plateau. The Armenian

¹² Schechter saw the discovery of the original Hebrew Ben Sira as vindication of his view that Second Temple Judaism was vital, lively, cultured, and human—not the legalistic, ritualistic monstrosity that biased Gentile Biblical scholars, such as Wellhausen, made it out to be.

word for apple is an old one, Urartean, and the finest apples, proverbially, were those of Artamet near Van. Perhaps the Jewish owner of the word list wished to praise these in pleasant conversation. *Aghya akhshkin, kays, kusan*. Ben Sira praises wine and warns that old men ought not to interrupt the music at a party with too much talk; and since slave girls and dancers figure as valuable property in Geniza lists, they perhaps formed part of the much-appreciated entertainment. The Jew and Armenian perhaps meet, then, in a well-appointed *majlis* at a drinking party where there are beautiful girls: *Aghchign agheg e, kuys e?* the two men wonder, perhaps wistfully. There are musicians, and singers. At this point, the party gets interesting—at least we have the word of the worried religious authorities. I have already mentioned consternation of the *qadi* in Aden—and the Muslim clergy of Egypt were regularly incensed by bibulous practices, which, one is pleased to report, they were quite unable to stop. As for the Jews, in the tractate *'Avoda zara* ("Alien worship") of the Babylonian Talmud, 31b, the Rabbis warn that drinking parties lead to intermarriage. (And why do the ultra-Orthodox disapprove of sex? goes the modern joke. Answer: It leads to dancing!) Armenian divines through the ages have been no less severe in their condemnation of such entertainments. A sermon attributed to the fifth-century Catholicos Yovhannēs Mandakuni (more likely to be the work of another Catholicos John, Mayragomec'i, who lived three centuries later), "Concerning the lawless behavior of drunkards", warns sourly, "Bread (*hac'*), water (*jur*), and raiment requite the necessities of life; all the rest are a matter of desire, not of importance". Another sermon of the same author that has become the *locus classicus* for discussion of Armenian *gusans*, "Concerning the lawless theaters of the demonic", declares weak-willed women particularly susceptible to the lewd suggestions of drama: "For the custom itself is evil and so are those who encourage it: wine (*gini*), the minstrel (*gusan*), and Satan", where "women are cast into the role of prostitutes; and men, as rutting stallions mounting mares (*jioc' matakaxazac'*)", There are also clowns or jesters at these performances: "For where jesters (*katakk'*) and minstrels and lewd play (*xat*) and satire (*catr*) be; there the demons, too, join in the dance". These occasions involve wine, as one might expect: "For the theaters of the play are the encampments of the demons, as are all the immoral, minstrel-mad (*gusanamol*) wine-imbibers (*ginarbuk'n*), too". It is

not just wine the demons give the performers: “And they pour more into the mouths of the lewd minstrels—many clownish jests and moronic speeches”. Yovhannēs did not miss anything: he even has a reference to the pleasant fragrances employed at social gatherings, like the rose water of Cairo: “Woe to them who drink wine in order to become intoxicated, and who anoint themselves with sweet oils (*anoyš iwteawk*)!” (Mandakuni 1860: 130, 132, 134, 135, 136). The kings of Armenia were fortunate in not having to take any account of such sermons: P’awstos Buzand reports that when Aršak II was imprisoned in the Sasanian Fortress of Oblivion, his faithful eunuch Drastamat *urax aṛnēr zna gusanawk* “cheered him with minstrels”; and Pap died while *nayēr and pēs pēs ambox gusanac’n* “he was gazing at a motley throng of minstrels”. At least eight centuries later and hundreds of miles to the southwest, the poet Yovhannēs of T’lkuran still called himself a *gusan* (Russell 1986: 2-3). And the 12th century law code *Datastanagirk* of Mxit’ar Goš—closely contemporary to our fragment—is scandalized by such entertainments, which seem to be typical of the way of life of the privileged classes. “Some freemen and horsemen, when they arrive at villages, which are situated in the region of a monastery, do not dismount at the village, but some with women (*kanambk*) and female servants (*nažštawk*) lodge at the monastery, and in this way trample on the canon of the fathers. With minstrels (*gusanawk*) and singing girls (*varjakawk*) they dine in the house of holiness and worship, which is horrible for Christians to hear, let alone see” (Thomson 2000: 254-255).¹³

The invective against wine drinkers and minstrels refers also to satirical speech and to actors playing lewd roles as animals. The satire would have been both political and anti-clerical; and the actors would have required costumes and masks. One recalls that the English “satire” itself goes back to the lusty, ithyphallic *Mischwesen*, the half-men, half-beasts who pursue youths and maidens across the surfaces of ancient Greek *kratērs*—wine-mixing bowls—and drinking cups. Might they provide a hint as to the meaning of the ninth and enigmatic term of our list, *štṗ’n mrt*, i.e., some kind of man (*mard*, pronounced here */mart/*)? Clackson reads the first word as *estefan*, and suggests, on the basis of the word it translates, Judaeo-Arabic *jilwa’az*, that it is a deformation of *ostikan*, a

¹³ I have changed his translation slightly. For the text, see T’orosyan 1975: 121.

high official (nowadays, just a cop). Let us return to the term Nowrūz, encountered above in the form Nairuz as the name of a Muslim Armenian who fought in Syria. The term is the familiar name of the Iranian New Year, a vernal festival commemorating Ahura Mazda's creation of fire, which coursed through the other six sacred creations, animated them, and brought the new world into motion. The holiday became immensely popular in Egypt, with wine and beer consumed in public. Too much alcohol was as dangerous then as it is now: in Aleppo in the spring of 1022, 'Azīz al-Daula fell into a drunken slumber after a party and was assassinated by his two favorite *ghulāms*, one of whom happened to be an Armenian convert to Islam named Abū'l Naǧm Badr (Dadoyan 1997: 110). A description of Nowrūz in Cairo in A.D. 975 mentions public performances of a carnivalesque character in which actors satirized, mocked, and punished officials, in an apparent overlay of customs associated with the Greco-Roman and succeeding Christian cultures of the Mediterranean. A twelfth-century source testifies that whores and transvestites carried musical instruments; and descriptions of Nowrūz in nineteenth-century Egypt note that celebrants still wore costumes blasphemously parodying such otherwise dreaded officials as the tax man, the hangman, the flogger, and so on (Shoshan 1993: 42, 43, 50, 59).¹⁴ Armenian Carnival or Mardi Gras—the feast of *Barekendan*—was also associated with such blasphemous and lewd plays of role-reversal. A chronicler of the era gives us a glimpse into contemporary celebrations of the holiday by Armenian traders, probably from the region of Lake Van, who seem to have been organized in a guild-brotherhood for, among other things, defensive purposes. "On the day of *barekendan* of the same year [i.e., in the 1120's], a caravan carrying salted fish [Arm., *tarex*] came to the city of Antioch from the East. The people belonging to this caravan had set themselves up in the marketplace and were drinking and making merry. When the townspeople heard the sounds of their dancing and singing, all the men of the city pounced upon them and beat them to a pulp, after which they began to throw them out of the city. Now the men of this caravan were eighty in

¹⁴ For the non-Muslims of Fatimid Cairo (and, indeed, of many other Muslim climes at many other times, too), who were required as *dhimmis* to pay the additional, punitive *jizya* tax, the internal revenue service of the day inspired even greater dread than it does among Americans in mid-April nowadays.

number and they had truncheons and were resolute in purpose. So when their guild-leader [*manktawagn noc'a*] cried out to them, in their drunken condition they fell upon the townspeople, pursuing them from the Gate of *Sewodn* [Arm., "Blackfoot"] to the Church of Saint Peter, they put all the townspeople to flight and broke the skulls and bones of many. Finally, the Antiochenes swore by the cross and the Gospels that they would never bother them again. So, after peace was reestablished, the caravan returned to its place of origin" (Dosturian 1993: 148-149).¹⁵

Minas of Tokat, an Armenian clergyman of L'vov (Austro-Hungarian Lemberg, Ukrainian L'viv, Polish Lwów, home to all those peoples, Jews, Kipchaks, and a great many Armenians at one time) in the Eastern European region of Galicia, wrote on Friday, 5 February 1563, a semi-satirical ode, *Govut'wn i veray herisayi*, in praise of the rich festival porridge called *herisa* or *keshkek* by Armenians. It includes this quatrain: "Shrovetide is near,/ The hour of joy has come,/ The *Abelat'ot* rite is near,/ And *Mort'ët'ot'ovn!* is said" (lines 37-40). *Abelat'ot*, which means "leaving the monastic rule", is a Shrovetide parade, a blasphemous parody of the monastic perambulation of a church. The Shrovetide shout *Mort'ët'ot'ovn!* which I understand as "Skin the stammerer!" has most likely to do with the mock-flaying of the *aycemard*, or "goat-man"—a man or boy dressed in a goat costume. The custom, which still existed among Armenians of 19th century Tiflis, was described by observers, and there is even a drawing of the *aycemard*, a man with a staff in a goat mask—both goat and goat-herd—that is, a "goat-herd man".¹⁶ This creature, part man and part animal, is a remote echo of the satyr; and as for the act of flaying, one recalls that young men of the Equestrian order killed and flayed an actual goat on Roman Lupercalia. They then ran through the streets, smeared with blood, striking women with strips of goat hide to make them fertile. The *februa*, or switches, used in Lupercalian rites have, indeed, given the month of February, when all this went on, its very name.

¹⁵ Armenian text: Uṯhayec'Ī 1898: 226. I am indebted for this reference to my former student and present colleague Dr. Rachel Goshgarian, from her excellent work on the Armenian fraternal orders of the Erzinka/Erzincan area.

¹⁶ Russell 2003: 137-179: the *aycemard*, "goat-man" of the *Barekendan* revels, is illustrated in pl. 1, p. 171/1259, from Bdoyan 1963: 147 pl. 11.

Now let us return to the drinking party and the young girls and minstrels in the Cairo *majlis*. Might it be the carnivalesque Nowrūz, with a *gusan* in lupercalian costume representing some mutually feared and despised official to be harmlessly mocked? If so, might then our enigmatic phrase be read as **atstpan mart*, that is, *acpan mard*, “goat-herd man”, with the mysterious first word a rendering of the attested form in Middle Armenian, and the phrase entire a medieval equivalent of the *aycamard*, “goat-man”, of the Shrovetide revels of Tiflis in more recent times? (Łazaryan/Avetisyan 1987: 21, s.v. *acpan*). The obvious problem and objection to this suggestion is that this term does not directly translate “tax collector”, and my suggestion is that the latter was being satirized; so the word list here employs a very particular paraphrase. Another possible reading, closer to a direct translation of *ĵitwa’az*, might be advanced: **atat’pan*, “keeper of order”, as a compound with the common Arabic loan variously spelled *adat’*, *adēt’* in Middle Armenian. One’s reconstruction of the social scene might have to part with its satyr; but I mean to revive him one last time.

Wine is poured, fruit is eaten, a minstrel sings. Then one realizes that one has only been gazing at a sheet of paper. Our revels now are ended, Prospero declared as the cloud-capped towers melted away. Federico Fellini once made a film based upon the *Satyricon* of Petronius, a book brimming with *realia* (and satyrs!) that takes us through the feasts, drinking parties, music, entertainments, and debauchery of Imperial Rome, about as long before the celebration in medieval Cairo I have attempted to reconstruct as we now stand after it. At the end of the film the speech of one of the two proto-picaresque young heroes stops in mid-sentence, and his face becomes a fragment of a ruined ancient fresco in the sun; beyond it, the indifferent and eternal blue of the Mediterranean. From this literal fragment of an Egyptian Jew’s book I have sought, with some imaginative audacity for which I crave your indulgence, to shore up my ruins, and your own.

The Fatimid Cairenes, as I have said, were at an equal temporal remove from both Rome and ourselves. But this equivalence of chronology is deceptive. Much of their world endured, little changed; and we have only recently been severed from it, root and branch. The drinkers of Tiflis in the mid-18th century could still hear the living voice of a great Arme-

nian *gusan*, the polyglot bard Sayat' Nova, who wrote Tatar in the Armenian script of Maštoc'; and Armenian, in the intricately curvilinear Georgian *mkhedruli*. His world, with its cosmopolitan conviviality, its wine and wit, its roses and delicate maidens, its absorption in music and love, its gatherings in the *majlis*, is not too far from that of eleventh-century Cairo. But the master minstrel, cited in the second epigraph to this paper, was wrong when he sang that without him wine parties would not lack for the sound of stringed instruments. The culture that Indian and Ethiopian, Arab, Armenian, and Jew had shared soon followed his departure from the earth. In the 11th century, Christian and Muslim Armenians wrote mystical songs, fought, traded, wove rugs, cut stone, and cast bronze in Syria, where the easternmost waves of the Mediterranean end their long journey from the Pillars of Hercules and break below the forested spurs and foggy chasms of Musa Dagħ. That life ended, in 1915, when the embattled Armenian villagers of the mountain withstood the onslaught of the world's first genocidal state. Though many of them survived, still by the end of the Great War, most of Armenia was gone. In the first epigraph, the French wife of the leader of the *fedayis*, the Armenian fighters on the mountain of Moses, exclaims, *No European can learn your language!* The isolation of Armenian the language has become the metaphor of Armenia, the nation itself, an island of civilization nearly alone in a darkening and raging ocean. There were no more phrase books through which a Jew and a Christian in a Muslim capital might enjoy together a Persian new year's drinking party spiced by the theatrical relics of Roman debauchery. For *The Forty Days of Musa Dagħ* are the work of Franz Werfel, a Jew from Austria. He imagined in the fateful year 1933 the plaintive words of Juliette Bagratian; the Nazis burned his book, and within a decade most of the Jews of Europe, too, had been murdered. There are fewer than a hundred Jews alive in Egypt today: the Ibn Ezra synagogue has become itself a *geniza*, a storehouse inhabited by ghosts.

Ašxarə me pañfara ē, sang Sayat' Nova. "The world is but a window", into the beyond. *Talerumēn bezaril im*, "And I am tired of its panes". (The pun, pane/pain, on window frame and hurt works here as well in English as in Armenian.) *Erekə lav ēr vunc' vor aysōr;/ Valerumēn pezaril im*: "Yesterday was better than today;/ And I am tired of the morrow". The *majlis* of the western world I inhabit seems too often a study in loneliness to-

gether: isolated faces around cheerless tables, each face fixed upon the balefully glowing screen of a laptop. Conversation itself is fragmented into the one-sided stridor of voices on cell phones. The salt, as Christ warned us, has lost its savor. But there are still places on the ruined and dying planet a delicate instrument is tuned, there is free and articulate conversation, a beautiful face may still be seen, a song is sung, and somebody pours a friend a glass of wine. Where I live, in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a singer named Peter from southern Russia plays his guitar on warm nights in front of the Au Bon Pain café on Harvard Square. During the winter he plays at an Armenian restaurant. When I told him I had written a paper to read in Yerevan, he said, "Don't forget to mention Okudzhava!". This was something of a joke, since whenever he sees me sitting at the café or walking past on Massachusetts Avenue, Petya plays my favorite, Okudzhava's song *Ваше благородие, госпожа удача* ("Your ladyship, Madame Fortune") from the good old Soviet movie *Белое солнце пустыни*, "The White Sun of the Desert". But in fact I already had done so, in the draft, and here it will stay. If the old bards are gone, there are others, still, to make our celebrations human amidst the hideous inversion of life of a nightmare age: Bob Dylan, Vladimir Vysotsky. And Bulat Okudzhava. His poetic voice emerged from the Russian, Armenian, Georgian, and Jewish cultures of Moscow and Tiflis, of a vast and undivided country we once knew, a sorrowful and joyful country, but one we loved. In his song he pleads with his own hero in art to carry on: *Моцарт на старенькой скрипке играет,/ Моцарт играет и скрипка поет./ Моцарт отечества не выбирает,/ Только играет всю жизнь напролет./ Ах, ничего, что всегда, как известно,/ Наша судьба то гульба, то пальба—/ Не обращайтесь вниманья, maestro,/ Не убирайте ладони со лба.*—"Mozart plays an antique violin:/ Mozart plays, and the violin sings./ Mozart chooses no fatherland for himself,/ Just plays his whole life away./ Oh, it doesn't matter that, as we know,/ Our fate is ever thunder and a howl./ Pay them no attention, master!/ Don't take your palm from your brow".

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bdoyan, V. (1963), *Hay žolovrdakan xater*, vol. 1, Yerevan.
- Dadoyan, S. B. (1997), *The Fatimid Armenians: Cultural and Political Interaction in the Near East*, Leiden.
- Daniels, P. T. / W. Bright (1996), *The World's Writing Systems*, New York.
- Dosturian, A. E. (ed.), *Armenia and the Crusades, 10th to 12th centuries: the Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa*, Lanham.
- Clackson, J. (2008), "An Armenian/Judaeo-Arabic Word-List in Cambridge", Barlow Der Mugrdechian (ed.), *Between Paris and Fresno: Armenian Studies in Honor of Dickran Kouymjian*, Costa Mesa: 241-246.
- Fenton, P. B. (2002), "Jewish-Muslim Relations in the Medieval Mediterranean Area", Stefan C. Reif, (ed.), *The Cambridge Genizah Collection: Their Contents and Significance*, Cambridge: 155.
- Ghosh, A. (1992), *In an Antique Land: History in the Guise of a Traveler's Tale*, New York.
- Goitein, S. D. (1983), *A Mediterranean Society*, vol. 4, Berkeley-Los Angeles.
- Golden, P. B. (ed.) (2000), *The King's Dictionary: The Rasūlid Hexaglot: Fourteenth Century Vocabularies in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Greek, Armenian, and Mongol*, Leiden.
- Hasrat'yan, M. (ed.) (1963), *Sayat' Nova*, Yerevan.
- Hoffman, A. / P. Cole (2011), *Sacred Trash: The Lost and Found World of the Cairo Geniza*, Nextbook series, New York.
- Kapořan-Kouymjian, A. (1988), *L'Égypte vue par des arméniens*, Paris: 2-15.
- Kouymjian, D. (2002), "History of Armenian Paleography", Michael Stone et al. (ed.), *Album of Armenian Paleography*, Aarhus: 59-63.
- Łazaryan, Ė. S. / H. M. Avetisyan (1987), *Mifin hayereni bařaran*, Vol. I, Yerevan.
- Mandakuni, Y. (1860), *Čark'* ("Orations"), Venice.
- Pagis, D. (1977), "Wine Songs preceding the Spanish period", *Qoveř meřqarim (Dov Sadan Jubilee Volume)*, Jerusalem-Tel Aviv: 245-255.
- P'ap'azyan, H. (1964), "Mesropatař aylalezu grakanuť'yan masin", *Banber Matenadarani* 7, Yerevan.
- Russell, J. R. (1986), *Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i and the Mediaeval Armenian Lyric Tradition*, University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 7, Atlanta.
- (1987), *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, Harvard Iranian Series 5, Cambridge.
- (1994), "On Armeno-Iranian Interaction in the Medieval Period", *Au Carrefour des religions: Mélanges offerts à Philippe Gignoux, Res Orientales*, Vol. VII (repr. in Russell, J.R. (2004), *Armenian and Iranian Studies [=AIS]*, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9, Cambridge).
- (2003), "The Praise of Porridge", *Le Muséon* 116.1-2: 137-179 (*AIS*: 1217-1260).
- (2007), "The Shrine Beneath the Waves," *RES* 51, Cambridge: 136-156.
- (2011), "On An Armenian Magical Manuscript (Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, MS 10558)," (in publication, 2011, *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities*).

- Shivtiel, A. (2005), "A Judaeo-Armenian and Judaeo-Arabic Word-list from the Cairo Geniza", Philip S. Alexander et al. (eds.), *Studia Semitica: The Journal of Semitic Studies Jubilee Volume*, Journal of Semitic Studies Supplement 16, Oxford: 139-143.
- Shoshan, B. (1993), *Popular culture in medieval Cairo*, Cambridge.
- Thomson, R. W. (tr.) (2000), *The Lawcode [Datastanagirk'] of Mxit'ar Goš*, Dutch Studies in Armenian Language and Literature 6, Amsterdam.
- T'orosyan, X. (ed.) (1975), *Mxit'ar Goš, Datastanagirk'*, Yerevan.
- Urihayec'i, M. (1898), *Žamanakagrut'iwn*, M. Melik'-Adamean; N. Tēr-Mik'aelean (eds.), Valaršapat.
- Werfel, F. (1934), *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, translated from the German by Geoffrey Dunlop, New York.

James R. Russell
(Cambridge, MA, USA)

THE VISION OF THE PAINTING: ALEXANDER KONDRATIEV'S NOVELLA «DREAMS»

Dreams have more than today's stuff, the snippets of impressions of the moment that were not narrated to the end or fully thought out. In dreams are also the things of yesterday: the events in life that are indelibly imprinted, and what is crucial — the blood, whose flow runs back to the time before one's own birth. But in dreams there is also the shape of tomorrow — that which in the stream of life, ceaseless and without beginning, we regard as the future — that is open to beasts through their instinct; and to men, by premonition. Dreams afford recognition, consciousness, and foresight. Life as depicted through dreams unfolds into the ages that are to come and to which came before them.

*Remizov A. The Fire of Things: Dreams and Drownings*¹

Di gantse velt iz a kholem - nar beser a guter kholem eyder a shlekhter (The whole world is a dream, so better a good dream than a bad one)

Yiddish proverb

«We are the blown leaves of the tree of life;
We are but the shadows of what once was;
We are but an unfulfilled dream
of the homeland bright,
Pale after dusk, the last reflected light.
We, troubled ghosts in the land of dream visions
Meet you, brothers, enwrapped in mourning;
We wander, silent, in the field amidst strange plants
And slip with light tread through mute precincts.
Soft is the film of their silvery dust at our step;
Something like moonlight on dark flagstones fell;

In the mortuary glare of an alien moon bathed,
Statues of grim beasts have frozen at their posts...
Time rolls on, we grow pale, we grow wan,
O forgotten brothers! We, the dreams you forgot.
We fly from you into a darkness unknown,
Shedding earthly visage like garments outworn...
So whispered the shadows beside me, leaning close.
My heart was wracked by savage pain
And soundless plaints overwhelmed my soul
Of those whose soul is captive to the vale
beyond the grave.

*Kondratiev A. Autumn 1911*²

¹ *Ремизов А. Огонь вещей: сны и предсказания*. М., 1989. С. 144: «В снах не только сегодняшнее — обрывки дневных впечатлений, недосказанное и недодуманное; в снах и вчерашнее — заснеженные нежданно события жизни и самое важное: кровь, уводящее в прошлое; но в снах и завтрашнее — что в непрерывном беснующемся потоке жизни отблескивает как будущее и что открыто через чужие зверя, а человеку предчувствием; в снах дается и познание, и сознание, и провидение; жизнь, изображаемая со снами, развертывается в века и до века».

² *Кондратьев А. Закат: Посмертный сборник стихотворений* / Под ред. В. Крейза. Orange, 1990. С. 11. № 4:

«Мы облетание листья с дерева жизни;
Мы только тени того, что было когда-то;
Мы лишь несбытанный сон о светлой отчизне,

Отблеск зари, поблескивая после заката.
Призраки смутные, мы в стране сновидений
С вами встречаемся, братья, скорбью обитые;

1. THE WRITER

Alexander Alexeyevich Kondratiev (Александр Алексеевич Кондратьев) (Pl. 1) was born 11 May 1876 (o. s.) in St. Petersburg. His father was director of the State printing house. In 1897 he was graduated from the Petersburg Gymnasium and was enrolled at the law school of St. Petersburg University, where in the following year he became acquainted with the poet Alexander Blok, a fellow student. His first published work of prose was the short story «Домовой» («The house spirits»), which appeared in 1901 in the newspaper «Россия» («Russia»). He began his first full time job the following year, in the legal department of the Imperial Ministry of Transportation. The year after that saw the first publication of his verses, in a student anthology; and he met the Symbolist poet-couple Zinaida Gippius and Dmitri Merezhkovsky. His first volume of verse, «Стихи А. К.» («Verses of A. K.»), was printed by his father's company in 1905; his translation from French, published in 1907, of the «Songs of Bilitis» was condemned by the critics as pornography. In the same year he published at Moscow his novel «Сатирикса» («The Satyress»). In 1908 he was hired by the legal department of the State Duma (housed in the Tauride Palace, described in «Dreams») and published his first collection of stories, «Белый козел» («The White Goats»). His second book of poems, «Черная Венера» («Black Venus»), was printed in 1909 at Petersburg. In 1911 he published at Petersburg a second collection of stories, «Улыбка Ашера» («The Smile of Asherah»). The following year he published at Petersburg a scholarly monograph, «Граф А. К. Толстой: материалы для истории жизни и творчества» («Count A. K. Tolstoy: materials for a history of his life and works»); the verses and notebook of the poet figure significantly in «Dreams».

Except perhaps for the post in the bureaucracy of the Duma — the parliament granted by Tsar Nicholas II in the wake of the first Russian Revolution, of 1905 — there is little sense that much of Kondratiev's creative work, populated by fallen angels, pagan goddesses, Russian sprites, and *femmes fatales* playing out occult and demonic themes, had to do with either his dull, everyday life as a state functionary or with the larger historical events convulsing Russia. Passionate social, political, and economic debates gripped nearly all strata of society: the disastrous war with Japan, the bloody pogroms engineered by the reactionary regime, the growing revolutionary sentiment against the established order. He used his art to avoid all this. The languid, decadent creatures and exotic landscapes that adorn the covers of his publications recall Aubrey Beardsley and the rest of the *fin de siècle*. It is perhaps fair that in the standard guides to Russian literature, that bastion of unrelenting moral engagement and agonized soul searching, he rarely merits so much as a footnote. When war broke out in 1914, Kondratiev worked for an organization providing aid to the wounded. But the experience seems to have left little imprint on his consciousness as an artist, for the last book he published in Russia, in the apocalyptic year 1917 (at Petrograd, this time), was yet another work of decadence mired in an imagined antiquity: «Елена: Драматический эпизод из эпохи Троянской войны» («Helen: A dramatic episode from the epoch of the Trojan War»). An unadmirable critic observed, perhaps too unjustly, that Kondratiev wrote as though Leo Tolstoy's Ivan Ilyich had never lived or died.

Politics and suffering were to flood into Kondratiev's life; they tinted, but did not deeply color, his art. In January 1918 he left the Cradle of the Revolution for the White-held Crimea, as did so many people of the old order never to return: when the Reds were victorious there, too, he moved to a family estate,

Бродим мы вместе в полях среди странных растений,
Поступью легкой скользим в немые палаты;
Нежен при входе в них слой серебряной пыли;
Свет вроде лунного пал на темные плиты;
Мертвенным блеском луны нездешней облиты
Статуи строгих зерей на страже застыли...
Катится время, и мы блуждаем в тьме,

Вам забытые сны, забытые бреды.
Мы в неизвестную тьму от нас улетим,
Облик покинув земной, как старые платья...»
Так мне цитаты, склоняясь, близкие тени.
Сердце сжималось во мне мучительной болью.
Душу наполняли мне беззвучные песни
Тех, чья душа пленена захребной колодой.

Dorogobuzh, near Rovno (now in the Ukraine, then eastern Poland). Though Kondratiev never embraced contemporary themes and his interest in the supernatural did not wane, he does seem to have turned in nostalgia from Greco-Roman and ancient Near Eastern settings and motifs to his native Slavic world and its own rich mythology, and to set his occult tales in prewar Petersburg as well as ancient Greece or Phoenicia. In 1930 he published at Berlin his great «demonological» novel «На берегах Ярына» («On the Banks of the Yaryn», available in a competent English translation by Valentina G. Brougher). The name of the fictional river is a combination of those of two others near the estate; and the book is a virtual encyclopaedia of Slavic folk lore and belief, its submarine landscape peopled by mermaids (русалки), the wraiths of drowned men (утраченные души), and the water spirit (водяной) who rules them. Above the surface we encounter a dryad (русалка), the pagan god Perun, witches, the devil, and various other beings moving through the feasts and rites, both sacred and blasphemous, of the changing seasons. It is perhaps significant to the argument I will make presently for the importance of water in an actual painting that parallels a fictional one described in the novella «Dreams», that much of the action of the novel «On the Banks of the Yaryn» takes place underwater, in the river Yaryn itself. In 1936 Kondratiev printed privately at Rovno a collection of verses, «Славянские боги» («The Slavonic Gods») — again an evocation of the local, native pagan past. To perceive the utter obsolescence of this in the context of 20th-century art one need but recall that not very far away, in Drohobycz, Poland (now western Ukraine), the writer Bruno Schulz was reaching the apogee of his fame with innovative, magical realist tales that transform, satirize, and enchant the actual social and economic life of the Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians of Galicia. And considering the racist uses to which the Germans on the western side of the Polish border were putting their own neo-paganism, Kondratiev's preoccupations can perhaps to some seem disturbing in retrospect. But the prism of historical retrospective can distort; and I would argue that Kondratiev was untainted by fascist notions of any sort. Perhaps the *entartete Kunst* of the languid Decadents and dreamy Symbolists was something of a protection against the lure of fascism, with its puritanical rigidity.

After the outbreak of war in September 1939 with Hitler's savage *Blitzkrieg* against Poland, Soviet forces moved into the eastern part of the country, including the district of Rovno, in fulfillment of a secret protocol of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. For most Jews in what had been the old Pale of Settlement of the Tsars, the arrival of the Red Army was a reprieve, whether they knew it or not at the time. But Communist occupation placed White Russian emigres and very many others (Polish officers, Ukrainian and Baltic nationalists, etc.) perceived as enemies of the USSR in immediate and dire peril of arrest, deportation to the Gulag, and worse. So in December Kondratiev fled westward yet again, this time across the lines to German-occupied Warsaw, then south to Krakow, where in 1941 his wife died of cancer. April 1945 found him in besieged Berlin. We do not know what he did, or knew, during the war and the Holocaust, at whose epicenter he was living. Though many Russian emigres fortunate enough to be without a traceable past in liberal politics reasonably preferred a rather precarious existence under the Nazis to certain death in the Stalinist USSR, there were some who had brought in their hurriedly-packed bags



Pl. 1. Alexander Alexeyevich Kondratiev

the anti-Semitism cultivated by the *ancien régime* and who regarded fascist policies with a depraved indifference or even with active approval. The two monarchists who had inadvertently murdered Vladimir Nabokov's father in 1922, for instance, found positions as SS informers during the war; and the newspaper «Новое Слово» («New Words») in Berlin called for Nabokov to be melted down in the same pot as the Jews, so that a new and untainted Russian literature might be cooked. There is no indication, at least in his work, that Kondratiev shared such pro-Nazi attitudes, or, indeed, that he ever hated or hurt another soul. In the stories set in the Rovno district the Jews of the *shetlach* (little villages, *мечетки*) are an unremarked, natural part of everyday life, never parodied or demeaned. As an occultist, Kondratiev was fascinated by the Hebrew language and by Kabbalah, which he admired. Kondratiev's apolitical aestheticism — escapism, really, with its tell-tale erotic fantasizing — may have helped him as a shield against the increasingly hideous world he had to inhabit as his life trailed into an enfeebled and impotent old age, as much as it distanced him from fascist ideas.

With the fall of Berlin to the Red Army in May 1945 Kondratiev fled south, to Belgrade, which had been another Russian emigre center, and lived there with his daughter and her children — one imagines, in circumstances of dependence and penury. But this haven too proved temporary, as Yugoslavia became a Communist state; and in 1950 its dictator Tito deported the Russian exiles to a camp near Trieste. The writer, driven by the winds of exile and stripped of individual dignity and resources, was reduced to resorting to a spiritualist séance to try to find out the circumstances of the death of his own son. Two years later the Tolstoy Fund assisted Kondratiev's daughter and grandchildren to move to the USA; he was settled in a pension for the elderly in Switzerland but rejoined his relatives in 1957, when he was admitted to the nursing home of the Tolstoy Farm in upstate New York. In May 1967 he passed away and was buried at the Russian cemetery of Novo-Dievo in New York State³.

The novella (новелла) «Сны» («Dreams»), translated here, was written after the author's emigration to Volhynia and contains the first real elements of autobiography in Kondratiev's work — and they are numerous. I have not been able to ascertain the date of its completion; but it is possible the author worked on it through the 1920s and finished it around the time of the outbreak of the Second World War. Most of it is set in the Petersburg of the Silver Age, before the First World War and the October Revolution: the narrator mentions as background the 1905 Revolution, and one character has a prophetic dream of street fighting, machine gun fire, and a friend's death on the embankment of the Fontanka — to take place, presumably, in the October Revolution of 1917. The supernatural events of the novella transpire, not in the ancient Slavonic mythological clime of water sprites and forest spirits, but in dreams about a landscape painting that depicts the country estate, a world more authentically (and nostalgically) Russian, and closer to the hearts of author and narrator, than in the submarine and supernatural Otherworld. And although the imagined estate turns out to be real, and near the narrator's home-in-exile near Rovno, he beholds it only after it has been destroyed; and its inhabitants, slaughtered⁴. Although the story is semi-autobiographical, the poem by Kondratiev translated as an epigraph to this study and translation, adumbrates many of its themes in an almost prophetic way and was written seven years before the Revolution (though published,

³ O. Sedov provides the chronology of the writer's life in: *Kondratiev A. Сны*, СПб., 1993 (с предисловием О. Седова); there are some more details in V. Key'd's introduction to *Kondratiev A. Завет*. Here I express my gratitude to my old friend, the acclaimed present-day Petersburg poet Elena Danayevskaya, for her gift of Sedov's lovely volume. May this small study and translation be a modest offering of thanks for the wonderful hospitality of her home and the pleasure of her extraordinary company (and that of her regal cat, Ricky) at Nepssa Pesna (Black Small River) in November 2012.

⁴ The device of coming upon an actual place now dead and in ruins that had first appeared in a dream as living and whole is encountered in the work of a contemporary writer whom Kondratiev could not have known. The American writer of horror and fantasy, H. P. Lovecraft (1890–1937), constructs the fabulous prehistoric city in the Antipodes of his story «The Shadow Out of Time», which was published just a year before his death, in a sequence of dreams; and the narrator at the end comes upon the actual ruins and an ancient book written in his own hand in them. Lovecraft did not believe in the supernatural; so in his tale the narrator's mind is taken in time travel by an alien intelligence that swaps its body for his for a period of time in order to study the human culture of the early 20th century.

as irony would have it, posthumously). In it one meets the souls of the dead wandering through sere parks and long-deserted halls in moonlit dream visions. And they declare themselves «the dream that did not come true about a bright fatherland», even though Kondratiev was yet to know the sorrows of exile.

The work is structured as a narrative set down in old age, consisting entirely of conversations recalled by the narrator; and even the latter refer mostly to memories of dreams told by others. The locus of these dreams is at first an imaginary landscape whose only reflection in the «real» world of the narrative foreground is a painting — and the artist who made it is deceased. Then it is a satanist temple seen by an artist in successive dreams; but the description provided turns out in fact to have been recast into a coherent narrative by an intermediary interlocutor, placing the scene at a tertiary remove from reality. The artist who saw the temple appears towards the end of the novella, and is invited to imagine the scene of the ruins of a stately home in the Crimea, this time not on the basis of a painting but of a poem describing such a spectacle in reality in the cycle «Крымские эскизы» («Crimean Sketches») by the 19th-century Russian poet Alexei Konstantinovich Tolstoy (whose initials with patronymic but without family name, AK, correspond to Alexander Kondratiev's initials without patronymic — and he used AK as an abbreviation or *nom de plume*, perhaps in homage to the admired poet). And this scene may have affinities to an actual painting — Apollinarily Vasnetsov's «Элегия» («Elegy») — which is typologically the precursor of his late-life canvas «Sound of an old park». And that picture, in turn, resembles the fictional one with which the novella begins. The lines that divide dream from waking, painted landscapes from real ones, and even poetic evocation from prose description, are all blurred or forced into recursive or synchronous patterns, in such a way that there is no longer only art for art's sake, but reality for art's sake — reality made subservient to art. And, in a way, that is exactly what a dream does, insofar as it is an experience that is also a composition. Kondratiev has thus, it would seem, placed his tale at so many removes from the representation of reality that is supposed to be the ground of a conventional, classical, narrative that perhaps a disgusted Socialist Realist Plato would have to invent a new metaphor of the cave in «The Republic» to account for all the layers of illusion!

Though the novella is peppered with references to *fin de siècle* Decadents, Symbolists, occultists, and satanists, the actual magic of the novella inheres, not in references to rituals and arcana, but in the artful construction of the text itself. Kondratiev, like Nabokov, is the *vol'shebnik*, the sorcerer and enchanter. He has taken reality and charged it with additional, subjective meaning through use of, or reference to, multiple forms of artifice. The philosopher Hans Jonas in his essay «Image-Making and the Freedom of Man» suggested one can conclude a creature is a man from seeing that it can make a picture, because «in the pictorial representation the object is appropriated in a new, non-practical way, and the very fact that the interest in it can shift to its *ekdos* signifies a new object relation»⁵. He goes on to specify that this likeness is not and must not be complete. Dreams remembered and recast as stories upon waking, paintings, and poems are thus all mental acts that force perception into a subjective relationship with the phenomena of space and time. And the act of recollecting a dream is an artistic ordering, a narration that is also never entirely complete. For some features of the dream are, inevitably, forgotten or omitted — or, if they are irreconcilable with the sense of the retelling, altered. This makes man, and not the thing, the focus: it is humane rather than utilitarian, an effort to assert meanings, even invented meanings, in the face of nihilism.

⁵ Jonas H. *The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology*. New York, 1966. P. 159. This formulation by H. Jonas, who saw the great turning point in human thought in the invention of a god who exercises concern, makes art a similar action of concern rather than a soullessly materialistic process of blind imitation. Sight then becomes a moral quality, saved from the worship of surface appearance that is idolatry. So Philo Judaeus believed Israel saw the voice of God (which Ishmael, as his name indicates, could but hear); see: *The Ten Commandments in History and Tradition* / Ed. by Ben-Zion Segal. Jerusalem, 1990. P. 116–117. H. Jonas, who is perhaps best known for his lucid survey «The Gnostic Religions», was a pupil of Heidegger; and Richard Wolin has argued convincingly that much of the thought of the German Jewish refugee scholar about ecology and the importance of caring evolved in reaction against the background of his teacher's hideous emergence from the chrysalis of German academe as a Nazi.

When Kondratiev's narrator finally sees the real and ruined manor house, he searches for a figure traced in a dream, and finds it.

Everything in «Dreams» is in the past, every important character except the narrator is dead and gone, nothing is verifiably real, and — except for the drama of the dreams recollected by the characters in recitations — nothing happens. Much the same might be said of course of Vladimir Nabokov's «Lolita», where the only «living» character is the fictional psychiatrist of the preface: all the others are dead and the entire novel is a narrative recited by one of them. And the title character, that cunning, lubricious, lethal nymphet-hybrid of the ancient Semitic demoness Lilith and the pagan Slavonic goddess Леля (Lel'), could have stepped out of a salacious Kondratievian reverie of Asherahs and pycанки. Yet Nabokov's novel is perhaps the greatest artistic exploration of personal cruelty, mutual incomprehension, indifference, and crushing loneliness ever attempted, using a modicum of mythological material to create a moral narrative deeply engaged with the new surroundings of America that the Russian writer embraced with such passion and perception. Kondratiev's work, by contrast, might seem as brittle in its nostalgia and stale artifice, as chillingly (or innocently) free of moral affect, as the blank eyes of the white marble idol of a pagan demon. But one can also see his tenacious pursuit of the dream, his careful hoarding of memory, and his aesthetic manipulation of consciousness, as an exaltation of the sovereign demiurgic power of the individual, of the intimacy of creativity. It is an attempt to transcend the horror and misery of an age of war, revolution, destruction, and exile — the working of a defiant personal magic against a dark and demonic social reality.

The use of dreams in literature is as ancient as writing, and seems to come together with a taste for exotic settings and extravagant effects: in a Persian romance summarized in the «Deipnosophistai» of Athenaeus, for instance, the lovers Zariadris and Odatis meet through shared dreams — a type that Kondratiev explores in his novella⁶. Russian literature abounds in dreams: in «Eugene Onegin» Pushkin devotes much attention to ethnographic details on dream interpretation and the like in the sequence on Tatiana's dream. In «Boris Godunov» the priest Pimen dreams of the feasts and battles of his youth, and counsels a younger cleric to fast and pray in order to forestall such visions. (Kondratiev's characters, occultists and satanists, seek out such dream-adventures rather than avoiding them.) The *locus classicus* for the dream about a painting that exists in the waking life of the narrative and acts upon the dreamer-protagonist is N. V. Gogol's «Портрет» («The Portrait», 1835, revised in 1842), in which the hero Chertkov lives in a state of *полупробужденности* («semiconsciousness») and *полусновидения* («semi-dream-vision»)⁷. Alexei Remizov, a contemporary of Kondratiev, could as easily have been describing the latter's *oeuvre* when he wrote of Gogol, in his «Ороч. сны» — from which the epigraph to this essay is drawn — «All of Gogol's works... can be conceived of as a series of dream visions with awakenings while still in that dream»⁸. Kondratiev's contemporary, the Symbolist poet Valeriy Bryusov, has the hero of his «В башне» («In the Tower», 1902–1907) wonder which is real, the writing-desk at which he is recording his narrative, or the story itself — a dream of imprisonment in the straw-strewn dungeon of a castle (cf.: the

⁶ See, with references: Russell J. R. *An Epic for the Borderlands: Zariadris of Sophene, Aslan the Rebel, Digenes Akrites, and the Mythologem of Alcestis in Armenia* // *Armenian Tsopik/Kharper* / Ed. by R. Hovannissian. Costa Mesa, 2002 (UCLA Armenian History and Culture Series, Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces. 3.). P. 147–183. It is worth noting that the central vision of the *Gdāls*, or «Songs» of the Prophet Zarathustra — the earliest known poetic cycle in world literature whose human author names and describes himself — takes place *svdno* «in a dream».

⁷ As though the satanic element were not obvious enough, the name of the corrupted hero contains Russian *sepr* (devil). This is common enough in Gogol that it is unlikely to have been a coincidental choice. In «Илиссес» («The Overcoats») poor Akakiy Akakievich (whose Christian name, Acacius, seems to contain childish *kaku* «shit») is nearly named Mokkii, Sossii, or Khondazad (Mocius, Socius, the Sasanian martyr Xwadodad) — saints' names that in Russian evoke *соеппа*, coars, and *защипа* — wetness, sticking, and a pair of buttocks.

⁸ Cited by M. R. Katz (Katz M. R. *Dreams and the Unconscious in Nineteenth-Century Russian Fiction*. Hanover, 1984. P. 66) whose translation of *сновидения* I have changed from «dreams» to «dream visions» (Russian *сон* is cognate to other Indo-European words meaning «sleep», including the English; but *вид-* means quite specifically «see».) And Gogol's hallucinogenic Russian landscape is dotted with wonderful, corrupt little hamlets like *Бухарь* Cнег and *Кухня* Чрезмерна — «Lousy Prides» and «Hotcakes All Gones».

castle-like building in «Dreams»). The Symbolists, heirs of Gogol, bequeath to the subsequent literature of the absurd the theme of the captivating dream that is more powerful or even more solid than the waking state. In his «Сон» («A dream», 1926) Daniil Kharmas has a character dream the same thing over and over in ever more bizarrely illogical iterations till he is no longer capable of waking life and is discarded with the trash⁹. These dreams are all grim. Pushkin had tried to cheer the imprisoned Decembrists:

Believe me, comrade, it will rise,
That star of captivating joy:
Russia will spring up from her sleep...¹⁰

But a century later K. D. Bal'mont (1867–1942) could write in exile the poem «Длнный сон» («A Bad Dream»):

It seems as though I never left Russia
And that no change could ever happen there,
And that she had both doves and serpents wise,
And a host of wolves, and long, long prison walls...¹¹

V. V. Nabokov, who considered himself as much a poet as a prose writer, chose to engrave in the glass of the window in the guest room of his friend Edmund Wilson the poem «Расстрел» («Execution by firing squad») that begins so wistfully, like a child's dream of an enchanted kingdom, a Narnia in the wardrobe:

There are nights when as soon as I lie down
The bed sails off to Russia¹².

But it continues: they are leading him to a ravine to shoot him, and «bed» (кровать) rhymes with «kill» (убивать). He wakes in terror, but part of him still wants to be home, with the racemosa (черемуха) in bloom in the ravine on the night of his death. «Приснилось как лучше, а проснулся как всегда», one might say, «We dreamed of better but awoke as usual» — paraphrasing Chernomyrdin's quip on the Russian reality that always seems to tag along as the dismal shadow of the bright Russian Idea.

The interaction of writing and painting is ancient: cf. the Greek literary convention of *ekphrasis*, which Old Russian literature inherited by way of Byzantium. And in pre-Revolutionary Russia paintings with a message of doom find their verbal echo. In Kondratiev's own day and circle, the poet and philosopher Vyacheslav Ivanov based an essay on the painting «Terror Antiquus» (Pl. 2) by Leon Bakst, a member of the World of Art movement (on which see *bywa*). Bakst began the painting in the revolutionary year 1905 and completed and exhibited it three years later: the canvas depicts the destruction of Atlantis in flood and lightning, seen from far above: in the foreground, facing the viewer is the immobile statue of a Greek *korē* or goddess with the enigmatic «archaic smile» on her lips. With her back to the tragedy unfolding far below, she would be coldly indifferent even if shown as a woman, not an idol. Ivanov interpreted the scene — or took it as the starting point for an idea of his own — as the condign doom of a society that had embraced

⁹ Katz M. R. *Dreams*... P. 150.

¹⁰ Товарищ, верь: взойдет она,
Звезда пленительного счастья;
Россия вспрянет ото сна...

¹¹ See: Горбунов В. В. *Сны русских поэтов*. М., 1999:

Мне кажется, что я не покинул России
И что не может быть в России перемен.
И голуби в ней есть, и мудрые есть змеи,
И множество волков, и ряд тюремных стен...

¹² Бывают ночи, только лгу,
В Россию проплывает кровать.



Pl. 2. Leon Bakst, «Terror antiquus», 1908

evanescent portrait that the mirror paints, changes one's state and one's place. Kondratiev seems to suggest that the work of art plays an active, even fatal, role in the life of its viewer, and that reflection (another way of creating a two-dimensional image, which is by its nature incomplete and therefore in a sense arbitrary and creative) has a formative impact on the three-dimensional world from which it is distilled. And here too one recalls Gogol: a young priest forced to read the Psalter for three nights over the corpse of a young witch survives terrifying visions of demons who cannot see him till the monster who gives his name to the story, «Буѣ» («Вѣ»), is brought in. The creature is a monstrous lidded eye. It beholds the youth, and the spirits rush in and kill him. Sight itself becomes the actor — the killer.

Could Kondratiev's «Dreams» have been inspired by works of art he had actually seen? As I began to read «Dreams» I realized I had seen, long ago and in real life a Russian oil painting uncannily like the fictional Russian watercolor that occupies the first half and conclusion of the narrative. Even the sense of everything being a reverie of the past is conveyed by the oil painting's details, and by a version of its title. The painting is «Звук старого парка» («Sound of an old park») by Apollinary Vasnetsov, Moscow, 1926 (Pl. 3). It is most unlikely that Kondratiev, already in Rovno, ever saw the canvas or heard about it, though he most likely knew the artist's other work, because of their shared interest in Russian antiquity; and a much earlier work, «Elegy», that prefigures the 1926 painting, can perhaps be seen through the citation of a poem in the novella that describes a Crimean scene. It would seem that both men, the writer and the artist, fairly conservative practitioners of their crafts, reverted in old age to the common vision of a world and way of life they had known, one that was now lost forever because of the Revolutions of 1917; and found premonitions or

the patriarchal and the abstract and forsaken the earthly and maternal values Christianity had ostensibly contributed to Scriptural religion¹³. One can take issue with this idiosyncratic «reading» of the painting; but the main thing is the engagement of a contemporary Russian writer with a rather decadent painting that focuses, as Kondratiev always did, on the supernatural feminine power.

One has dwelt on the static aspects of Kondratiev's work, the passivity of the narrator and the other characters. But that is perhaps not the most useful perspective from which to discuss the novella. For the painting itself is the dynamic actor, and becomes the occasion for more dreams and further descriptions of their scenes. It grows, literally, out of its limits and dimensions, as the dreamer sees some details of the landscape that are beyond the frame or on the other side of — behind — the images visible on the flat canvas. The landscape of the painting expands and engulfs the dreamers. Kondratiev elaborates this theme with his use of mirrors: the narrator of a dream explains that he is transformed into a stag as he looks into a mirror; when as the metamorphosed animal he is cornered by a huntress, he is returned to the waking world by looking into the polished metal surface of the shield she carries. The picture forms a world for its viewer; and within that world the more

¹³ Bird R. *The Russian Prospect: The Creative World of Viacheslav Ivanov*, Madison, 2006. P. 154, 171–172.



Pl. 3, Apollinary Mikhailovich Vasnetsov, «Sound of an old park», 1926

refractions of loss and elegiac emotional response to it in scenes from earlier in the 19th century. This confluence of visions and themes is logical, and not unique. The likelihood that affinity rather than causation links the fictional painting in the story written in eastern Poland to the real one in an artist's studio in Soviet Moscow (Pl. 4) makes the coincidence more, rather than less, interesting. But if there really were synchronicity, the acausal connecting principle Jung was pondering at the same time. Yes, and what then?



Pl. 4, A. Vasnetsov's studio, Moscow

Coleridge merely poses the question coyly, in his musings upon the dreamer waking with the flower of Paradise of his sleeping vision in his fleshy, waking hand. But Russians venture more boldly. Fr. Pavel Florensky introduces the reader to the icon, in which the true Otherworld finds its window into this insubstantial and evanescent one, at the beginning of his study «Иконоста́с» («The Iconostasis»), not with a consideration of painting but with an intricate and empirical meditation upon dreaming, as another window of that world beyond the linear sequentiality of time-space. He notes that when an external stimulus intrudes upon a dream, the dreamer has prepared for it in advance, thematically and typologically. I am sleeping, for instance, and a bell outside rings. But in my dream a bell tower about to chime has *already* — and therefore achronically — been worked harmoniously into the plot. Kondratiev is to visit in the foreground, the «real life» of the novella, the imagined estate of painting and dream. And there he is to find the monogram scratched there by a dreamer long dead, with a reply by a dead girl: Coleridge's flower, but a bloom wilted by mortality.

2. THE ARTIST

Apollinariy Mikhailovich Vasnetsov (Аполлина́рий Михаи́лович Васнецов), a younger brother of the far more famous academic painter Viktor Vasnetsov (best known for his iconic carves of three Old Russian knights), was born 6 August 1856 in the large and happy family (possibly of ancient Novgorodian stock) of a Russian Orthodox parish priest in the village of Ryabovo, in the *guberniya* of Viatka. His youth was unremarkable and quietly successful: he went to St. Petersburg and studied art under the tutelage of his brother Viktor in the 1870s; and in 1900 was elected an academician of the Imperial Academy of Arts in the capital. He joined the Union of Russian Artists (Союз русских художников) in 1903. Vasnetsov was an accomplished graphic illustrator, and in 1897 had done the sets for Musorgsky's opera «Хованщина» («Khovanshchina»), but is best known for his paintings of historical scenes of old Muscovy and of estates outside the ancient capital, as well as landscapes — from the Crimea to the Siberian taiga and Kama river. Vasnetsov associated with the circle of the benefactor of the arts, Savva Mamontov, at the latter's estate outside Moscow at Abramtsevo. Though an academic painter of the old school, he refused to condemn as decadent the World of Art (Мир искусства) movement with its connections to the Symbolists, *art nouveau*, and the occult, and unlike some other academic painters agreed to participate in their exhibition, writing «I am an enemy of decadence but have not become so senile as not to tell the shell from the kernel, that is, to be unable to distinguish between decadence and progress in art...»¹⁴. But he later broke decisively with World of Art. Vasnetsov spent most of his working life in Moscow, and seems to have come to terms with the Revolution, serving on the Moscow historical commission through the 1920s. But the hostility of the atheistic new order to Russian tradition was still intolerable to him; and he is reputed to have been the only artist publicly to protest the demolition by the Stalinist regime of the giant Cathedral church of Christ the Savior (Храм Христа Спасителя) in Moscow. He died peacefully after a long illness in 1933.

In 1926 Vasnetsov executed an oil painting on canvas, «Ильм crapopo napka» (Pl. 3), 106 x 176.5 cm, now displayed on an easel in the studio of the apartment-museum of the artist at Furmannyi pereulok 6, Moscow. The Russian word *urym* in the name, basically a loud sound, a noise, is hard adequately to render into English in this context. It is not necessarily discordant and has not the animal association of a feral roar. Pushkin in the novel in verse «Евгений Онегин» («Eugene Onegin») describes the Russian countryside in late October:

The secretive canopy of the forests
With a sad *urym*/sound was denuded¹⁵

¹⁴ Беспалов А. Аполлинарий Михайлович Васнецов, 1856–1933. М., 1956. С. 58.

¹⁵ Лесов таинственная сеть
С печальным шумом обнажилась



Pl. 5. A. Vasnetsov. «Elegy», 1893

In the poem «Медный всадник» («The Bronze Horseman») he evokes the «блеск, и шум, и говор башен» («glitter and шум/sound and talk of bashes»). So the «Шум (Sound) of an old park» (henceforth to be abbreviated as «SP») conveys the loud rustling of leaves, the soft and mighty roar of a forest vexed by wind, and although the foliage is green in the painting, the proof text from Pushkin in a Russian reader's mind conveys the possible added overtone of an approaching autumnal senescence. This would be relevant to the subject: one Soviet reproduction of the painting I remember from the Barnard Slavic Department common room in my own distant youth — the early 70s of the last century — had this title, «Шум старого парка (все в прошлом)» («The Sound of an old park (all in the past)»). I have not found since then this form of the title, with the reflective parenthesis. But that explanation seems to force itself upon every interpreter of the canvas as surely as a written text. This is how the author of a monograph on the artist describes the painting, for instance: «Late dusk. By a pond, on a stone bench, his back to the viewer, sits a grey-haired old man in a posture of thoughtfulness. In the house surrounded by a park, the lights burn. There, life goes on, perhaps a youthful revel: for them, all is ahead, but here... only the hollow roar of the trees and the implacable, cold wind blowing off the vexed steely-blue waters of the ponds». She considers the painting qualitatively to stand apart (особняк) from other works of the artist in the period, despite its somewhat garish colors, and considers it the elegiac work of an aging artist feeling his powers waning with disease. But in its general composition and important details it is clearly a development, she notes, from the much earlier canvas «Элегия» («Elegy», 1893) (Pl. 5)¹⁶. This painting depicts a man resting on a stone bench, back to the viewer, sunken in thought, as in «SP», though here his black hair has not yet turned white. He gazes out at the Black Sea, not the pond of a cold northern estate, and a rosy dusk

¹⁶ Басистова А. Александр Михайлович Васнецов. С. 57 + рисунок.

touches the mountain ridges of the Crimea. But there is still a tinge of loss, for the setting is a cemetery dotted with squarish tombs and a funerary chapel crowned by the Cross, with the white statue of a winged angel at its door. A single votive lamp (свечница) gleams there. Stately, dark cypresses rise from the gentle sloping lawn. These are southern trees, but also funerary ones: one is reminded of Böcklin's romantic «Toteninsel» («Isle of the Dead»). «Elegy» is imbued, then, with a kind of necromantic *Weltschmerz* very much at variance with the boisterous spirit of his paintings of life in Muscovy; but it is the kind of painting Kondratiev and his circle could well have known. Kondratiev probably never saw «SP», but it is quite possible he knew «Elegy» and even associated it with the elegies of the poetic cycle «Crimean Sketches», which he quotes at length in «Dreams», even citing material from the notebooks of the author, A. K. Tolstoy, about whom he published, as we have seen, a scholarly study.

«SP» continues to be «read» by recent viewers as it was two or three generations ago. A recent writer on the artist has interpreted «SP» this way: «In 1927 a one-man show was held to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Apollinariy Vasnetsov's artistic life, as it were summarizing his work of many years. The artist being celebrated prepared several new landscapes for the exhibition, perfect in execution and intensely lyrical. But the most striking of the canvases displayed was «SP», which, by the painter's own admission was an epilogue of sorts reflecting the whole of his creative journey. «SP» is a painting that is a reminiscence of the lovely Muscovite estates where Vasnetsov had lived and worked, of his unrecoverable youth. Evening is coming on. A ray of the setting sun, as if in a gesture of parting, has gilded the treetops, but a sudden gust of wind heralds nightfall. A grey-haired old man is seated on a stone bench in an attitude of profound thought: gazing at the ripples vexing the surface of the pond, he thinks of many things. The images of years gone by pass before his eyes: the cozy home in Ryabovo, the corner of the attic where little Apollinasha took his first steps in art; Vyatka, the handsome, black-eyed Andriolli [Vasnetsov's first tutor] and the ABC's of drawing; the glitter and throngs of Petersburg; and much else... It would seem all is past, yet light streams out of the windows of the house upon the hill as ever, and the strains of music are wafted to him. There, a fresh, young generation laughs and rejoices in life. Apollinariy Mikhailovich Vasnetsov died on 23 January 1933 in the seventy-seventh year of his life. He was buried in the Vvedenskoye cemetery alongside the grave of his brother, friend, and teacher Viktor Vasnetsov»¹⁷.

«Elegy» is a fairly straightforward painting that would fit easily into a World of Art exhibition or album, with its exotic setting and morbid overtones. But «SP» is compositionally and thematically more complex and subtler. Five objects of human artifice are connected in a semicircle broken at the left edge by forking paths: clockwise, the first is the square balustrade at the top of (invisible) stairs leading down to the pond, at about five o'clock. An ornamental urn (one notes the funereal association) stands at the edge closer to the viewer's position. On the other edge is a stump where its partner has broken and vanished (death and loss again). At six o'clock is the old man. He sits on a stone bench formed of a circle and square and rests his weary right elbow on a broken fragment of sculptural bas-relief. Behind him on a circular base is a tall pale statue, cousin of the angel in «Elegy». The path linking all these leaves the painting to fork and re-emerges above, fringed by a dark straight line of trees. (The edge of the pond is straight, too, underscoring the theme of nature shaped by human artifice.) On a rise at about ten, reached by the path, is the big square mansion, lights blazing, curtains billowing. Beyond it the path forks again, leading on the left to a round, open colonnaded pavilion or gazebo (беседка). The latter explains, in case you still have not understood, «I am a typical Russian country estate». These pavilions are as ubiquitous in the art as in the reality of the pre-revolutionary nobleman's country spread. One may cite for instance G. V. Soroka's painting of Spasskoye: in the foreground is a pond with the straight line of a dam. The house and trees are behind, and the round, domed, open-sided, colonnaded little gazebo, the беседка, is to the right. Or there is the identical type of pavilion, rather grandly designated the Temple of Venus (one can

¹⁷ Вольф Л. Аполлинарий Васнецов. М., 6. с. С. 47.

but hope the dalliances that transpired there lived up to the name), of the early 19th century above the lake (of course) at Sukhanovo¹⁸. In 1880–1886 Vasnetsov himself painted «Вид усадьбы, Ахтырка» («View of an estate, Akhtyrka»): in the foreground is a pond; trees to the left partly conceal a terrace with steps; and above and center is a colonnaded white building half-hidden by trees. It is practically the same landscape as «SP», except in sunnier, summery weather, and without the old man seated pensively on his bench¹⁹.

So the setting of «SP» is not in the romantic Crimea, in the Muscovite past, or in distant Siberia: the landscape is that of Vasnetsov's own life, at its heart. The objects along the road are the loci of events in that life, remembered counterclockwise: love, sociability, art, thought, and at the end of the path (at which the old man may be gazing pensively, unless he is peering wistfully at the distance ball in the manse), the *descensus ad inferos* down those steps capped by the bereaved urn, into the Otherworld of the lake²⁰. The forking paths will remind the reader (and American readers, of Robert Frost's sententious verses, pounded into our poor heads in childhood, about the road not taken) of the hackneyed metaphor of choices taken in life. The aged artist walked his path: perhaps a romantic dalliance in the temple of Venus, *soirée*, then the dark of the woods and all that followed, all in the unrecoverable past (signified perhaps by the break in the road at the left edge of the canvas). But, like the tamed



PL 6. WPLJ-FM poster
by Brad Johansen, 1971

¹⁸ See: Roosevelt P. *Life on the Russian Country Estate: A Social and Cultural History*. New Haven, 1995. P. 95. PL 75; 219, PL 156. Americans would probably regard these little structures as quaint, Victorian, and even silly; the illustrator Edward Gorey's dapper young decadents, after dismal walks through menacing parks, repair to a «skens» to find the tea cakes iced a sinister shade of green.

¹⁹ Борис Г. Антонович Басинин. С. 4.

²⁰ But what if one goes down the steps into the lake of a painting? Perhaps the wonders of Atlantis, or of H. P. Lovecraft's submarine cities Y'ha-nthlei and R'lyeh, await one below the waves. (I shall return to H. P. Lovecraft in commenting on the device of the monogram found at the end of «Dreams».) Here I recall a very different painting indeed, yet one that has strong compositional and thematic affinities to both Vasnetsov's landscape and Kondratiev's fantasies of submarine *oceanus* and *pycnos*. In the spring of 1971 the American psychedelic artist B. Johansen made a poster for the New York rock and roll radio station WPLJ (95.5 FM) (PL 6). It depicts a vast man in starry cape and hood rending the veil of the sky, an vague expression of delight or wonder on his face. Below him is an overgrown landscape with cypresses and mansions. A winding stone staircase with a pinkish carpet winds down between two liana-wreathed columns to a milky-blue, roiling pond. On the column in the foreground is the statue of a winged humanoid figure facing away; on top of the other column is the image of a curving fish with open maw. Two gorgeous sea serpents with human heads and torsos are playing in the water; and a girl's smiling face peeks through the gigantic, fabulous flowers that grow out of the lake. Generally the archetype of the steps is of ascent to supernal realms, cf. the ladder of St. John Climacus. But the reversal of the motif relocates the Otherworld, it would seem, downwards and into the waters beneath at the foot of the stair.

landscape, the milestones shaped by architect or sculptor, so the very painting itself is the artist's own creation, the representation of reality shaped by his imagination — as a dream is.

But the title of the painting says none of this, and refers to one the thing the medium of a picture can allude to in various symbolic ways but cannot really convey: sound. Thus the written words of the painting's title are meant to perform a kind of magic akin to that of the writing *about* a painting in Kondratiev's novella. They enchant the perceptive powers of the viewer, enabling his consciousness to imbue the colors and forms canvas with the quality of living sound, of the sentient roar of an enchanted forest rising round the vexed waters of a lake where an old man waits dreaming. Словни, саово, снаса: the ekphrastic novella becomes the *nightingale* of bygone ages, giving voice to the painting and imperishable *renown* to its mortal maker and seer and dreamer.

3. ALEXANDER KONDRATIEV «Dreams»

When I was young and worked for one of those institutions of the pre-revolutionary Russian establishment, a place that had little in common with my poetic inclinations, I happened once to be visiting a colleague from work, Fyodor Nikolayevich Gosh, a man with whom I shared many of the same interests. True, he did not write verses, but with his command of several languages he followed with great interest all the new works of European literature that were appearing then. Gosh never missed an exhibition, subscribed to two or three art magazines, composed a handful of pieces for piano, and, to top it off, took an interest in the occult sciences. At that time the latter were in fashion and every self-respecting «decadent» prominently displayed the requisite volume of Eliphas Levi or Stanislas de Guaita²¹.

I enjoyed visiting Fyodor Nikolayevich. It was pleasant and interesting to listen to his quiet but animated discourses on the latest in art. I was interested also in the rare books he sometimes borrowed: volumes bound in red calf with a crowned monogram stamped on their covers. My co-worker used to obtain these to read for a short time through some secret channel, from what, it seemed, might have been the Imperial library itself.

I was obliged to Gosh also for my acquaintance with the work of French writers not yet well known then such as Barbe d'Oreille²² and Villiers de l'Isle-Adam²³. I remember as though it were now the Elsevier editions he supplied to me from his bookshelves.

Fyodor Nikolayevich was married but I never saw his wife, as she lived permanently abroad somewhere. But the absence of a housewifely hand did not tell on the order that reigned in the apartment: not a speck of dust was to be seen on the red wooden bookshelves or the cabinets with their Japanese and Italian vases. The books on the shelves were ranged in strict order, there were no stray cigarette stubs anywhere, and the writing desk always looked as though it had just been tidied. This last particular, though, might have been because of Gosh's sociable habits, which left him little time to write. An elderly lady of stern countenance who had assumed the role of lady of the household of my co-worker managed all matters of order and cleanliness.

Everything in Gosh's apartment occupied a place that, once determined, was eternal: new books and journals lay on a round table covered by some sort of antique cloth; albums stood on the lower and middle shelves of the cabinets; and a small collection of Italian engravings hung on the walls.

For this reason I was very surprised to see a certain rearrangement of the etchings to make room for a watercolor landscape in a reddish-brown frame.

²¹ Eliphas Levi (Alphonse Louis Constant) (1810–1875) and Stanislas de Guaita (1861–1897), were French writers and practitioners of magic and the occult.

²² Jules Amédée Barbey d'Aurevilly (1808–1889) was a French writer of late Romantic and Decadent tendencies.

²³ Jean-Marie-Mathias-Philippe-Auguste, comte de Villiers de l'Isle-Adam (1838–1889), was a French Symbolist writer.

I was unable to find a better place to display the fruits of my musical profits: Davingof recently paid me for four pieces at once, so I gave in and forked out for it... But come to that, had the picture cost five times as much, I would still have contrived to obtain it somehow,» said Fyodor Nikolayevich with a tone of uncharacteristic agitation, having noticed the surprise on my face.

I approached the landscape on the wall and commenced to scrutinize it more closely. It depicted a stone terrace whose white steps descended in the direction of the viewer, to water. Greenish bronze censers stood on either side of the marble balustrade. Two owls of the same color gazed from niches on the walls flanking the stairs. Farther on was an old, overgrown park (срапый паросущийся парк). Behind its trees were visible the upper part of a façade and the jagged towers of a palace or fortress.

The landscape seemed familiar to me. I recalled that I had seen it some weeks before at an exhibition, in a room dedicated to the work of an artist who had died recently. But there had been nothing that particularly stood out in the watercolor, neither in conception nor in execution, by comparison with the scores of similar pieces that were being offered posthumously for sale in order to provide a sum of money for the family of the deceased to tide them over in the period immediately following their misfortune.

«Fyodor Nikolayevich, you most likely knew this Stepanov, poor fellow,» I said, naming the artist whose signature I had discerned in the right-hand corner of the painting, «though I have never heard you say anything about him»

«I heard his name for the first time only when I became interested in this picture. At the thought Stepanov had already died I was beside myself with annoyance. I recently hastened to find out whether he had had a family and learned only that the deceased was a bachelor, and that the sum realized from the sale of his canvases and studies are to go to his young sister, who lives somewhere in the provinces. And nobody could tell me a word about where and when this study was done!»

«Why were you so taken with it?»

«O Lord, why — why, because I swam up to these steps with horns on my head, galloped up them onto the terrace, and still had time to cast a glance to either side. And everything was exactly as it is painted here!»

I gazed intently at him as he spoke. Fyodor Nikolayevich, noticing my stare, continued in quieter tones, though agitation still visibly seized his slender frame.

«Of course it was just a dream, but it was not an entirely usual sort of dream; considering its consequences, it was even a tragic one. Do you recall Arbuzov? You met him more than once at my place»

«That very plump, jolly blond fellow? The music lover and composer? Who seems to have been notable for the reprehensible style of life he led? Who died about a year ago?» I tried to recall.

«Everything you say is true. Arbuzov passed away the same night I saw him in a dream, in the park depicted in this very painting».

Fyodor Nikolayevich was unrecognizable. He stood, rising to his full height. The stooped posture he had acquired by always sitting hunched over engravings and books, had vanished somewhere. The black eyes in the face with its rosy blush glittered through the glare of his pince-nez. At that moment, Gosh was even handsome. He continued.

«I've known you for a long time and hope you will not start constructing tempting analogies between the dream, with its absurd metamorphoses, and my family life²⁴. Therefore I consider that I may be entirely candid with you. Not long before the dream I want to tell you about, I had received an important and rather unpleasant letter from abroad. Wanting to banish my gloomy thoughts, I fell in with the company of that likable but dissolute Arbuzov. The dear departed used to regard himself as a Nietzschean, then a satanist; and in all matters strove to be an eccentric. But he succeeded poorly at this. The company of his in which I found myself one evening did not correspond entirely to my tastes and habits, on account of which I had only a little to drink and then, pleading a headache, went home earlier than is generally

²⁴ Presumably a reference to «The Interpretation of Dreams» by Freud.

the rule for such occasions. But when I arrived home I felt for real a kind of heaviness in my head and feet — because, as I now suspect, Arbuzov had most likely slipped a few treacherous drops of something into the wine or the coffee. I remember the disappointed expression of my acquaintance when, despite all his pleading and persuading, I had resolved to leave. At home I went to bed, quickly fell asleep, and in my dream beheld Arbuzov himself. He and I were walking along the side of a very wide road overgrown with grass in places and edged to either side by a forest of tall old trees [высоким старым лесом]. I remember one particular as though it were today: to the left of us, in a broad cutting there lay, smoking, a few felled trunks, stripped of their branches and smoldering in places. At the same moment we noticed lone wolves loping now and then across the road, sometimes behind us, sometimes ahead.

«Hoping perhaps to be rid of the animals we turned off the broad, main road onto a narrower one cut into a sandy, wooded slope. Here, too, tall and sturdy trees stood to either side, somewhat recalling an old park gone to seed [старый запущенный парк]. On the ridge of the hill by the edge of the path one could see the tops of stone arches choked with earth and sand almost to their keystones. The wolves we had encountered on the road skulked in these arches as though in lairs; some of them crept back out and stared after us.

«I do not remember how we already found ourselves in what was definitely a park, with avenues, ponds, and beautifully distributed stands of rare trees. The servants we met, whose faces I do not recall — as is often the case in dreams — surrounded us, divided us from each other, and led us off in the direction of a nearby castle, the very same one depicted in the painting.

«At this point some invisible person said to me that the owner of the castle was a wizard and an enchanter. They conducted Arbuzov to him before me, leading him away through different doors, since I did not see him there again and heard only later on that the wizard had transformed him into a boar: he was stuck, roasted, and given to somebody to be devoured. Sometimes it even seems to me that from far off I heard his despairing shriek, like the squealing of a pig being slaughtered.

«Then my turn came. They led me into a smallish room on the second floor, where an elderly man sat. He was grey-haired, of medium height, dressed in an elegant gray robe and a colorful skullcap or yarmulke. He had a passing resemblance, I recall, to the poet Sologub. But I was not to examine him for long. They brought into the room a mirror with an intricate silver frame, and the old man suggested I look into it.

«Though a hidden inner voice cautioned me against peering into that mirror, for some reason I was unable to restrain myself, and looked. At exactly that instant somebody alongside me said 'Be a deer!' and the horned head and muzzle of a stag stared back at me from the bright, polished surface of the mirror. Thereupon they drove me out and conducted me into the park, where I began contentedly to graze on the bright green grass of the lawn.

«I do not remember how long I wandered through the park. It seemed to me that I had been there a very long time, and had acquired a thorough knowledge of the disposition of all its nooks and groves, its hills and paths — when all of a sudden I heard the barking of dogs and the bellow of a horn. And once more the secret voice within me explained that this was the daughter of the sorcerer — the owner of the castle painted by Stepanov — riding to the hunt. The sound of the baying of the curs was louder and closer. I realized the dogs had picked up my scent. Rearing my head, I galloped away from them. Meadows and clumps of trees flashed past me as I ran with giant leaps, trying to outdistance my pursuers. But the barking of the dogs and the trumpeting of the horn drew ever closer.

«When the dogs were already very close and began to jump in from both sides, trying to surround me, I flung myself into the lake depicted in the picture, and swam past an islet with a gazebo [беседка] outside the frame of the painting, towards the white terrace. I remember how the owls in the niches loomed larger and larger. Beneath these niches were iron rings for mooring boats. See: he has painted them, too. I remember how my hooves clattered on the marble steps to the white terrace as I leapt from the water and bounded upwards. Shaking myself off, I saw the stone bench on the other side of the parapet. Right there, in that

corner, it is a little broken and covered with velvety green moss. You cannot see it from this side. On that side of the terrace and around it grew strange roses of some kind with darkish bands on their petals.

«But I did not have time to study all this in detail, since the dogs, swimming after me, were already near. I took flight again, galloping down this avenue, then veering right from it, where the landscape became hilly. The dogs caught up with me again and tried to trap me. I remember how I kicked at one of them with my rear hoof: it flew into the air and fell somewhere behind with barely a yelp. But then I heard the call of the horn again, and the wizard's daughter rode towards me at a gallop, having come around the lake. As far as I can recall, she was a beautiful brunette in a dark dress with a tightly buttoned velvet jacket. A small, glittering metal shield was strapped to her left side, and she gripped a lance in her right hand. The huntress rode at me, just about to cast her spear, but at that very moment some mysterious power compelled me to look at her shield, which shone like a mirror.

«I had barely glanced at it, when the green hills, the sky, and the forest all whirled around in my head. I felt something akin to an electric shock and collapsed unconscious. My last thought was that the lovely daughter of the wizard had not wished to kill me and had set me free.

«I came to at home, in bed, with a headache and heaviness in all my limbs.

«The illness, which I myself, and the doctors, too, attributed to a chill, kept me in bed four or five days. I was still housebound when I learned that on that very night, after we had supped together, Arbuzov died at home of a paralysis of the heart. Perhaps the abuse of narcotics had precipitated his death.

«The sudden end of Arbuzov, who had been a fairly intimate friend in our younger days, had a powerful effect on me, and for a long time I was unable to divert my thoughts from it. At that time you», Gosh added, «had just gone abroad on holiday. I tried to take my mind off it, forcing myself to work intensively on my music. I left to stay with my family for a fortnight. I even attempted to learn Hebrew, and became acquainted with the Kabbalah. But all this helped little. Then came the autumn season of art exhibitions, and I forced myself to go to them. Imagine my astonishment when in the room dedicated to a posthumous exhibition of Stepanov's works I saw, alongside other landscapes, this very terrace with its ovals in their niches and the avenue leading to the castle with its jagged little towers. I remember how I then desired to look again into the face of the sorceress, which had not been etched in my memory exactly it should have been. I know only that she was very beautiful,» concluded Gosh with a sigh.

«Perhaps looking into her shield was your salvation,» I said. «Otherwise you would probably have suffered the fate that befell Arbuzov»

«I don't think so,» replied Fyodor Nikolayevich with a serious voice. «I remember very well how she took pity on me. What do you think? What ought I to do in order to get back to that park and behold its mistress?»

«You doubtless know as well as I do what one does most of the time in such cases. You have a painting that depicts one corner of the park. That makes the matter easier. All you now need to do is to choose the opportune time, put yourself in the appropriate cast of mind and convey yourself mentally to the terrace. The rest will be the result of your preparation and the powers of your own abilities. You surely know yourself the risk to which you are exposing yourself in this. I am quite unable to imagine who the master of the castle, whom you saw in your dream, may have been; but I do not advise you to let yourself be seen by him a second time. Arbuzov's fate ought to serve as fair warning to you. It is very easy indeed not to return from this kind of excursion, at least without grave injury to your mental faculties.»

«I know all that, but the desire to see the magical huntress is more than tempting. Once one finds a suitable talisman the danger is not all that great. But we'll discuss that in more detail later. Meanwhile, do listen to this fantasia I've composed.»

And Gosh played a short piece on the piano in which one might, if one wished, sense the terror of the chase, the barking of the dogs, and the triumphant wail of the horn.

«It is hard to render on the piano the sound of a hunter's horn,» said Fyodor Nikolayevich, «but the motif still sticks in my mind».

When we parted I begged Gosh not to undertake the experiment we had discussed without telling me first. He consented.

Several days later my friend brought up again his desire to go back into the enchanted park, but I advised him first to try to find out something about the artist, and to question the latter's acquaintances about where the picture had been painted. If it was done from nature, then, I thought, one ought to locate the castle and park and make inquiry as to who lived there. But I considered it a dangerous procedure to rush into experiments with dual personality, particularly as these demand of the novice a huge expenditure of energy; and Gosh was not of the most robust health and was prone to consumption.

The political events of 1905²⁵ kept me from seeing Gosh often. But from time to time we managed to meet in the library of the ministry where we worked: he was a member of the committee there that supervised the acquisition of books in foreign languages. During one of these brief encounters Gosh informed me that although he had not yet been able to discover where Stepanov had painted the picture, the deceased artist — according to his friends — had been abroad two or three years before, in a northern coastal locale as a matter of fact, and had brought back a few paintings from there which by now had all been sold. The painter had spent the last two summers of his life, though, in either Volhynia or the Podolsk district²⁶.

On one of my visits to Gosh I noticed that Stepanov's picture had disappeared from the wall of the parlor. I thought Fyodor Nikolayevich had lost interest in it, and was, I must admit, very pleased, since his health had somewhat deteriorated towards springtime. Despite a cough he persisted in smoking cigarettes whose thick, whitish-gray smoke led one to suppose that tobacco was not their sole ingredient.

«I'm thinking of traveling abroad this summer», he said, «but I still don't know where. I'd like to go to Italy, but in all likelihood I'll have to spend some time in France as well».

I knew Fyodor Nikolayevich's wife lived in France and thought he wanted to visit her, but the subsequent words of my interlocutor shattered that assumption.

«Now I keep hoping», he continued in somewhat disturbed tones, «to see the artist Stepanov in a dream and get the location of that castle he painted out of him».

«Have you managed to obtain a photograph of him, or some object from his personal effects?» I asked, knowing how having such things present facilitates communication with the dead.

Gosh nodded wordlessly and added after a short silence, «Would you like to take a look? Then let's go into my bedroom.» However there was no bed in the room we entered — a wide, leather-upholstered couch stood in its place. By the doors, near the landscape, so familiar by now to me, that he had moved in here from the parlor, hung an enlarged photographic portrait of the artist Stepanov. The face of the latter betrayed no quality out of the ordinary. The visage of the blond man of about thirty who gazed at us out of the *daguerre* frame had a bristling crew cut, curling moustache, and a very tall collar knotted with a smallish cravat. He could just as easily have been the sales manager of a fashionable shop, or a bank teller, as an artist and painter.

«I took it from a group portrait and enlarged it», said Gosh, nodding at the photographic portrait.

«Well, so, have your experiments been successful?» I asked.

«So far, no. I needed to find some article of the deceased's undergarments or outer clothing, but up till now all I've managed to obtain is a pair of his gloves. I got them from the laundry where they had been left. I'm afraid that now they are clean, these gloves aren't worth as much as they would have been, had he just taken them off».

²⁵ That is, the first Russian Revolution, which was sparked by shortages, a general social unrest that manifested itself in terrible pogroms, and the country's ignominious defeat in the war with Japan. In his memoir «Speak, Memory» Nabokov recalls soldiers chasing and shooting down fleeing children outside the window of his family's home in Bel'shaya Monikaya street, not far from Palace Square — the epicenter of the demonstrations. Compare the street battles described by Kondratiev later in the novella.

²⁶ In 1919, after his flight from Soviet Russia, Kondratiev settled on his mother-in-law's estate near Rovno in Volhynia (Volyn' province, northwestern Ukraine, then a territory of Poland).

«That is exactly right, I'm afraid,» I replied.

«Instead of Stepanov, I had a dream about Arbuzov,» Gosh continued.

«Did he tell you anything?»

«How can I put it? Yes and no. In the dream he came to visit me, just as plump and cheery as he was when you met him here one time: he went up to the piano and began to play a one-handed version of 'Grandma had a little gray goat once upon a time' and then smiled, shook his finger at me, and left»²⁷.

«In my opinion he told you even more than necessary,» I said. «You ought not to go into a forest where all that will be left of you, like the kid in the song, is little horns and little hooves. Moreover, I recall you said something or other about wolves at the beginning of your fateful dream, didn't you?»

«Quite right. Now I recall it. I had nearly neglected that detail... But so what? 'If you're afraid of wolves, don't go into the woods,' as the proverb says.»

«Considering that you've transferred this landscape to your bedroom, I guess you're not afraid of them. But admit it, haven't you already made a couple of attempts to return to that park?»

«Of course I have. But cautiously, making sure that at any given moment I'd be able to halt the experiment.»

«With these dilettantish methods you're probably employing you can easily be tricked by your own fantasy and not achieve the results you might, were you to adhere to all the rules recommended by the science of occultism.»

«You and your rules and methods! That's all lengthy and dull. I've worked out my own rules through trial and error. For instance, when you wish to be transported into one or another picture and you're having a hard time making it happen right away, then what you do is select a point in it that is the most familiar and accessible to you. Let's say you can't get right into the room you desire: mentally make yourself stand at the outer doors of the house and try to go inside. If that, too, is difficult, then while you're standing at the doors try to imagine yourself before them, but this time from inside them; and then it will be easier to penetrate deeper into the recesses of the house. Everywhere you are unable to proceed, look from the point where you stopped, back at the path you've already come down, and then keep on walking, but facing backward, and it will be easier for you to visualize yourself in the place where you want to be. This succeeds best in places you are already familiar with.»

«Precisely: familiar places. But in unfamiliar ones Fyodor Nikolayevich, our fantasy can play tricks on us,» I remarked.

«What am I to do if my imagination, perhaps against my will, conveys me to that enchanted park? All I have to do is shut my eyes to swim in my mind across the pond and, shivering with cold, mount the marble steps to the great terrace. I tread slowly on the gravel, first along the shrubby verge of the path, then down the wide avenue to the park itself. Before it there is another plaza or field that I edge around, then at last the façade of the building. Fearing for some reason to enter by the main gate, I stop by the yellow corner door and waver — should I go in here or use the other door that lets into the little passage opposite the white stone wall of the neighboring wing? Passing through the front door by the method I confided to you, I try to reach the second floor but cannot get beyond the first landing on the stairs, to the place where in the left-hand corner there is a fireplace near the door that opens into the room. Some force thrusts me back. And again I wander around the house, trying not to be noticed by anyone at the windows. I wander, possessed by the desire to behold the woman mounted on the black steed, who with spear in hand was hunting me.»

²⁷ This is a popular Russian children's song: «Жыл-был у бабушки серенький козлик, (2x) / Вот как, вот как, серенький козлик. (2x) // Бабушка козлика очень любила, (2x) / Вот как, вот как, очень любила. (2x) // Выдумалось козлику в лес погуляти, (2x) / Вот как, вот как, в лес погуляти. (2x) // Напал на козлика серый волчок, (2x) / Вот как, вот, как серый волчок. (2x) // Осталась от козлика рожица да ножки, (2x) / Вот как, вот как, рожица да ножки. (2x)» («Grandma had a little gray kid one upon a time, sure she did. Grandma really loved the little kid, sure she did. The kid got the idea to take a walk in the forest, he sure did. Gray wolves fell upon the kid, sure they did. Sure'n all that was left then were the little horns and hooves of that little kids.»)

«I think,» Gosh added, «that Arbuzov's death constitutes mere chance, or, perhaps, coincidence. This enchantress had no need to slay me. Besides which, a person in a dream vision, no matter who it is, as far as I know, is unable to kill. I saw a man who happened in analogous circumstances to suffer a blow delivered in a dream by a fallen archangel, and that man still survived, escaping with no more than a jolt to the nerves».

«That is most curious. Tell me the story, unless it's a secret».

«The incident occurred with an artist acquaintance of mine. He now lives in Sicily, where he supposedly studies the juxtaposition of colors in the stained glass windows of local churches and takes his time about writing. He seems not to have received my last two letters. Otherwise he would have instructed me as to how to proceed».

«I think I once met this friend of yours who now resides in Sicily. We were both in the editorial office of *The Maiden*.» Suddenly, without knowing why, I cut Gosh short. «Isn't his name Ostroumov?»

«Let us suppose it's Ostroumov. Well, anyhow this artist acquaintance of mine read up on descriptions of the flight to the witches' sabbat, the service of the devil. He became so absorbed in his reading that he began to dream that he was flying himself, but not just to the Brocken or Bald Mountain, but to another place of communion with the unholy powers, to some sort of temple with columns of black stone whose capitals disappeared in the twilight murk of the arches above. As he described it, pale-greenish ornaments formed of strange hieroglyphs and arabesques glowed on the cornices. Since the dream was repeated several times, this artist had the opportunity to become acquainted in detail with the layout of this mysterious temple, about which he related interesting details to me later on. So, for instance, over a hole worked in red stone and gold something resembling an open pavilion rose on seven small pillars in the form of entwined snakes, some of which were a ruddy bronze; others, dark and silvery in hue. The master of ceremonies first manifested in the guise of a pungent and rather repulsive greenish or grayish-white smoke that was rising from the hole I mentioned. But this has nothing to do with the matter at hand... So, at this rather reprehensible celebration, where there was a great throng of uninteresting people, my artist friend kept meeting a very sweet young lady. It happened all by itself somehow, that the two of them started withdrawing into secluded corners where they were undisturbed by the propositions and stealthy stares of various repulsive old men and hags, the latter shamelessly revealingly-attired or even completely nude. The young woman informed my friend that she, too, flew here regularly in her sleep, without resorting to any sort of ointments or other preparations. She gave my interlocutor to understand that she found him attractive; but she stubbornly refused to tell him where she came from or where she lived. Perhaps the lady would have imparted something about herself eventually; but here the event intervened, on account of which I am telling you this story.

«It seems to have been on the fourth oneiric visit of my friend to the black temple. 'I observed carefully,' the artist related, 'the still-empty throne, on which the *Hircus Nocturnus* customarily took his seat; and tried to commit to memory the very interesting sculptures in high relief that adorned it. I studied also the officiating figure in golden sandals and a mask — like his — of bronze, in the shape of a tiger's head. This hierodule made as though not to notice me and to be wholly absorbed in the task of decanting something into the Corinthian bronze lamps, which flared with a pale, colorless radiance. In that coruscating light the obscene figures in high relief on the throne seemed to come to life. Some of the new arrivals among the throng of guests considered it their duty to press themselves against these.

«But I keep straying from my topic. My friend felt suddenly that the young girl he had taken a liking to, was somewhere not far away. Looking around, he quickly located her. The girl was in her night dress, and, according to the artist's tale, was slightly embarrassed by this situation even though it would seem that most of those present did not notice each other; and if they did, then only by mutual consent. Nonetheless, my artist friend's unknown acquaintance wanted to retire with him apart from the crowd, on the pretext that she was for some reason afraid. They walked down an uneven floor that was rubbed down in places, to a fairly distant nook of the temple where little green wandering flames flared now and then.

When they ignited close to the ceiling one could discern the motionless, stony smiles of half-bestial, half-angelic faces on the capitals of the columns. A company of old men seated nearby paid no attention at all to the pair who had gone off to be alone. These old men were, it seems, wholly engrossed in sniffing something in a box they were passing from hand to hand: having taken a whiff, each would freeze, motionless as a statue, for a while. The artist began, as was his wont, to persuade his friend to permit him the honor of her acquaintance in waking life, but she just resolutely shook her head and insisted, 'Just not today, not today. Today is not the right occasion. I'm waiting for something, and I'm afraid'.

«I must add that this woman, as the artist told me, behaved with perfect modesty and nothing particularly improper transpired between them. My friend's interlocutor was able to tell him that she was eighteen and had begun to frequent this place in dreams only recently. Sinking her chin between her knees and gripping both legs with her hands, the girl gazed from far off at what was happening around the throne and shivered now and then. She was particularly frightened of the luminous apparitions when they flared nearby. To the girl's enormous relief, my friend drove off a very large and inquisitive snake that had slithered too close to her. Glowing with a faint bluish-green fire, the snake withdrew with an offended hiss.

«But a fiery red pentagram with some sort of hieroglyphs in the middle appeared out of a pylon in the Egyptian style worked into the wall not far away. Rising up at first, the pentagram paused briefly at a height of about three fathoms and commenced to descend. Then its outlines started wavering and it appeared to flow down to the ground, changing shape into an angel attired in crimson flame. The angel was astonishingly beautiful; what was especially striking, the artist said, was the proud, even insolently arrogant expression on his face. A diadem studded with sparkling stones of various hues rested on his black locks, and a shining, lilac-colored steam played at his lips. With slow, languid steps the fiery-purple newcomer advanced towards the seated couple.

«'It's him!' the girl suddenly exclaimed, pressing herself against the artist. The latter, though aware his powers could not match those of his opponent, still did what, as he put it, any decent man in his position must: he arose and interposed himself to defend his friend. With a simple gesture of utmost contempt the angel gave my acquaintance to understand that he must step aside. But the artist, who only shortly before this had been awarded the gold medal of the Academy and whose head was full of laudatory reviews of his painting, felt no less inflated with pride and self-confidence than his opponent was. For this reason, he not only did not retreat to the side, but even advanced a step or two towards his challenger. At that point, the angel raised his hand and moved his lips, as if pronouncing something. A sort of small sphere of lilac color detached itself from his fiery lips and in the same instant the artist felt a blow to his nerves that shot through his entire body — probably just what I had felt in my own experience. But the blow was so severe that the poor fellow's head spun and consciousness deserted him. All went dark.

«After coming to in his own bed, my friend never again beheld in dream the black temple or the girl whom the fallen angel had taken away from him. He never even attempted to discover her whereabouts.

«I do not know whether fear of his rival or some other factor was the cause, but whenever I asked the artist why he did not want to find out about the fate of the unknown girl, he constantly averred that women seen in a dream are always much more interesting than they are in waking life; and he did not want to ruin the beautiful image that remained in his memory. In a word, he was behaving somehow strangely. He would show me sketches from memory of the architectural and artistic details of the black temple he had seen in his dream. Several of these were very interesting, and my friend was putting them together to use sometime in his work. During his sojourn in England he was invited to decorate in the *style moderne* the interior of a church. I fear my artist friend put into the stained glass windows not just his handsome angel but something else rather more fanciful as well, which he'll have to answer for yet».

«And do you think,» I asked Gosh, «that the girl your acquaintance saw in his sleep, if indeed the whole dream was not itself a mere invention, existed in reality?»

«And why not? Have you never had occasion to experience a collective dream, that is, the kind seen simultaneously by somebody else as well?»

«It's happened,» I replied. «It's happened twice, as a matter of fact. It was during my first term at the university, in 1898. They had not prepared us in high school for independent study and I had a rather hard time at first. The printed notes for the course on Roman law were prepared less than two weeks before the final examination in the subject. I was already overtired from the previous exams — not having gotten used yet to the procedure — and had developed a case of neuralgia. The whole right side of my head and body hurt. When I tried to study the pain intensified so greatly that I had to collapse onto my bed and lie motionless, burying my head in the pillow and trying to clear my mind of all thoughts. The pain would then slowly abate. But there was little time left before the exam, and I had to apply myself to the lectures. In order not to overtax my thinking, and particularly to avoid having to recall this or that concept that seemed abstruse to me at the time, I decided to resort to the age-old high school practice of cheating by writing invisibly in pencil in the examination program the answer to each question listed there. At first everything seemed to be going fine, but soon I began to feel a pounding in my temples and had to lie down in bed again. I gradually fell asleep. In my dream I saw auditorium number ten of St. Petersburg University, the examination table, and Professor Grimm, and felt myself walking up to him. Peering fixedly at me, the examiner turned directly to me with the words 'Well, hand over your program.' And when I surrendered the sheets I had scribbled all over, David Davidovich began scolding me, admonishing me that I was no longer a high school student, and wasn't it high time to learn to regard my responsibilities more honorably — and all the other things one says on such occasions. After this the professor in the dream began to question me about the course. I offered some lengthy answer but then fell silent, tongue-tied. 'No, you do not know this question,' Grimm said. 'Answer this one here.' And he handed his own program over to me, pointing at the number of the question.

«Just at that moment I woke up. It was one of those bright, clear May Petersburg mornings. Dashing over to my desk I leafed through the program lying there and found on one page the spot indicated by the dream. I ticked it off then and there with a blue pencil. Afterwards I let myself rest for a whole day; and for the remainder of the days left before the examination I managed to go over the course material twice, rereading numerous times the part I had seen in my dream...

«Right after the dream vision I stopped copying down the program, and did not take it with me to the exam. Nonetheless, when I entered auditorium ten and was summoned, the first question of the professor, who had looked intently at me as I entered, was, 'And where is your program? Show it to me.' 'I forgot it at home, professor,' I replied. 'Perhaps you could give me yours? There are several on your desk.' Peering at me with a searching expression that, as it seemed to me at the time, expressed some disappointment, David Davidovich pronounced, 'Very well. Select a page.' I don't recall exactly what number it was. I remember only that it was more or less familiar to me, as the others were, by the way — for I tried never to miss lectures. I began to prepare my answer according to the program Grimm had given me. In the middle of the page, to my surprise and displeasure, was a question that I had completely forgotten: it was as though somebody had erased with a wet sponge from the blackboard of my memory the very answer I had to give.

«Since I had gone over that page at least twice, I started to answer, going into the most minor details retained in my memory, figuring thereby to exhaust my examiner and convince him I knew the material. But the professor fixed his eyes, which resembled those of a sleepy fish, on me, and listened in patient silence, as though waiting expectantly for me to reach the point I did not know. I came to the fatal question and... fell silent. 'Well? Answer!' urged the examiner. I tried to improvise, but without success. 'No, you don't know this question,' said Grimm, exactly as he had in the dream. 'Answer this one instead.'

«And with the same gesture I had seen him make in my dream, he indicated the place on the program that I had awaited so. God, how I trotted it out, citing not only everything in the printed notes, but even the details that had been omitted from them. The examiner stopped me and dismissed me with a grade of Four»²⁸.

²⁸ The Russian system of grading employs the numbers 1 to 5: Five (*piaterka*) is the highest, equivalent to the American grade of A.

«Why do you consider your dream a collective one?» Gosh asked me. «By desiring intensely to answer a question on a particular page and thinking about it, you could have convinced the professor to choose it».

«And in that case, why did he insist I show him my program? He didn't ask anybody else for theirs that day, and I did not impress the idea upon him in any way».

«That's very simple. You came up to him without a program and the professor was curious about where it was».

«I wasn't the only one without a program — which is why he had no fewer than half a dozen lying on his desk,» I retorted. «And besides, instead of letting me go after hearing a solid answer, Grimm persisted till I got to the question in the second half of the page in the program».

«I agree your dream belongs to the so-called mantic category, but I'm not prepared to recognize it as a collective one,» Fyodor Nikolayevich insisted.

«In that case, I'll tell you my other dream, which is already beyond any doubt of the collective type. When I was still in that first year at the university, in the autumn of 1897, I dreamed once a whole series of scenes of war in Petersburg, in which I was in various buildings or on the street. The interiors of those buildings were unfamiliar to me at the time, but in the last few years I've had occasion often to be in one of them. I'm sure I'll be in the others, when the time comes. In one of the buildings I had yet to see from within, I was impressed by the spectacle of a very lofty, circular hall with windows beneath its dome — like a church, although it had never been one. I recall empty plaster (or maybe marble) brackets on pale-brown painted walls and some sort of high plinths with nothing on top of them but with adornments in high relief on the sides. Not far from the entrance were what looked like four corpses lying on the floor.

«Adjoining this circular hall was another, gigantic in proportions, with a long row of white pillars. In one of the buildings I've mentioned, I was standing at a window that let onto the Fontanka river and was looking at people running past, some of them falling to the ground. I hear gunfire and the rattle of machine guns — the latter did not exist yet, I think, in the arsenal of the Russian army. I remember how one bullet shattered the windowpane and struck the sill where I was standing. I didn't like that, and crossed the vestibule to the staircase leading to the next floor. Under it was a door, which I went through and into a round courtyard the bullets could not reach. Tender shoots of green grass sprouted between the bricks with which the yard was paved. The sky was a clear blue. Swallows flitted, chirping, through the air: it was, obviously, springtime. I went out of this building — one that you and I frequent since our department is situated there — and made my way to Zabalkansky prospect, where I saw from far off a few soldiers in grayish summer uniforms and forage-caps. They were headed towards the Fontanka embankment from the direction of the Baltic and Warsaw Stations.

«Then the dream transported me to yet another building. The room in which I found myself was full of people rushing here and there in desperation and fright. Papers were scattered all over the floor. I went up to one rather short, elderly man, placed my right hand on his shoulder, and said, 'Enough! Don't try to flee. You cannot be saved.' Right after that I woke up.

«When I came to study at the university and was about to tell my high school classmate Lopatkin about the dream I'd had, he pre-empted me with the words, 'Listen, the strangest thing happened to me! I never have dreams, it seems; but last night I had one about a revolution, and was even as it were in the middle of a war.' And he began to describe the scenes he had witnessed in his dream. Some of them didn't coincide with mine, since they took place at other locations; but others corresponded with astonishing precision to the smallest detail. At the end of the last of the scenes he had beheld, he clapped me on the shoulder and said, 'Enough! Don't try to flee. You cannot be saved.' I remember that when Lopatkin and I were discussing our dreams, we arrived at the mutual conclusion that he was probably to see my ghost just before his own death».

«And might that dream not have served as a continuation and result of conversations you had, perhaps, with your friend about the revolution?» asked Gosh.

«Not in the least. We didn't discuss the revolution at that time and had not read anything about it immediately beforehand, either....»

Then I related to Gosh the rest of the events and scenes of the dream that had endured in my memory.

Fyodor Nikolayevich pretended to listen attentively to me, but I had the feeling he accorded little credence to my story, most likely attributing the greater part of it to my literary imagination.

I glanced at my watch. It was already late, and we said our farewells.

When we met afterwards at the Ministry, Gosh let slip that he had not abandoned his efforts to penetrate the enchanted fortress of the country of dreams, and had now equipped himself with a talisman and was taking all the necessary precautionary measures dictated by the science of the occult. Fyodor Nikolayevich added that he was following the advice of «an experienced mage», but for some reason did not want to divulge the name of the latter. As a matter of fact he had been somewhat secretive earlier, too, with respect to his diverse acquaintances.

«With the assistance of this mage», Gosh continued, «I even managed one time to get to the terrace with the steps down to the pond. My tutor advised me to go no farther at that initial stage. What makes it even more interesting is that I was not entirely in a dream state when I was there. In a dream our ego does not control its actions: it is as though they were dependent upon the will of another person. In a dream you do not know in advance where you are going to go, or what you will do. But I knew.

«With a long, sharp dagger whose hilt bore two half moons, I traced a circle on the marble paving stones of the terrace. I stood within it and for a long time summoned the huntress, the horsewoman. In vain, unfortunately I must confess. Perhaps I did not know the incantations well enough, or maybe they were just not sufficiently powerful. More likely it was because I did not know the name of the woman I was summoning. But she did not come. There was a deathly nocturnal stillness in the park: not so much as a leaf stirred.

«The moon bathed the empty terrace and the bushes with their white roses in its glow. Taking advantage of the moonlight, just before I was to return to my everyday life I scratched a circle on the right-hand parapet of the terrace as one ascends, near the uppermost step of the stone stair, inscribing within my monogram with the letters F and G. I know this monogram will remain there, in reality and for a long time,» said Gosh, concluding his story.

Soon after that we lost touch with each other forever. I married, changed jobs, and when I first entered the Tauride Palace, in whose chancellery I was employed, I was struck by the resemblance of its circular hall to the one I had seen in my dream: the same brownish paint on the upper part of the wall, the same empty white brackets there as in the dream, the same light streaming down from above that one sees in churches, the same great white columns in the neighboring Catherine hall, where political events were later to transpire²⁹. Beholding in a waking state these halls and the other apartments of the palace that once I had traversed in sleep, I felt that in all likelihood the particulars of my long, piecemeal dream vision were to become reality, right down to the appearance on the streets of the doomed city of soldiers clad in what was then still an unfamiliar uniform to me, with those forage-caps on their heads.

But I never got to share my impressions and conjectures with Gosh. That very spring when I found new employment he fell ill and went south on leave. There he died, leaving me in the dark as to whether he had ever succeeded or not in beholding his Amazonian enchantress.

Time passed in its way, and the war came. The coup d'état took place, with all its consequences. Remembering from my experience of the cribbed program from the exam on Roman law that dreams are not always in every detail what is fated to occur, but are sometimes, rather, a warning, I avoided visiting those

²⁹ The Tauride palace (*Tavricheskii dvorets*) on Shpalernaya str., St. Petersburg, was built in 1783–1789; in 1906–1910 it became the seat of the Russian Duma, or Parliament, and was used by the Constituent Assembly and the Soviets following the October Revolution. It is famed for the imposing domed hall (*kupol'nyy zal*) and colonnaded great gallery (*bol'shaya galeriya*) Kondratiev describes (Pl. 7 and 8).



Pl. 7. Tauride Palace, St. Petersburg: Rotunda



Pl. 8. Tauride Palace, St. Petersburg: Catherine Hall colonnade

corners of Petrograd³⁰ in which, according to one of my dream visions, danger threatened me. The surroundings of the Peter and Paul Fortress, for instance, belonged to that list of places. In a dream I'd had long before the revolution I was walking there, boots crunching the frozen mud and the icy crust of puddles. Isolated shots rang out in the park. I was walking there at a time of day when it was dark, but for some reason the gaslights that were common then were not lit. I was completely alone in the dream and was suddenly assaulted by armed men in gray Russian army coats. I remember I woke up, interrupting the part of the dream where I was clambering over some high fence to save myself from my pursuers, who threatened me with their bayonets from below. Recalling the dream, which at the time had seemed absurd and strange to me, I took care during the revolution to give the environs of the Peter and Paul Fortress a wide berth.

Much of what I beheld in dreams in 1897, for instance: the corpses of the slain in the circular hall of the Tauride Palace or the troops in foreign uniform on Zabalkansky prospect — did not come to pass. But it does not follow from this that those events will never happen.

I escaped successfully to the Crimea in January 1918, where my family had relocated during the war, and remained there till autumn. Then by the will of fate I found myself in Volhynia not far from the Austrian frontier, during the German occupation, on the modest estate of my mother-in-law. In the neighboring Jewish *shetl*, where the railway junction was, I happened to meet — it must have been in 1920 — Ostroumov, a friend of the late Gosh. The former was walking at the measured pace of a man out for a stroll, a bedroll over his shoulder. The artist who had once favored dandified jackets and cutaways now wore a ragged army uniform, but without epaulets.

«Georgii Sergeyevich!» I called out to him by name and patronymic.

Ostroumov did not recognize me at first, but after I had identified myself and mentioned the editorial office of the journal where we used to meet in bygone years, he brightened and became talkative. We reminisced about the past, sharing our impressions of the recent years we had lived through. During the conversation, I mentioned *inter alia* the death of Gosh.

«And did you know him?» asked Ostroumov.

«Yes. And he told me a great deal about you».

«What kind of things?» asked the artist, not without some unease.

«Well, about your serial dreams of flights to the black temple, at least. Tell me, Georgii Sergeyevich, after that confrontation with your angelic rival did you ever again meet the girl who had been the apple of contention between you?»

«Look here», replied Ostroumov. «Of the two of us it was my friend Gosh, and not I, who should have been the artist. I really did try once upon a time, to purchase some opium, to study in preparation the graphics of Felicien Rops³¹, Ferdinand Knopf³², Goya, and other artists with an inclination towards the demonic. After that I experienced several nightmarish, though disconnected, dream visions. The interior of the black temple, the angel in fiery red garments, and the girl with the beautiful face really did reappear from time to time, but all this was fairly chaotic; and only after I related my impressions to Gosh and he expounded them anew to me in conversation, did my dreams, through his retelling and recasting, acquire a certain coherence with respect to the sequence of events and the details of the setting. He would describe the black temple as though he had frequented it more often than I. For my part, after the clash with the red angel I put a stop to my flights altogether».

«And you never met the girl after that?» I repeated my question.

³⁰ As the capital was patriotically renamed at the outbreak of the First World War and till after Lenin's death, even though St. Petersburg is Dutch, not German.

³¹ Felicien Rops (1833–1898) was a Belgian graphic artist famed for his illustrations of Baudelaire's «Les Fleurs du Mal». He also did a series «Les Sataniques»; and was admired by other Decadents, including Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly, mentioned above.

³² Fernand Edmond Jean Marie Knopff (1858–1921) was a Belgian Symbolist painter.

«No, I did not. She had a very interesting and attractive face, about which I dreamed a few more times, in fact. Later I attempted to draw it from memory, together with some other images from my dream visions; but, as it happens, without the least success».

«Perhaps you will yet see her again, somewhere, and have the opportunity to sketch her face from nature. Sometimes in dreams we see faces, situations, and places where we are yet fated to be. Have you ever read the verses of Alexei Konstantinovich Tolstoy?»³³

«I have. Some of them, I must confess, I am very fond of».

«He wrote the *Crimean Sketches*. There is an entire cycle in it of poems composed in the immediate aftermath of the War of 1854–1855 when the poet, who had just recovered from typhus, went on several excursions along the southern coast of the Crimea with the woman he loved. Writing never again came to him with such ease, it seems, as it did then».

«How could one fail to remember?» Ostroumov interrupted me, and even intoned in a low voice, 'Do you remember how the sea thundered that evening, / How in the briar the nightingale sang, / And dense springs of white acacia / In your riding cap were nodding?' »³⁴

«It is, of course, a charming poem», I said, «But it was not the one I had in mind when I wanted to tell you, Georgii Sergeyevich, something about the kind of dream where we see a locale, a setting, where we are yet to be».

I began to tell Ostroumov about how the poet and his lady arrived at Melas, which is located not far from the Baydar Gates — the estate of Perovsky, Tolstoy's uncle. The ancient trees rising from the seaward-descending flanks of the Yayla had been cut down by the French occupiers of the district; and Perovsky's home had been ransacked by the enemy soldiers quartered there. On the walls were the 'crude drawings and vulgar jokes' mentioned in Tolstoy's poem; and sabers had cut gashes in the statues that adorned the room. Shattered mirrors, broken windows, smashed furniture, owls nesting in the rooms, and other signs of destruction and desolation filled the poet's heart with sorrow and inspired him to compose the poem 'I greet you, desolated home, / Oaks wilted, fallen round, / The blue sea, and you, steep cliffs, / And garden once luxuriant — now abandoned and alone' »³⁵.

«As an artist, you must recall the wonderful image of the climbing roses clinging to the marble cornice of the window. But that is not the point. I happened somehow to read the poet's notebook, which he kept with him throughout his trip. The little volume, even though many of its pages had been torn out, still offered interesting authorial notes, for instance, and the preliminary drafts of *Crimean Sketches*. And right opposite the draft of the poem I mentioned was a scribbled remark added in the poet's hand: 'And this is what a persistent dream displayed to me so many times!' I suppose Tolstoy saw in his dream the scene of the desolate house where he was fated in future to find himself»³⁶.

«That is quite possible,» replied Ostroumov. «And you suppose I am fated to meet in real life that lovely young lady with whom I spent such a pleasant time in the midst of that ravaging, demonic company that surrounded us. I recall that she was rather terrified. She pressed her shoulder against me and trembled slightly... No, I doubt it! In the place where I am bound and from which I shall probably never return, there are, it would seem, no young ladies».

«I do not insist that you will definitely see this person, but a meeting is still possible. One person has likened so-called mantic dreams to reflections in one's brain of impending events. It is equivalent to sitting at the window and looking into a mirror affixed to the frame outside, in which people and objects moving in the street are reflected in proportion to their proximity. In the mirror you see a man who is walking in your direction, earlier than his actual arrival alongside your house wall. In all likelihood he will keep

³³ Alexei Konstantinovich Tolstoy (Алексей Константинович Толстой) (1817–1875) was a Russian poet, prose writer, playwright, and satirist, about whom Kondratiev published a scholarly study.

³⁴ See Appendix 1.

³⁵ Here is the poem (see Appendix 2).

³⁶ Kondratiev's narrator here must be identical to the author, whose scholarly monograph on the poet is cited above.

on going past it, so that you will be able to view him directly through the window as well; yet he, before striding directly up to that point, is still able to duck into the nearest gateway and then you will not see him directly in the window, in unmediated physical reality».

«Well, I do not want to meet in unmediated waking life the woman whom I found so attractive in my dream, anyhow,» replied Ostroumov. «Oh, how much more beautiful than real life are reveries! By way of thanks for your commentary on Alexei Konstantinovich Tolstoy, I will explicate for you in turn, to clarify my point, a writer to whom you are not, I think, altogether indifferent. You have surely read Pierre Louÿs' *Aphrodite*?»³⁷

«Not without pleasures», said I.

«Well then, this same Louÿs in his novel elaborated a theme found in a poem in an anthology belonging most likely to the Alexandrian period. I do not remember it, of course, in the Greek, but perhaps if I survive I'll yet read your own poetic rendering of it into Russian. The meaning of the verse is approximately as follows: 'Svenelans, for the sake of whose charms capital cities are aflame, she who sells herself for fabulous sums, she who amasses the treasures of her lovers — she, thanks to a dream vision, whiled the night away by my side, all night till the morn, naked, demanding no recompense for her caresses. I will no longer implore the wicked girl on bended knee for her love and will no more bewail my fate after that dream, which vouchsafed me, holding nothing back, pure ecstasy' ».

«Developing the theme further,» Ostroumov continued, «Louÿs forces his hero, the artist Demetrius, who has had a similar dream, to refuse the caresses offered him by a beautiful woman whose love he had earlier sought. And he acted rightly. Otherwise he would have had to repent later on as Apelles did. Alexander the Great bestowed upon the latter his favorite concubine, with the remark that the artist who had painted her portrait might like to enjoy its original. The grandiloquent gesture of the mighty ruler cost the painter much trouble and discomfort later on... And, echoing the hero of Pierre Louÿs, I declare that the maiden I saw in my dream is unlikely to be any sweeter or more captivating, should I become acquainted with her in real life. I recall she came over to me in one of the dream visions and touched my leg. I rose and, embracing, we took flight through the air. She was wearing a black cape with the hood thrown back. She rested her head on my shoulder and still I remember the caress of her soft tresses brushing against me... No! Reality can only spoil the wonderful dream. Who could my lovely intimate stranger be, twenty years since we parted? And aging emigré, her nerves ravaged, prone to hysterics; an opportunist; a spy; the kept woman of some nouveau riche speculator; a Bolshevik nurse; a prostitute offering herself to foreign troops for a crust of bread? No, I don't want reality! My dream of bliss is sufficient for me!»

The conversation turned imperceptibly to political events. We chatted for another hour or so and then parted, most likely forever.

Two years after the encounter with Ostroumov I had to leave the estate where I was living on some business — a journey of over seventy *vershs*. I had to travel by carriage, railway, and even on foot. I was diverted from the most direct route, partly by an errand for a friend and partly by happenstance, to the address of a village priest. The good father, who had not seen anybody in a long while save his parishioners, an occasional local Jew, and various authorities arriving for the purpose of requisitioning property, received me very pleasantly, and was delighted to receive the letter I had brought. He asked me to stay over, at least, till the following morning. It was such a warmly offered invitation that I could scarcely decline; the more so as I wanted to see the steep river banks of the locality so famous for their beauty, and the remnants of a great aristocratic estate that had been destroyed [остатки большой разрушенной помещичьей усадьбы].

³⁷ Pierre Louÿs (1870–1925) was a French decadent and Symbolist poet and prose writer. He is most famous for his cycle of Lesbian verses, «*Les Chansons de Bilitis*»; his erotic novel about the life of an Alexandrian courtesan, «*Aphrodite: moeurs antiques*» (1896), was a bestseller in its day.

«There were nearly thirty rooms in the main palace, not counting the wings of the house. The paintings were Italian and the walls and ceilings were frescoed. And the fittings, the silver, the linens, the clothes! Our village women now come to church in laces and silks one doesn't like to look at. They just cut away the upholstery from the furniture, the satin and velvet, and made themselves jackets and frocks. How many mirrors alone were broken! You couldn't maneuver a whole one through the door of the peasant huts. One man set up a pier-glass near his threshing floor. In comes the ox, sees his reflection, and grapples it with his horns. Well, no matter, they picked up the pieces. All of them were put to use. Of course they carried off all the furniture. They sold some of it to the Jews in the neighboring *shetl* and burnt the rest. A year before the war the Count had installed new zinc drain pipes for the main house. One way or another all of that's been cut up and used for stills to make vodka. And how many books there were! Two huge rooms were stocked with shelves to the very ceiling. Later on I saw ragged, charred scraps of them drifting all over the park. They were in either Italian or English; it was hard to tell. I have to confess that what with living here I've gone and forgotten all the book learning I acquired in the seminary at Kremenets. So when the peasants plundered the big house after the soldiers' pogrom, they set fire to these books instead of torches and walked around lighting their way with them».

«And did the landowner himself manage to escape?»

«*Pan* Count, you mean?»¹⁸ You really haven't heard? No, soldiers returning from the front killed both him and his stepdaughter. The front was right nearby. As long as the command post was here it was possible to live; but when our soldiers turned on their own officers it became very bad. And the Count was sick then and couldn't be moved. So they shot him as he lay in bed. His stepdaughter was a headstrong sort of young lady and would not deign to flee. Well, they tortured her to death, or, depending on whom you believe, she shot herself. She was a person with many strange qualities, very well educated and haughty. She would not let me, or the Catholic priest, even, past the threshold. They said all kinds of things about it in the village and the *shetl*. Well, God be their judge. But one thing is for sure: both she and the old Count were freethinkers and would not pay attention to anybody».

After dinner my host, donning his priestly mitre with its flaps reddened and darkened with age, kindly guided me to the Count's estate to see what remained of it. Along the way he continued his story.

«It's strange, of courses», he said, «that the young lady, even though she was not advanced in age, relatively speaking, still would not marry and preferred to live with an old man who was neither husband nor father to her. She kept domesticated wolves in her apartments, did not entertain guests, and never went out visiting. Paying no attention to anybody else, she would just read thick tomes day and night or else go horseback riding. She had an enormous stallion, black and fierce. The peasants even considered him an evil spirit. I was once coming home late from a pastoral visit and nearly collided with her. She flew past like a whirlwind, all in black, motionless at a full gallop except perhaps to adjust her cap now and then. The horse she rode was foaming and panting. And beside them, those accursed wolves. My mare almost pitched me out of my diligence because of those wolves, even though they were domesticated. When the soldiers later on were pillaging the manor and began driving the horses out of the stable, that black stallion knocked down one of them with his front hooves and trampled him. The other soldiers shot the horse dead on the spot. The wolves met the same fate. They did not want to let the robbers into the Count's stepdaughter's room».

Two stone pillars bore the marks of escutcheons that had been pried off. An iron grille connected them, across the empty space where once the gates had been. A hedge, untrimmed for years, had grown wild; and supple branches not yet green but thick with buds thrust upwards. It was a fine day in early April. Here and there little flowers glowed in the young grass. Tramping through the brush and cuttings of paths made not long ago, and moving past two wings of comparatively recent construction that were now without roofs or windows, we made our way to the place where the palace stood.

¹⁸ The Polish title *Pan*, «Sir», indicates the owner of the estate was a Pole and therefore a Roman Catholic; hence the Russian Orthodox priest's surprise below that not even the Catholic priest (*koioud*) was allowed into the manor house.

«They've been cutting down the park since 1917, they couldn't destroy it all, and now they don't dare,» the priest continued. «And what a park there was, to the other side of the estate!» He pointed towards where peasant cows were grazing among the stumps, and where chestnuts or maples that for some reason had not been chopped down were still standing. Here and there rose American pines with their short, trimmed branches almost to the crown resembling tall brushes, or cedars with their downward dragging crests. In the heap of debris from the front façade of the palace was visible a beheaded stone statue of the seventeenth century: he had been a medieval warrior holding a shield emblazoned with the crown of the Count. The same crest had survived by chance on the pediment. It was a two-story building, badly scarred by fire, without roof or windows, and with little towers, mostly in ruins, to either side. Bricks, fragments of shattered glass, rusted iron roofing, and pieces of the facing stone of the hearths lay all over. A withered peach tree pressed like an orphan to the wall between huge windows with shattered frames. Through the gaping windows of the upper story, through the shattered roof, glared the blue sky. The sooty walls of the rooms still preserved the traces of peeling green and blue paint. The parquet floors had been stripped; the fireplaces and ovens, wrecked. There were no doors visible.

«The floorboards, beams, and the rest of the wood went for fuel for the distilling,» my companion explained. «The peasants make plenty of moonshine these days. The Poles, our new masters, seized three stills, but they say there are thirty six more they haven't found that remain and are functioning. And it's not as though just the rich were at it, but the poor as well: one man only had five *puds* of grain left but he's still making vodka out of it».

We walked around what had once probably been a beautiful and elegant palace. We stood on a terrace, half of which had collapsed, and took in the vista that opened before our eyes, which was somewhat spoiled by the traces of the cuttings and the cows at pasture. Then, along one of the surviving avenues, our footsteps crunching in the gravel, we came to a small lake. It was bordered by slabs of moss-coated gray stone, here and there overgrown with grass.

«The labor of serfs,» the priest seemed to feel it necessary to comment about the masonry; and we went on, descending easily past bushes that had not yet turned green.

«All rose bushes. The uncle of the last owner planted them. They were a special variety raised in the greenhouse. Nothing left of that now, either. First they knocked out all the glass panes and now they're picking them out to repair the windows in their own huts. They break those often: they'll get drunk and go round to show each other a thing or two. That's all it takes».

We walked up to the terrace over the mooring on the lake. It was paved in white marble. Here and there the stone was broken, even removed in places to reveal the bricks below. Part of a parapet had collapsed into the water. Their appearance seemed somehow familiar to me. I walked down the steps leading to the water and saw stone owls in the niches to either side of the stair. The head of one had been knocked off; the other was missing only its beak. Beneath the niches, just as in Stepanov's painting, were huge iron rings.

Completely forgetting the priest who was accompanying me, I rushed in haste back up the overgrown steps and began attentively to scrutinize the upper part of the balustrade. There I fairly soon found what I had sought. But only traces remained of the monogram Gosh had scratched. It had been scraped away with a sharp instrument. Only the circle remained untouched. Near the circle, in a hand that was unfamiliar to me but seemingly feminine, someone had written in pencil a single word, *Nolo* («I do not want to»).

The dreams of my two friends had met a convergent fate. One of them himself had desired that the vision in slumber achieve transformation into reality; as for the other, though he strove in actuality to meet the princess of his oneiric vision, she also did not want to become acquainted in waking life with the man whom she had spared in dream.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1³⁹**Крымские очерки, 4**

Ты помнишь ли вечер, как море шумело,
В шиповнике пел соловей,
Душистые ветки акации белой
Качались на шляпе твоей?

Меж камней, обросших густым виноградом,
Дорога была так узка;
В молчанье над морем мы ехали рядом,
С рукою сходилась рука.

Ты так на седле нагибалась красиво,
Ты алый шиповник рвала,
Буланой лошади косматую гриву
С любовью ты им убрала;

Одежды твоей непослушные складки
Цеплялись за ветви, а ты
Беспечно смеялась — цветы на лошадке,
В руках и на шляпе цветы!

Ты помнишь ли рев дождевого потока
И пену и брызги кругом;
И как наше горе казалось далеко,
И как мы забыли о нем!

Crimean Sketches, 4

Do you remember how the sea thundered that evening,
How in the briar the nightingale sang,
And dense springs of white acacia
In your riding cap were nodding?

Between the rocks thickly overgrown with vines
The trail was very narrow as we rode
Above the sea together; in silence
Our hands found each other and were joined.

With such charm you bent forward in the saddle
To pluck the purple briar blossom
And adorn with it
Your bay pony's shaggy mane.

The folds of your cloak,
Disobedient, caught on the branches;
Yet you laughed without care: flowers
On the pony, flowers in your hands and on your cap!

Do you remember the roar of the rain gushing,
And everywhere the spray and foam?
How distant our grief to us seemed then,
How we forgot it all.

Appendix 2

Крымские очерки, 9

Приветствую тебя, опустошенный дом,
Завядшие дубы, лежащие кругом,
И море синее, и вас, крутые скалы,
И пышный прежде сад — глухой и одичалый!
Усталым путникам в палящий летний день
Еще даешь ты, дом, свежительную тень,
Еще стоят твои поруганные стены,
Но сколько горестной я вижу перемены!
Едва лишь я вступил под твой знакомый кров,
Бросятся в глаза мне надписи врагов,
Рисунки грубые и шутки площадные,
Где с наглым торжеством поносится Россия;
Все те же громкие, хвастливые слова
Нечестное врагов оправдывают дело.

Crimean Sketches, 9

I greet you, desolated home,
Oaks wilted, fallen round,
The blue sea, and you, steep cliffs,
And garden once luxuriant — now abandoned and alone.
To weary travelers on a scorching summer day
You still afford refreshing shade,
O house, and your violated walls still stand.
Still what grievous changes I behold!
Barely have I entered your friendly shelter
When the enemy's graffiti wounds my sight:
Crude drawings and vulgar jokes
Abusing Russia in their triumph shrill,
The same loud and boastful words used still
To justify the cause of a dishonorable foe.

³⁹ Here is the complete Russian text, with my translation.

Вздохнув, иду вперед; мохнатая сова
 Бесшумно с зеркала разбитого слетела;
 Вот в угол бросилась испуганная мышь...
 Везде обломки, прах; куда ни поглядишь,
 Везде насилие, насмешки и угрозы;
 А из сада в окно вползающие розы,
 За мраморный карниз цепляясь там и тут,
 Беспечно в красоте раскидистой цветут,
 Как будто на дела враждебного народа
 Набросить свой покров старается природа;
 Вот ящерица здесь меж зелени и плит,
 Блестя как изумруд, извилисто скользит,
 И любо ей играть в молчании могильном,
 Где на пол солнца луч
 столбом ударил пыльным...

Но вот уж сумерки; вот постепенно мгла
 На берег, на залив, на скалы налегла;
 Все больше в небе звезд, в аллеях все темнее,
 Душистее цветы, и запах трав сильнее;
 На сломанном крыльце сижу я, полон дум;
 Как тихо все кругом, как слышен
 моря шум...

Sighing, I pass on: a fluffy owl
 Noiselessly takes wing from behind a broken mirror
 And to his corner runs a frightened mouse...
 Everywhere I look, debris and dust;
 Everywhere is violence, and mockery, and threat.
 But roses, creeping through the window from the garden,
 Gripping its marble cornice here and there,
 Flower in flung loveliness without a care
 As though nature wished to shield us
 with its own protection
 From these doings of a hostile nation.
 Here a lizard between the paving stones and the green,
 Glistening emerald, sinuously slips,
 Glad to play in the tomb-like quiet
 Where the sun's rays' dusty pillar strikes the floor...

But already it is dusk, and gradually
 Murk has hidden shore and gulf and cliff:
 More stars now throng the sky. The avenue is dark:
 Stronger is the smell of grass;
 Denser, the fragrance of the flowers.
 Absorbed in thought, I sit on the broken porch.
 How silent is everything around; how loud the sea's roar...

Heaven Is Here and the Emperor Is Near: A Traveler's Guide to Heaven

James R. Russell

(Armenian Studies, Harvard University)

Abstract: The visionary literature of the ancient and medieval Near East provides descriptions of heaven and guides to travel there. In the literature of Israel, the Prophet Isaiah envisages a holy mountain; the Mishnah, a royal palace with successive chambers leading to the Divine Throne. It can also be a walled garden (this is the meaning of the word "paradise", from Persian) watered by streams: Eden has four (and medieval Armenian travelers saw it floating in the air). One might travel to Heaven in life. The Zoroastrian Arda Viraz visited the Otherworld(s) by ingesting a deadly narcotic, *mang*; the Prophet Muhammad rode the creature called Buraq; and others employed mantric meditation or a ladder (Hebrew and Arabic *sullam*, Ethiopic *ma'areg*, hence Arabic *mi'raj*). This was a dangerous journey: the foolish or faint hearted might mistake certain stones for water, or go mad. Heaven is divided from earth by a layer of hard stone or iron (Iranian *asman* > *ahan*, cf. Greek *akme* and Russian *kamen'*; Armenian *erkin/erkar'*). Some have seen it as a protective shield; others, as a prison wall, depending on their view of its king.

天低皇帝近：一份通往天堂的旅客指南

詹姆斯·罗素教授

(哈佛大学近东语言及文明学院)

摘要：近东古代与中古的幻想文学提供了关于天堂的描述以及前往的旅行指南。在以色列的文学中，先知以赛亚设想了一座圣山，《密西拿》设想了通往神圣王座的、有着鳞次栉比房间的庄严宫殿。它也可以被墙包围、溪流浇灌的花园（这是出自波斯语的“伊甸园”之意）：伊甸园有四个（中古的亚美尼亚旅行

者曾看到它漂浮在空中)。一个人或许一生中旅行到过天堂。琐罗亚斯德教徒 Arda Viraz 在吸食一种麻醉剂 (*mang*) 时访问过另一个世界; 先知穆罕默德骑着叫布拉克的生物; 其他人采用真言冥想或者梯子 (希伯来与阿拉伯的 *sullam*, 埃塞俄比亚的 *ma'areg*, 阿拉伯的 *mi'raj*)。这是一个危险的旅程: 愚蠢的人与胆小的人可能将石头误看成水, 或者发疯。天堂由一层坚硬的石头或者铁从大地分离 (伊朗的 *asman/ahan*, 参看希腊的 *akme* 与俄罗斯的 *kamen*; 亚美尼亚的 *erkin/erkat*)。一些人将天堂是为一个护盾; 其他人则将其视为狱墙, 这取决于它的王的想法。

“Heaven is high and the Emperor is far away.” — Chinese proverb

To my father, Joseph Russell, on his 87th birthday.

Some years ago the American writer Michael Chabon while rummaging in a bookshop came across a Yiddish phrase book for travelers, part of a series in various languages (French, German, and so on) published by Dover. The volume enables the foreign traveler to buy plane tickets, book a hotel room, ask a policeman for directions, decipher street signs, and so on, in Yiddish. Yiddish is a very rich language of the Eastern European Jewish diaspora derived from Middle High German with a great many Hebrew, Aramaic, Slavic, and other elements. But it was never the official language of any country, with the dubious exception of the tiny Jewish Autonomous Region of Birobidzhan in the USSR, which is still nestled happily somewhere around Mongolia, with a handful of speakers of Yiddish. But you could never purchase a ticket to get there on Aeroflot in Yiddish. Israel employs Modern Hebrew, which is a completely different language— and most of the people who did speak Yiddish perished in the Nazi Holocaust in any case. It survives among a very few speakers around the world, mostly ultra-Orthodox Jews, and subsisted till recently as a significant secular literary idiom: a Yiddish writer, Isaac Bashevis Singer, received the Nobel Prize. The phrase book thus has none of the practical utility of such a volume in Spanish or Italian: it is an imaginative appreciation of the character and sound of the murdered past of a living people, maybe a way to help that people understand itself and chart its future. The book with its imaginary Yiddishland stimulated Chabon

to write a brilliant counterfactual novel *cum* detective *noir* thriller, *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, about a temporary refuge, a Yiddish-speaking Jewish protectorate of the USA that he situates in Sitka, Alaska. The novel, though not intended as such, served for this reader as kind of a foil or mirror, exerting its negative capability, if you will, a powerful argument for the importance and genius of the revived Hebrew language and the flourishing, independent State of Israel. It is a reflection on such vital concerns as the condition of exile, the place of Diaspora language and culture in the construction of present-day Jewish identity, and the inherent precariousness of a territorial claim by a proverbially homeless and landless minority.

So today I would like to offer an analogous, though shorter and more discursive phrasebook, Lonely Planet guide, and *vade mecum* combined to another place, Heaven, that is just as fictional, and is physically even more improbable than the Yiddishland of the phrasebook Chabon discovered. I think such a treatment may help us to appreciate how Heaven, which all available evidence indicates is only an imaginative and imaginary invention of the human imagination, can still be an idea of real value in life. It holds up a mirror to the real world, affords a contrast to things as they are, and helps people to think about and plan how we want to lead our lives and fashion our society and surroundings. It is a meditation on important social concepts such as authority, responsibility, and mutual cooperation. Thinking about heavenly occupations assists us to refine our earthly pursuits. The abstraction of heavenly harmonies and languages helps us to hone practical thinking about the origin of language, the idea of a universal language, and the relationship of the capacity of speech, apparently unique to humans among the creatures of this planet, to the cosmos as we perceive it through science, mathematics, harmonics, and art. The order (or disorder) of heaven enables us to reflect on society and how to improve it. And the various cultural traditions about heaven combine to form a major part of our spiritual heritage, sheltering all that remains to memory of the unnumbered dead, their loves and pleasures and hopes so like our own as we age, and crawl to the only end of age.

So you want to go to Heaven. The first thing the sensible traveler does is to consult a map. That will look different depending upon the tradition you hail from. One of the titles of God, lifted from that of the ancient Persian monarchs, is King of

Kings. Heaven is, accordingly, often presented in Jewish sources along the lines of an ancient royal residence consisting of a series of palace chambers through which one passes, rather like Persepolis near Shiraz or the Forbidden City in Beijing. One approaches the innermost chamber, where is God holds court on the Divine throne or chariot, through successive halls, called in Hebrew *hekhaloth*. The word *hekhal*, meaning the hall of a palace, is a loan into Hebrew from Sumerian, and evidently maintained its Mesopotamian majesty and gravitas long after the actual edifices of ancient Iraq had crumbled into dust; for it was subsequently adopted from Hebrew into the Arabic *haykal* of the *Qur'an*. Each hall is different, and is constructed of marvelous and otherworldly materials that awe the visitor with their splendor and strangeness. In the Mishnaic tractate *Hagiga*— the *locus classicus* of journeys to Heaven in the tradition— the little band of travelling Rabbis, led by the saintly Rabbi Akiva, are warned not to cry “Water, water!” when they behold the stones of marble of which one hall is constructed. What this probably means is that in heaven what is liquid on earth can be solid simultaneously, without having frozen into ice— heaven is a place where the usual physical laws not only do not apply but can contradict each other, and a traveler unprepared or unfit to appreciate his new surroundings is unworthy of being there and risks extreme culture shock— madness or worse.

The tenth-century Armenian mystical poet St. Gregory of Narek composed a series of 95 meditations that are to be imagined by the reader as a progression through a kind of imaginary *enfilade* of physical rooms and mental states like the serial order of the *hekhaloth*-halls: the stages of the Divine Liturgy and the three parts of the church building culminating in the holy altar. These divide into three groups of chapters or prayers, then, in the text; and the first point of division is at chapter 33, a number that has great symbolic significance for the Pythagoreans and later Christians. (Numbers, as we are to observe again, matter a lot in Heaven.) Thirty-three is the age at which Christ was crucified and rose from the dead; and St Gregory intended Chapter 33 to be recited by the celebrant of the Divine Liturgy at the point of the consecration of the Host, over and over until he sees a light coming towards him from Heaven. This repetitive practice is akin to the induction of ecstasy by the rhythmic chanting of a mantra again and again in other traditions. The light itself is a piercing of the veil between the upper world and the lower; and St. Gregory refers in the text to

“the solid liquid at thy last curtain” (*loytsn matsuats verjnim varagurid*). This cryptic, alliterative expression uniting opposites refers most likely to the same mysterious building material as the marble of the *Mishna* one is cautioned not to call water. The Armenian word for curtain in the text, *varagoyr*, is almost certainly a loan from Middle Iranian, the same source as Hebrew *pargod*, the word for the curtain in the Holy of Holies, as the last and most sacred building of the Temple at Jerusalem was known. The Muslim Dome of the Rock now stands on the site. In the Ancient Near East the king was concealed by a curtain; the Torah scroll in the Ark is veiled thus in the synagogue; and Orthodox churches have a curtain that is drawn to separate the laity from the priests during the Divine mystery, the ritual where the chapter of St. Gregory’s text is to be employed. The Christian Gospel claims that at the moment of Christ’s death on the Cross, the *pargod* was torn in half. There are multiple possibilities of symbolism afforded by Christian typology: the body is the temple of the soul and death tears it asunder. Christ’s death, a ransom paid for our sins, shattered the temple of the law. His death, preceding resurrection, tore the veil from the face of the ultimate mystery of mortality and removed the barrier between the Creator and the sons of God—mankind. The last curtain is the one that separates one, then, from the ultimate, awesome mystery. In the Christian liturgy that mystery is the transubstantiation of the bread into Christ’s body, the breaking of all the defined categories of life and death, human and inanimate, the transcendence of all states of mind limited by earthly logic, salvation.

So the halls of heaven are not merely the *divan-e ‘am* and *divan-e khass*—the public, then privy, chambers of a terrestrial Persian palace, or even the buildings of the Temple. They are stages of a mental and spiritual journey that challenge and confound the senses of the traveler. If he is unprepared, the experience can lead to insanity and death, as indeed happened to some of Rabbi Akiva’s fellow travelers in the Mishnaic text. But suppose one arrives at the chariot of the Divine presence unscathed. What happens then? On the face of it, the experience is somewhat anticlimactic: one participates in the celebration of the angelic liturgy, singing the praises of God in the company of the congregation of the cherubic and seraphic hosts. But it must be a spectacle of blinding light and color, of vastness and ineffable beauty; and emotionally the closeness to God is a state of ecstasy. It is the ultimate *nostos*, or

homecoming, the deepest loss restored and most passionate yearning fulfilled. Ordinary travelers are privileged to take part in this ceremony of the Divine court. That is what the pious Jew does; and then he returns to the world to perform the very same liturgy, the *Qedusha*, or Sanctification, every Sabbath in the synagogue, with renewed faith. The trip has thus enriched and enhanced that which he habitually does. It makes the Sabbath, that crucial punctuation of the rhythm of the week, that much holier. One stresses closeness to God, not union. God, the Qur'an explains, is closer to man than his jugular vein. But they are not the same; and when the Muslim mystic, who experienced *fana'*, the extinction of the ego and unity with God, and exclaimed "I am the Truth!" he was condemned as a blasphemer. The successful traveler to Heaven returns enriched, maybe even transformed, but still as his own person, as himself.

Other travelers have more to do than pray in God's presence. Prophets may address the King, with petitions on behalf of their people, or discuss practical questions. During the *Laylatu 'l-qadr*, the Night of power, the Prophet Mohammed woke in the darkest hour, was taken *Al-Aqsa*, the "farthest mosque", which was soon associated with the Temple Mount in Jerusalem, and then vaulted heavenward mounted on a magic steed called Buraq. In the *Mi'raj nameh*, the Book of Ascent, the Prophet when he met God in Heaven was instructed to command Muslims to pray 250 times a day. In modern Chinese this number is a slang expression for an idiot but it is unlikely God was joking. Maybe He wanted everybody to become a Sufi mystic and make every breath a prayer, or perhaps He just didn't get out much and His expectations of people were unrealistic. In any case, the Prophet, modest and obedient, would have carried this order back down and made it law. So Muslims are fortunate that much as Dante had Virgil as a guide when he embarked on the three-part tour of *The Divine Comedy*, the Muslim Prophet traveled in the experienced company of our father Abraham—the patriarch to whom one formally traces the three great scheduled faiths of the Middle East. (There are many other religions in the region, and a few are mentioned here, but in the mainstream Western religion business they are just charter airlines—without the Abrahamic accreditation.) Abraham was used to bargaining with God, having tried to save Sodom and Gomorrah once by getting the Lord to agree to spare the sinful cities of the plain if as few as ten righteous men might be

found there. Abraham got the number of daily prayers down to five. So when you're in Heaven, be prepared to bargain.

Mohammed saw various interesting phenomena in heaven, including a gigantic white rooster portrayed in manuscripts that I believe is simply the harbinger of the dawn sacred to the Zoroastrian angel Sraosha. The latter survives as Soroush in Islam—the only ancient Iranian divine name thus preserved by the later religion—and Sogdian Zoroastrian funerary reliefs unearthed near Xi'an depict bird-headed humanoids performing rituals: they may represent Sraosha again. These richly detailed carven narrative panels are thus a testimony to one of the sources of Muslim miniature painting and iconography in later centuries. Persian miniatures did not originate by a sort of Islamic parthenogenesis: they are an inheritance of Zoroastrian art. The traveler to Heaven, in any case, should not be startled to see a very large bird: a rooster, perhaps, or an eagle. In some Iranian silk brocades and silver of the early Islamic period it is a giant eagle, rather than the equine Buraq, that ascends to heaven bearing a naked human figure—the enfranchised soul, perhaps—secure in its talons. It would seem that this is the magical Simurgh bird, whose name is etymologically “eagle”; and the artistic composition of the scene is probably owed in part to a Greco-Roman source, since that tradition favored the naked body in a way Iran did not. Specifically it may derive from a portrayal of the abduction of Ganymede. The latter was a handsome Anatolian shepherd boy whom Zeus, the happily married father of the gods but a man of catholic tastes, took a fancy to and made his cupbearer (a euphemistic job description) on mount Olympus. This snow-capped mountain in northern Greece, easily visible from my grandmother's hometown of Salonica on a clear day, is a heaven. But only the gods and their chosen favorites live on Olympus, drinking their ambrosia and squabbling with each other. The rest of us, no matter how virtuous we are, go down to Hades; and even the heroic, aristocratic few assigned to the Elysian fields find their shadowy existence in meadows of pale asphodels so depressing that they would rather be slaves on earth than kings of the dead. Elysium is evidently quite unlike the Parisian namesake of the place. As my friend and teacher Prof. Martin Schwartz of Berkeley once commented on a dream I'd had about a departed mutual friend in the Hellenic afterlife, “A Greek hell is bad news.”

But there are, happily, other flowering fields for us barbarian non-Hellenes to tiptoe through. The Biblical Eden, whose name means simply “pleasure” (*ma'adanim* is modern Hebrew for delicatessen items at a supermarket), was the garden God made for Adam. His name is related to redness, earth, and blood—the ingredients of our generically named prototype—and Eden was quite definitely earthly. Eden is thus not Heaven *stricto sensu*, but since it has come to be called Paradise, a synonym of Heaven and a metaphorical destination of the souls of the pious after death, we can consider it in the survey of heavenly geography. Paradise, Hebrew *pardes*, Greek *paradeisos*, are both loans from Old Persian again: the **paridaiza* was the walled park or garden of the Achaemenian King of Kings. It was separate from the palace complex but not far away from it—like the park at the far end of the Forbidden City. His subordinate satraps constructed lesser palaces and *paradeisoi* for themselves in the far-flung provinces of the empire; so Greeks, Jews, and others might behold them without making the long journey as tributaries to the capital. So again, Heaven is modeled on an impressive feature of the dwelling of an earthly monarch; and much as the throne room has a curtain, the garden has its wall. Heaven is that which is inaccessibly above or impenetrably within, and separate from the inferior, the profane, *hoi polloi*. The wall of Eden is convenient to the Biblical myth: once Adam and Eve sin by sampling the forbidden fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (in the West, an apple since its Latin name is the same as *malum*, “evil”) and are expelled, the wall is there to keep them out and an angel with a flaming sword guards the door. Armed guards such as this formidable being are an impressive aspect of the staff of any royal palace or government building down to the present day; the traveler to Heaven has to be prepared to empty his pockets and pass through the X-ray monitor.

The imperial paradises of the ancient Persians were stocked with game so the king might go hunting whenever he wished; and there was an irrigation system of channels—an important feature in a desert climate. These watercourses are lovingly stressed in the Islamic image of Paradise in the *Qur'an*, which was composed in the arid desert climate of Arabia. In the book of Genesis, these channels possess an additional, cosmic symbolism. They are not mere rivulets but the four main rivers of the known world, all made to rise in Eden. The Tigris and Euphrates that define Mesopotamia, literally the land between the rivers, both take their course southwards

from the Armenian mountains, and these are the two we can still confidently locate. What the other names referred to is now less clear. But the symbolism is lucid and that is what is more important: four is the number of the earth's directions, its quadrants, the number that establishes its squareness, the squareness of our houses, our fields. And for the purposes of Christian symbolism, the four are made to branch from a single spring, conveniently rendering them cruciform as well. This squareness figures very prominently in the classical Chinese conception of heaven, as we shall see presently. And the beginning learner of Chinese easily remembers that the character for a country is a square enclosing a map of salient features of its landscape.

Eden is not outside the known regions of human habitation or distantly above the earth, but at the inmost heart of our world, at its center, though access is barred to us. It is some distance above us now: medieval accounts agree that it floats over the earth, in the air. Not everybody can see it; but according to a medieval legend a band of six Armenian monks did, after traveling six months and climbing a great mountain. It is strange it took them so long since Eden, Armenian sources aver, is a local destination: it hovers in the air just to the northwest of lake Van, in the district of Hark'. (In his *Discourse on the Terrestrial Paradise*, London, 1666, M. Carver avers that it is in Sophene, a district bounded by the Euphrates a bit farther to the west.) They were not allowed to enter, but they could see the garden and sniff the enchanting fragrance of its blossoms. They returned to report what they had smelled and seen to St. Nerses the Graceful (died 1173), the Catholicos or supreme patriarch of the Armenian Church. He included their description in his *Commentary on Genesis*, a book that, unfortunately, is lost but may turn up in an old and forgotten manuscript someday. However a densely illustrated Armenian manuscript from Kaffa in the Crimea of the *Lives of the Desert Fathers*— the early Christian mystics and monastics— has a wonderful and unique narrative miniature painting which depicts the black-cowled monks climbing the bare gray slopes of the rocky mountain, the opulent garden bursting with multicolored flowers above, and, on the right and down below, one of them telling St. Nerses about it afterwards.

We've noted walls and rivers as geographical features of Heaven. One should note in passing that ancient geography sets limits to the earth itself; and post-Biblical

and medieval sources add a wall at the end of the civilized world, erected by Alexander the Great to keep out the barbarian hordes of Gog and Magog. Though this is an old legend, and is a mere metaphor of any fortress or city wall, perhaps those who continued to elaborate it had learned of a real wall like Alexander's imaginary one, erected by the emperors of the fabulously remote realm of Seres, that is, China. And as for rivers, Jewish tradition places one, Sambatyon, at the end of the earth as well. It is so named because it throws up stones into the air on every day of the week but the Sabbath, Aramaic Shambat. Beyond it the hordes of the lost Ten Tribes of Israel wait to irrupt into the cruel kingdoms of Edom and take vengeance on the Gentiles—a variant of the myth of Gog and Magog. When the Mongols invaded the West in the 13th century, Armenian and other sources were certain they were Gog and Magog. But then life went on, Armenian princes travelled to Karakorum, and Armenian artists learned to paint Chinese dragons. Just beyond the dangerous waters of Sambatyon are the still more perilous Mountains of Darkness. If you make it you will find a well; and in that well is an articulate cat and a chain. Did Pushkin get his own learned cat on its golden chain in *Ruslan and Ludmila* from this myth by some circuitous route? And the cat serves faithfully a pair of fallen angels called by various names—in a Qur'anic variant of the myth they are the rhyming duo of Zoroastrian archangels who preside over the waters and plants, Harut and Marut (Persian Khordad and Amurdad). These angels, once introduced by their cat, offer to teach magic to travelers for free. One medieval account locates the two, now called Jannes and Jambres after another strand of Biblical legend (where they are the magicians who opposed Moses at the court of the Egyptian Pharaoh), and their well, not in mountains but in a walled garden in Egypt, that proverbial locus of dark sorcery. An early modern Armenian poem declares that Jannes and Jambres are the culprits who first brought the tobacco plant from Hell and planted it in their evil vegetable patch. So walls and rivers are re-arranged and re-situated to create a sinister anti-Eden whose denizens are a couple a lot less friendly than Adam and Eve. The world map of Andrea Bianco, 1436, situates Eden at the very top, that is, in the East (the North was still not the top of the world in mapmaking yet), on a kind of peninsula separated by a bay to another peninsula to its left. That other one has the wall of Alexander separating it from the mainland; and the hordes of Gog and Magog skulk sullenly behind it. On his Edenic peninsula Andrea helpfully marks the inn of St. Macarius,

who wanted to visit Eden but was not allowed in.¹ Macarius did, however, visit the *kepotaphion*, “garden tomb”, or *paradeisos*, “enclosed garden” of Jannes and Jambres.² The sources place this in Egypt, the land of dark sorcery; but for all we know, the anti-Eden is just across the bay from Eden itself. So make sure you turn right if approaching the shore from the West and visit the right Eden, and don’t eat the apples when you get there. If you do find yourself in the wrong one, don’t talk to the cat and don’t smoke the weed. Or you could wind up like Alice in Wonderland...

Another map of Heaven would depict it as a mountain. The Armenian legend, as we have seen, has Eden hovering above a high mountain; and one is reminded that Zion, a name of the holy city Jerusalem and its temple, is a word whose original Hebrew meaning was “mountain summit”. The Temple sat on a vast man-made platform on a hill rising above dizzyingly steep valleys. The God of the Prophet Isaiah has a “holy mountain” where the lion and lamb lie down together at peace— this is clearly a mythical, otherworldly place, a heavenly mountain specifically not of this earth or time, where animals instinctive rend and eat each other. Isaiah’s Heaven is thus seen not only as another place, but in another age, the Messianic one. The ancient Greeks, as we have already seen, considered an earthly mountain, Olympus, the home of the gods, though not of the souls of virtuous men; and the ancient Anatolians portrayed eagles and other representations of divine beings perched on mountains. So Heaven as a mountain peak is another geographical model and one ought to take along sturdy hiking boots. For the Japanese and the Polynesians— sea peoples all— the Otherworld is not vertically but horizontally distant, lying beyond the illimitable, level expanse of the Pacific Ocean. If you belong to an Austronesian culture you have to row a canoe. The geographical fact about heaven common to all the atlases of human culture is that it is not here. Moreover, once one alights in Heaven, has one really arrived, or is there still farther to go? How many heavens are there, stacked like

¹ See Jean Delumeau, *History of Paradise: The Garden of Eden in Myth and Tradition*, New York: Continuum, 1995, p. 67, Map 10.

² See J.R. Russell, “An Armenian Spirit of Time and Place: the *Ġvot*,” *REArm* 36 (2014), in press; and J.R. Russell, “Hārūt and Mārūt: The Armenian Zoroastrian Demonic Twins in the *Qur’ān* Who Invented Fiction,” in S. Tokhtasev and P. Luria, eds., *Commentationes Iranicae: Sbornik statei k 90-letiyu V.A. Livshitsa*, St. Petersburg: Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Nestor-Historia, 2013, pp. 469-480.

pancakes one on top of the other? Christians agree on seven levels; Siberian shamans have to ascend 27 to reach the highest, inhabited by the great Uralo-Altaic god Bai Ulgen. So in visiting heaven you may need not only to go from one room to the next, and the next; but also up, and up, and up some more. Sometimes a lower heaven may be a kind of waiting room, or place of study and preparation (the Latin word *auditorium* has been used) for admission to a higher one. Zoroastrians do not plan to stay in Heaven indefinitely: at the end of time, when evil is defeated and the material world is purified of imperfection, disease, and death, the souls of men will receive their *tan i passen*, “final body”, and return to live here on earth.

But let us return to the tactile, visible, and olfactory experience of the place. Since the learned deal mainly with marks on paper, our chosen medium can circumscribe our appreciation of existence: one can write down a description of a physical place easily enough, or make a map, or even scribble a musical score. But how does one write in any precise, descriptive way, of a smell? Yet smell is a sense that plunges deepest into human emotion and memory, more evocative often than any picture. Smell is a sense that mystics have cultivated and refined in a way savants generally do not; so it seems important that it was precisely the aroma of the flowers of Paradise that the medieval Armenian travelers focused upon. It suggests a subtle sophistication of preparation for the trip. Heaven attracts all the senses, though. In the Zoroastrian *Hadhokht Nask*, the soul upon arrival in Heaven is given spring butter and basil to eat. Basil is, as its Greek name implies, the royal herb, its pleasant aroma and taste suitable for the divine. It is an earthly plant, though; of food that originated in heaven we know the *manna* of the Bible, a kind of seed with the taste of honey that God sent down to the Israelites in the desert of Sinai to make into cakes. Offerings for the dead often include food; and it would seem therefore that there are sometimes shortages there. In an Armenian folktale, a credulous peasant woman gives the lunch she has just cooked for her younger son to a deceitful stranger who claims to be a traveler from Heaven and friend of her deceased first born. We Sephardic Jews eat a meal of hard-boiled eggs and hard, sweet rolls called *roskas* at the grave. This is picnic food, to be sure; and the togetherness of a family repast at the time of loss and place of farewell is therapeutic, a good affirmation of the continuation of life. But these are durable viands, too; and metaphorically they are provision for the departed

Over the ages, humans imagined various kinds of food in Heaven. The great social event of ancient life was dinner with family and friends: funerary bas reliefs and frescoes from ancient Greece and Iran eastwards depict the deceased feasting with loved ones, reclining on a couch or sitting stiffly at a table, staring out solemnly at the viewer, munching bread, drinking wine. Christ's last full day on this earth, a Thursday in the spring month of Sivan of the year AD 30, ended with the Passover *seder* meal with his disciples, its conviviality dampened by premonitions of His arrest, betrayal, judgment, and crucifixion on the morn. Numerous frescoes in Roman catacombs, whether they be Jewish, Christian, or pagan, depict the family of the deceased at the dinner table, eating together. One looked forward to more such occasions and reunions. Is the fare of Heaven vegetarian? Man kills for food; and on many tombstones from Greece, Anatolia, Armenia, and Iran the somewhat static scene of familial culinary exertions is paired with the more dynamic one of the deceased at full gallop, hunting on horseback. This exciting and pleasurable exercise was the way our ancestors put meat on the table. It was also what a man did to prepare himself as a warrior, and in Persian epic poetry the shorthand expression for the way real men—the heroes— pass their time, is *razm o bazm*, “hunting and feasting”. As below, so above, it would seem. There is an old joke: a Rabbi, a Priest, and a Mollah are, unusually, traveling together. The last night of their journey they have just enough food left for breakfast the following morning, and they agree to remember their dreams from the end of such a special trip. On the morn, the Mollah tells his friends of a dream feasting with the Prophet and being entertained by virgins. The Priest describes sitting with Christ as at the Last Supper. I had insomnia, says the Rabbi, and since I figured you guys were up in Heaven feasting, I ate everything we had saved for breakfast. So if you're about to take that long flight to Heaven, with airline cuisine to look forward to, have a bite and maybe a tippie afore ye go.

Pack food for your trip; but also check your wallet. Coco Chanel said the best things in life are free; and the second-best are very expensive. The same might be said of the afterlife. The ancient Greeks placed an *obol*, a small coin, in the mouth of the deceased to pay Charon, the ferryman over the river Styx into the otherworld; and the

Chinese offer special otherworld paper money for the dead for various necessary purchases. Manichaeans describe heaven as a teeming city, with bazaars—a rather ordinary place, compared to the royal precincts and government compounds of other imagined heavens. But you need cash to get something at a bazaar. So it would suggest, again, that money is useful, no matter whatever one's cosmology or how noble one's mission. As Cervantes reminds us: an innkeeper whose bill has not been paid admonished Don Quixote, Next time you embark on a heroic quest, Sir Knight, take along money! As my Mom says, "Rich or poor, it's good to have money."

Heaven also has sound: Rabbi Akiva and other mystics hear the Divine liturgy: Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts! His glory fills all the world! (*Qadosh, qadosh, qadosh Adonai tseva'ot, melo' kol ha-arets kevodo.*) The Zoroastrian name for heaven is *garo.demana*, literally the "house of song" in Avestan; hence Pahlavi *roshn garodman*, "the luminous house of song" and Armenian *gerezman*, which has become the word for a tomb. (Armenian uses for Heaven *drakht*, a Persian word meaning, simply, a tree—Paradise the park, again.) The Divine liturgy imagined by the Hebrew prophets gives us the text but not the score: the composers of religious music have striven to approximate the strains of divine songs; and the mathematical affinity of the golden section in painting, the widening volute chambers of the nautilus shell, and the intervals on the neck of a guitar suggests that harmony and number, the language by which the cosmos speaks, may be a musical as well as a verbal language. It would be well for the traveler to Heaven to be musically literate, in order fully to appreciate the experience; and to have a decent singing voice. Does heavenly music employ instruments? The divine beings of ancient Indian mythology called *apsaras* and *gandharvas* carry lutes; and wherever Indian artistic influence is felt, in the iconography of Buddhism and of Zoroastrianism in Sogdiana and along the Silk Road into China, the angels hovering in the supernal clouds of the divine worlds flourish these instruments. And funerary furniture and offerings, from Egypt to China, supply stringed instruments as part of the necessary baggage of the more sophisticated otherworld traveler. Bards entertained kings at court with lyric and epic poetry chanted to the accompaniment of a lute or harp. But this placid music was punctuated for announcements, wars, and the like by the stirring martial blast of trumpets. The Jerusalem Temple had its players of the *shofar*, the trumpet made of a ram's horn; and

God and His host signal the redemption of Israel, or the end of the world, with the trump of doom.

Purists in the Christian tradition abhorred the use of musical instruments in the liturgy, preferring to imagine a massed chorus of voices singing in unison. In an early modern Armenian folk tale an ambitious priest makes a pact with Satan to advance in the hierarchy and become a bishop, on condition that he keep a tiny harp in his robes. When he has attained the highest post, the devil's orchestra bursts out in church with the mighty twangs and brays of many instruments: the incriminating object is discovered and the sinner is tied to the tail of a horse and let loose to be dismembered on the rocks. Clearly Armenian Christianity had no time for the guitar-toting practitioners of folk masses. And one recalls that the classical Persian poet Onsori, recasting the ancient Greek myth about the invention of the lute from a tortoise shell with stretched sinews through which the wind blew, has Ahura Mazda—the good Creator God—find the shell. But it is Ahriman, the devil, who shapes and tunes it for him. And Onsori adds that what the Greeks call Dionysian song is the music of Harut, one of a pair of fallen angels. A boy out-fiddles the devil in American folklore. Clearly some music is held to stimulate the lower passions and to conduct the listener, not to the House of Song but down the primrose path to Hell. So opinions about what one hears in Heaven are divided: some imagine all the orchestra of the Jerusalem Temple that the Psalms allude to; while the more puritanical insist on plainsong, eschewing even polyphony.

Who travels to Heaven? The dead, mostly, on their final journey, wait with their passports at the gate, hoping to receive a residence permit. Prophets go there to ask questions and take orders: ancient Israel has about forty we know of because they left writings that were accepted into the canon or are otherwise mentioned in Scripture, and some went to Heaven or saw it. Probably many more are unrecorded, since prophecy was quite common—there was a place in Jerusalem you could go to be enraptured if you wished—and few put brush to papyrus after the trip. There are mystics hoping for an ecstatic experience, a fulfillment of their faith, even an erotic union with the Divine. Again, considering the numbers who have thronged mystical orders over the centuries, we know of only a few from texts. Then there are the

frequent fliers, the shamans: with the help of drugs, drums, chants, and other techniques they go to the Otherworld for practical purposes— to obtain useful knowledge for their communities, to assist the sick, to deal with divinities involved in earthly affairs. They go back and forth more than anybody else, on business visas. Their drums often have maps of the place. Like all successful businessmen, they know how to communicate without a phrase book: shamans of the Hindu Kush region whose native language is Burushaski, for instance, display an uncanny proficiency in the unrelated Indo-European Shina speech. They also have associates up (or, out) there: animal and spirit familiars to help out on trips. A study of Tibetan Buddhists calls them “civilized shamans” and that is a good designation for a highly literate tradition of immense philosophical sophistication that employs all the panoply of shamanistic spirit travel. So it is no surprise that there is a Tibetan guide to the intermediate states of the afterlife, the *Bardo Thodol*, which in English is translated imprecisely *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* on analogy with the well-known ancient Egyptian work. The latter inspired *The Western Lands* of the American writer William S. Burroughs—a brilliant guidebook for the otherworld traveler of the present age.

The word trip will have a special resonance for people of my generation and conjure up vivid memories. American young people of the 1960s employed various methods, most involving what the Food and Drug Administration calls controlled substances, to take very uncontrolled trips. A bad trip left the traveler in much the same state as the companions of rabbi Akiva who went mad, or became heretics, or died. But tripping to Heaven for the merely curious did not begin with LSD. Lucian of Samosata, a second-century satirist author and playwright who grew up among speakers of Syriac, Parthian, and Armenian and wrote in Greek, has the curious adolescent hero of his *Menippus* hook up with an enterprising Zoroastrian priest named Mithrobarzanes who promises to take him to heaven and hell and back and has him perform all sorts of ascetic exercises in preparation. He might also have taken *mang*, the hallucinogen employed by the seer Jamaspa at the court of Vishtaspa in Zarathustra’s day and by the righteous Viraz, who undertook the dangerous journey in a time of universal doubt and despond in order to bring back to the Iranians the assurance that their path, the way of Zarathustra and Ahura Mazda, was right. One can add to this list accidental travelers: in recent years narrators of near death experiences

have made tidy fortunes describing how they walked through tunnels to the light, meeting much-missed loved ones before being sent back to serve out the rest of their earthly sentence.

How does one get to heaven? For the Zoroastrians and Muslims, it is a bridge over an abyss; another way is ascent, on a ladder or stair. The chief obstacle is what is in between our earth and heaven above. Between heaven and earth is the air, the intermediate space called in Indic *antariksha* ("dominion of between"); in Armenian, *anjrapet* ("not-water-dominion"). Christians populate it with demons, and it is a place of danger. One can climb a ladder. The Greek saint who had a vision of this, St. John Climacus (that is, of the *climax*, "ladder"), beheld demons at every rung trying to drag the traveler down with various temptation; angels try to assist the worthy. The Hebrew for a ladder is *sullam*, the word used of Jacob's Ladder; and the Ethiopic is *ma'areg*; from the latter Christian culture was loaned Arabic *mi'raj*, for the Prophet's night journey. The word *sullam* is used as well in Islamic texts; but it is the former term that has yielded "mirage", the English word for a deceptive vision that evaporates as you approach it. The Spanish Catholic mystic, San Juan de la Cruz, whose family were converted Jews, employs the ladder in his great poem. Perhaps he knew the earlier Hebrew text of the eleventh-century Spanish Jewish poet Moshe ben Ya'aqov Ibn Ezra: *Heqitsoti tenumat ra'ayonai/ Le-yashen ta'avat nafshi v-'einai./ Ve-tarti kholfot ha-zman be-libi/ Le-hashmi'a 'atidotav le-aznai... Akhapes bo khaddar hokhma ve-a'al/ be-li sullam elei ginat 'adanai*. "I roused my thoughts from their slumber/ To put to sleep the desire of my (lower) soul and eyes./ And I turned over in my heart the changes of time/ To let my ears hear the things to come... I shall seek in Him the chamber of wisdom and ascend/ Without a ladder to the gardens of my Edens." The pious man, the Rabbis say, has a ladder in his inner room: that is, a means of ascent to heaven within his heart.¹

Another means of travel is a bridge spanning the interval between worlds. Zoroastrians believe that the soul on the fourth morning after death ascends on the

¹ See S. Solis Cohen and H. Brody, *Selected Poems of Moses ibn Ezra*, Philadelphia, PA: Jewish Publication Society, 1934, pp. 6-9; and V.A. Altmann, "The Ladder of Ascension," in *Studies in Mysticism and Religion presented to Gershom G. Scholem*, Jerusalem, Israel: Magnes Press, 1967, pp. 1-32.

rays of the rising sun to the mountain of judgment (Middle Persian *chagad i dadig*) and begins to cross the Bridge of the Separator (*chinvato peretu* in Avestan). For the righteous it is a safe nine spear-lengths in width; but for the damned it narrows to the sharp edge of the blade of a sword and the doomed plummet through the air into hell. On the famous Wirkak sarcophagus, made for the tomb of a Sogdian communal leader (*sapao*) in China, there is a roiling sea beneath the bridge from which the horrible fanged jaws of monsters rear up in hungry anticipation. When the bas-relief was discovered, I was among several scholars who immediately connected it to the description of the soul's peril in the Parthian Manichaean funerary hymns *Angad Roshman* and *Huyadagman* published by Boyce and revised by Sundermann. The third-century Sasanian high priest Kartir, a foe of Mani, induced an out-of-body *psychanodia* in which he crossed the bridge and confronted a leonine monster on it. So there was some variation in the way Iranians of the pre-Islamic era, whether they were Zoroastrians or Manichaeans, imagined the perilous experience of crossing the bridge between the worlds. The journey might be made after death or as a shamanistic traveler in life: either way, it was perilous, and accomplishing it was proof of the pilgrim's piety and bravery. Islam borrowed the myth of the Zoroastrian bridge of the separator, making it the thickness of a hair; and the Armenians, who had once been Zoroastrians themselves, adopted as Christians the Islamic image in their folk beliefs as the *maze kamurj*, "the bridge made of (a single strand of) hair".

Various activities take place in Heaven. Travelers arrive and make their way through the halls of the palace, one by one, trying to maintain their sanity. The arriving souls of the dead are offered local basil and butter or munch on the box lunches thoughtfully deposited in their tombs and pyramids. They unpack their huge trunks full of musical instruments, terracotta horses, servants, and carriages (all of which stretch and spring to life), and count their money, subtracting, if they are Greek the obol they have paid Charon for the ferry crossing of the Styx. Heaven's angelic bureaucracy is large. Even in the timelessness of eternity it takes a while to rummage through books of judgment, sort out entry visas, supervise events on earth, and report to superiors. Alasdair Gray's novel *Lanark* is a modern satire on the bureaucratic tangles of the otherworld. The emperor himself, God, head of the pyramidal heavenly corporation, sits on a throne and several orders of angels and mystics sing His praises.

And what is He himself doing? Genesis and the Qur'an agree that He created the universe by an utterance: His thought and act are one. But the Qur'an observes that God is of such a kind that when he decides on a matter He says "Be" and it is (*kun, fa yakunnu*). His language has a special power: words really are deeds, at least when He is talking. (He teaches with a pen, qalam, too: the divine language has a system of writing.) But what is striking about Divine grammar here is the use of the present tense. It prompts a question: Is God still creating, or was Genesis a one-off? Was there one big bang or are there many? Parallel universes and multiple dimensions? Is he the *deus otiosus* of the Deists, a retired God done with doing, just tinkering now and then with the cosmic clock He made to keep it running? A traveler preparing to visit Heaven may ponder these questions for quite practical reasons: the Jewish Kabbalists who used to go there studied not only *Ma'aseh Merkava*, the Work of the (Divine) Chariot, which deals with where He sits and how to get there, but *Ma'aseh Bereshith*, the Work of Genesis, and *Sefer Yetzira*, the Book of Creation, both of which are about what He did, or still does. Part of their technique of travel was psychotropic: they hyperventilated and chanted repetitive mantras based on permutating patterns of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet. Shamans do much the same, speeding the process (they do this for a living and with lots of customers time is money) by adding drugs, from the *mang* of the ancient Iranians and the *amanita muscaria* or fly agaric mushroom of the Siberians to the *ayahuasca*, peyote, and psilocybin of the Americas. Perhaps the ancient Israelites had similar drugs: the visionary prophet Ezekiel mentions *peneg*, which could be *bangha*, hemp. This is all standard stuff, on the level of the advice in a Lonely Planet guide. But let us focus on the issue of Creation. The Rabbis also made golems.

What is a golem? According to some cosmological systems condemned as heretical by a triumphant Christianity, God did not create the world *ex nihilo*, from nothing, but from pre-existing undifferentiated matter, *hyle* in Greek. According to one strand of cosmological speculation that took hold in the Balkans, God stared at the ocean, the primordial abyss, and was at a loss about how to make the world. A duck named Satanael, that is, the devil with the divine suffix El, "God", tacked on, cf. Michael, Gabriel, Raphael, Uriel and the rest, helpfully plunged down to the bottom of the bottomless and brought up some mud— some hyle, that is— for God to work

with. There is a sort of parallel to this myth that was current among Zoroastrians that we know about through contemptuous references to it in Armenian and Manichaean literature: Ahura Mazda was at a loss as to how to create light till a demon named Mahmi showed him. So a golem is an artificial man one makes from an inert lump of clay— *golem* is the rough Hebrew equivalent of *hyle*, raw material— and animates by employing complex rituals, perambulations, recitations of complex alphabetic patterns. The most famous historical, or, one should say, legendary golem is the one Rabbi Loew made in Prague to protect his fellow Jews from attackers motivated by the infamous blood-libel— and to help him out around the house. If monsters and robots did not become unmanageable or go berserk we would not bother to compose stories about them; and Rabbi Loew's had to be put down and disassembled. The pieces are supposedly in the attic of the ancient Prague synagogue. Pure science fiction; but the great Israeli scholar of Jewish mysticism Gershom Scholem argued that some accounts of the ancient mystics actually trying to make these Frankensteins *avant la lettre* are true. Maybe in altered states of consciousness they even believed for a time that they had succeeded. As the writer Michael Chabon explains, "The ritual itself was the point of the exercise: performing it... would induce a kind of ecstatic state, as the adept assumed a privilege ordinarily reserved for God above: the making of a world. It was analogical magic: as the Kabbalist is to God, so is a golem to all creation: a model, a miniature replica, a mirror— like the novel— of the world."¹ The implication of the practice is that God is still making worlds. The traveler to Heaven will see this happening and ought to prepare himself by learning something about it, if only better to appreciate the spectacle, to get the most out of his encounter with God the Creator.

The Book of Creation mentioned above, *Sefer Yetsira*, is a very concise treatise— an outline or sketch, almost— of fewer than ten pages, on two subjects. The first is the contraction of the Divine essence away from an infinitely small point and the emanation of ten quanta, or atoms, or spheres, or counters of Divine energy and qualities— the *sephiroth*— into it. These are linked together by the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet, each forming a pathway, to form a pattern, a matrix of existence, that is simultaneously the Tree of Life that grew in Eden and suffuses the living

¹ Michael Chabon, "The Recipe for Life", *Maps and Legends*, San Francisco: McSweeney, 2008, p. 164.

worlds, the body of the Primordial Man Adam Kadmon that enables us to understand the physiology of golems, and Jacob's Ladder— the vehicle of ascent and descent from Heaven. They are abstract qualities, static directions, and motions all at once.¹ The ten *sephiroth* are also— since Divine essence can be made different things and kinds of things at once— the ten dimensions: North, South, East, and West (or in Greek, Adam again, formed of *Anatole* (East), *Dysis* (West), *Arktos* (North) and *Mesembria* (South)— a nifty cosmological acronym); up and down; beginning and end; and good and evil. In the cosmic scheme, good and evil are just... directions. The other half of the text has two wheels moving in opposite directions, each with the 22 letters on it, forming 231 possible bilateral roots mechanically. Meanings are assigned to these arbitrarily, resolving in one stroke, as the great historian of Kabbalah Professor Joseph Dan of the Hebrew University once observed, the problem of the relation of the signifier to the signified. Although the text of *Sefer Yetsira*, only a few pages in length in all, may be witness to a large and long tradition of cosmology— the snow-capped, miniscule acme, as it were, of a giant mountain of linguistic and mathematical speculation hidden from us by the clouds of time— it still stands strangely and starkly alone in Jewish thought. That is in contrast to the analogous corpus of Indian tradition on *mantra* and *yantra* or the huge library of commentary in China on the triadic and hexagrammatic system of 64 permutations of the binary system of broken and solid lines of the *I Ching* and the creative action of Yin and Yang in the wheel of being (cf. the two wheels of the *Sefer Yetsira*, perhaps). The isolation and esoteric status of the Jewish text contrasts with the centrality and visibility of these systems in India and China and allows one to hazard the suggestion, at least, that Israel might have received the system, unique and exotic in its own milieu, or been inspired to shape it, from another culture where it was commonplace. This tantalizing hypothesis need not worry the traveler to Heaven; but wherever in Asia he hails from it would seem that a little knowledge of math and physics (and perhaps harmonics, too) will go a long way to helping him speak the idiom of Heaven,

¹ T.S. Eliot in the poem "Burnt Norton" of *Four Quartets* evokes the ten stages of the dark night of the soul of St. John of the Cross as *sephiroth*, though it is unlikely he knew them as such, much less anything about Kabbalah or the *Sefer Yetsira*. "The detail of the pattern is movement./ As in the figure of the ten stairs." "Here the impossible union/ Of spheres of existence is actual." See also Helen Gardner, *The Composition of "Four Quartets"*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 89 and n.

a powerful one in which words do not just denote things, but create them. .

It is possible that one may be understood speaking earthly languages in Heaven, though preferably the sacred ones: Sanskrit, Hebrew, Arabic. Dr. John Dee, court astrologer to Queen Elizabeth, used a scrying stone and chart, and the assistance of a decidedly shady Welsh amanuensis, to converse with angels in a rather cacophonous language and crabbed, inelegant script— both hitherto wholly unknown— that he called Enochian, after an enigmatic early figure in Genesis who went to Heaven without dying first. Arriving and realizing one has to know Enochian would be an unpleasant surprise; but fortunately there are dictionaries available in the better occult bookshops. Musing about the heavenly idiom is invariably involved with speculation about the primal language, the speech of Paradise. For all men spoke only one before the power of Heaven shattered the tower of Babel (which had been erected in order to get there: skyscraper as ladder). The dispersion of men and the confusion of tongues leading to the present plethora of languages ensued. This aetiological myth expresses a longing, not only to know our beginnings, but to repair the sundered, to restore to our factious race an imagined and lost human unity and harmony. For early Christians, Hebrew was the primal speech; but what with anti-Semitism and the growth of local nationalisms, other languages became candidates for official status. Some *philosophes* of the eighteenth century *Verklärung* nominated Chinese, because of its melodic tonal aspect and monosyllabic structure, both of which they regarded as aspects of a primordial linguistic capacity. And it employed hieroglyphics, the most ancient kind of writing. So it had to be first. Why not? *Xuexi Hanyu!*

Heaven's inhabitants might be curious to know about the traveler's home. Americans like to say that our political differences end at the water's edge; and it may be prudent for the visitor to Heaven to present a positive image of the Earth's friendly relations and shared values. A good way to do this is to stress that the relation between heaven and earth is not of competing tribes claiming special relationships but of a moral reciprocity that harmoniously extends over all. "As above, so below," declares the Western Hermetic maxim. The chapter "Inward Traveling" of the *Guanzi* affirms this: "For the heavens (*tian*) the ruling [principle] is to be regular (*zheng*): for the earth (*di*), the ruling principle is to be level (*ping*)... If you can be regular and tranquil,

only then can you be stable (*ding*).” David Pankenier, in a study of the beginnings of Chinese writing, proposes that the latter word, meaning also “right”, would have been written originally with a homonymous glottograph consisting of a simple square.¹ These geometric metaphors of rectitude have, it would seem, a geographic implication, too: both Heaven and Earth have four sides each. Heaven and Earth are complementary in a marital and conjugal sense, also. In the earliest recorded Armenian religious hymn, Heaven, Earth, and the Sea are all in labor to give birth to the fiery Zoroastrian divinity Vahagn (Avestan Verethraghna). The poem contains an intricate play on the etymologically related words for Heaven (*erkin*) and Earth (*erkir*), both of which contain the common root *erk-*, meaning “two”, from Proto-Indo-European **dw-*; the word-play is extended logogrammatically in the hymn to the homonymous verb *erkner*, “labored”, to suggest that Heaven and Earth have lain together for the god to be born out of the womb-like sea. The linguist Luc Baronian has proposed that Armenian *erkat*’, “iron”, which seems early to have been loaned into neighboring languages, was formed with the *-at*’ suffix one finds, for instance, in *arcat*’, “silver”, from the *erk-* root. One observes that this would accord with the cosmological conceptions of ancient cultures to Armenia’s west and east— as is often the case, with Armenia presenting a strikingly individual reflex of these concepts. Heaven as iron: Iranian and Old Indic *asman*, “sky, heaven”, cognate to Greek *akme* “stony mountain summit” and Russian *kamen*’ “stone”, implies Heaven was a dome or level of adamantine rock; in the *Gathas* of Zarathustra, Ahura Mazda clothes himself in “the hardest stones” (*aseno khraozhdishteng*). The word for “stone” becomes “iron” in later Iranian. This is undoubtedly analogous to the sky-mantle found in other mythologies, notably in the cosmic Psalm 104 of the Bible.

For the Iranians, the hard stone of heaven was perceived originally as an egg-shaped shield enclosing the created world, with the sea filling the lower part and the earth a disk floating upon it. When the evil Ahriman assaulted the cosmos, the Pahlavi *Bundahishn*, or Book of Creation explains, he punctured the egg from below in the shape of a snake and was then trapped in the center of the earth, which fled to form

¹ See David W. Pankenier, “Getting ‘Right’ with Heaven and the Origins of Writing in China,” in Li Feng and David P. Branner, eds., *Writing and Literacy in Early China*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2011, pp. 41, 49.

the mountains, the space vacated becoming the hollow funnel of hell. So the shield that protected the world from Ahriman is now his prison. The Manichaeans, who inverted this dualist cosmology in such a way as to suggest that the evil spirit, not the good God, fashioned the world, regarded the stone or iron sky as a prison wall for us. We are spirits in the material world, as the English rock band *The Police* sing. Our task is liberation: Mani's Parthian followers appropriated the Buddhist Sanskrit term *punya*, "merit": by accumulation of *pun*, which to them was not transcendent morality but just a kind of rocket fuel, we attain the escape velocity to crash through the guards' barriers and travel to the remote heaven (*parnirvan*, from Buddhist *parinirvana*) of the true and alien God, who has nothing to do with the evil of materiality. That is a rather sardonic understanding of virtue; and accordingly, the journey to heaven for the Manichaean is not so much an ascent as an escape. Clearly, Manichaeans and other Gnostics when they want to see Heaven have a different destination in mind than Jews, Christians, Muslims, and Zoroastrians. Or maybe not, and we all go to the same place and just don't know it. Once upon a time, an angel conducting a visitor around Heaven asked him to be quiet while passing one particular cloud with people on it playing harps. Why? he asked. Oh, said the angel, That's the place for the Catholics. They think they're the only ones here.

The first man in space, the Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, dutifully reported to Moscow that he saw neither God nor angels up there. Imagine there's no heaven, sang John Lennon some years later— above us, only sky. Christ taught, according to Luke, that the Kingdom of Heaven is within you: don't look upwards, look into your heart. A great Chinese poet, calligrapher, and statesman experienced the same insight, though he expressed in an intriguingly different way: he once mused that we look up at the stars and say that is Heaven; but those in the stars look towards us and say that is Heaven, so surely we are in Heaven. Chairman Mao Zedong's verse suggests it is our responsibility to make life on earth socially, politically, economically like what we imagine the happy state of heaven to be. This takes the ancient ideas of what is regular, level, and right, and adds to them an imperative of ethical action. Looking up from Heaven, the traveler may see our blue orb of jasp in the blackness of space, and realize it is time to come home.

You are returning from Heaven, and like any tourist you would like to bring back a souvenir. The English visionary poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge once mused: What if a man dreamed of Eden and awoke holding a flower from there? Yes, he replied wryly to his own question. Yes, and what then? The science fiction writer H.G. Wells, who visited the young Soviet Union and reported “I have seen the future and it works,” wrote *The Time Machine*, about a future that did not work. In the year 802,701 the surface of the earth is a garden inhabited by the beautiful, indolent Eloi, who are fed, clothed, and housed by the ugly subterranean working class of Morlocks, who climb up the wells from the machinery of their caverns to take a few Eloi to eat. The time traveler saves a lovely Eloi maiden, first from drowning, then from hungry Morlocks. She loves him and gives him a flower. When he escapes back to the past, to late-Victorian London, and the time machine flickers into solidity in his laboratory he finds himself still clutching the blossom, answering Coleridge’s question. Wells’ Paradise is distant in time; and more recent science fiction offers the same answer with a trip instead through space. The American *Battlestar Galactica* imagines humans from a distant galaxy who have created cybernetic slaves to support their luxurious way of life. The slave robots, endowed with feelings, rebel and destroy the planet: the surviving men take off across the cosmos to find the true earth where, according to an ancient myth, the human race originated—our world. But they land in empty ruins: we have already destroyed this Eden and all its inhabitants in a nuclear holocaust. What then? asked Coleridge. The answer is: It doesn’t matter. Human beings have created both heaven and hell, and the most beautiful flower means nothing if it does not grow in a garden where all of us are equally the gardeners, living in a just society, performing meaningful labor, enjoying together the fruits of all the material and spiritual culture of the planet. Some decades ago, Chairman Mao spoke to the miners of Anyang. He drew the first character, shaped somewhat like the Roman capital letter I, of the word *gongzuo*, “labor”. The upper and lower horizontal bars, he explained, are Heaven and Earth. The straight and true vertical line that supports heaven, that makes the cosmos whole, is the strong back of the worker.

I began this excursion through heaven with the invocation of a fiction. But as Brian Boyd has argued in his work on the genesis of stories, fiction is an evolutionary adaptation. Humans are awkward bipeds with a long adolescence: we don’t run as fast

as tigers and we don't acquire intuitive survival skills as soon as wolves. It is only by dreaming and imagining, of creating unreal situations and crafting solutions for them, that we survive. Creative work, writing stories, painting art, is part of the labor whereby we survive and evolve. The anthropologist Weston La Barre called this lifelong process neoteny: we retain an awkward adolescence throughout our lives, always learning, always trying out the new. Heaven is just such a useful fiction, a meditation, like Thomas More's *Utopia*, on how to make life here better and fairer, as well as a reflection on how things are, what we like best. The dystopias of Wells, of the spacemen of battle star *Galactica*, are equally warnings about how these heavens, if we are not careful, can become hells.

When I was a boy my father gave me a book he had enjoyed when he was little. *Shvambrania*, a memoir of childhood by the Soviet writer Lev Kassil, is named after an imaginary country the author and his little brother Oska invented in their childhood in the town of Pokrovsk on the Volga river. Meanwhile, Russia plunged into the First World War, then the Revolution and Civil War, and the Kassil family walked out of the old Russian Empire into the new Soviet Union as the book ended. Yes, and what then? I wrote a letter, rather a message in a bottle, to the Writers' Union— this was in 1962, in the midst of the Cuban crisis, and one might as well have been sending a message to the Moon— asking Kassil, wherever he was, whether he still played with *Shvambrania* and what language its people spoke. Some weeks later an envelope from Moscow with a big hammer and sickle arrived from the Moon, from the far galaxy, from the year 802,701, from Kassil. "Dear Jimmy," Kassil wrote, and I now paraphrase from memory, "as we make a new life which will be really better for everybody, the dream of *Shvambrania* that Oska and I played has become real. The *Shvambranians* used to speak only Russian; but as the book has been translated into many languages they have become polyglots, speaking many languages. The *Shvambranian* admiral Ardelar Keys had a ship; and I have a boat named after it, which I gave to the cadets of a school on the Moscow river. But I kept the *Shvambranian* flag on it, which I now dip three times for you." The letter, my flower from the future, was sealed with a cork stamp of the arms of *Shvambrania*.

We have taken quite a trip together, talking about golems and cash, lunches

and banquets, gardens, palaces, songs and orchestras, exotic languages, cosmic geometries, mountains, bridges, ladders, and sea monsters with snapping teeth. The traveler to heaven is a polyglot, like the modern Shvambrianian: he speaks Armenian and Greek, Hebrew and Arabic, Persian and Sanskrit. And he has to know a bit about Buddhism and Confucianism, Judaism and Islam, Zoroastrianism and Hinduism. Many dreams of many people across the ages and the lands. "If you dream alone, it's just a dream," says a Brazilian folk song. "If you dream together, it's reality."¹ As the First World War of the last century was grinding towards its end my grandfather, a working class printer born a slum in lower Manhattan, joined some other people like the journalist John Reed, who was to write *Ten Days that Shook the World* and rest in the Kremlin wall. The Communist Party of the USA and the people who as "fellow travelers" supported some of its aims, shared with revolutionaries around the world the dream of making a heaven on earth for the dispossessed and the exploited. In the decades that followed, they were pioneers in the struggle for civil rights for Black people. Many of them fell in the desperate and lonely battle against fascism in Spain. They joined the fight against the imperialist exploitation of China. I grew up with a photo Grandpa had in his study of Dr. Norman Bethune, who came to participate in the liberation struggle of this country.

I'm very honored to be here. After the cataclysms of the last two centuries, China's present successes, achieved through hard work and intelligence alone—without colonial rapacity, without natural resources plundered and sold—bring happiness to my heart. Weary cynics where I come from used to say anybody who is not a Communist before age thirty has no heart; but anybody who is, after age thirty, has no head. At sixty I fear I'm still like a child, very much a neotenic dreamer, still awkward and learning, taking trips and having a hard time keeping a straight face. Perhaps a bit like your scholar poets of the Tang dynasty, living in the mountains and getting drunk with their friends. But I really do hope that in this vexed world we will renew our collective commitment to the values and labor of world culture, that we will all dream together, our collective work building the only heaven there is, right here, in this palace, this garden, this holy mountain called planet earth. I'm happy to be your fellow traveler on this trip. So in two of the languages of Heaven, to the men

¹ P.M., *Bolo'bolo*, New York: Semiotexte, 1985, p. 1.

and women whose rectitude supports the sky, *Proletarier fun ale lender, fereynikt zikh!*
That is Yiddish for *Quan shijie wuchanzhe lianhe, Qilai!* Workers of the world, unite!
And, *Zhonghua renmin gongheguo, Wan sue!* Long live the People's Republic of
China. God bless you.

Plates.

1 and 2. The Creation of the world and Eden, from the medieval Sephardic Haggadah of Sarajevo.

3 and 4. Anselm Kiefer, *Shevirat ha-kelim* ("Smashing of the vessels", the emanation of the world) and *Sefer Hechaloth* ("The Book of the [Heavenly] Mansions").

5. The six monks at the gates of Eden, Kaffa Lives of the Fathers (Armenian Patriarchate of St. James' MS 285).

6. Detail of Eden and Alexander's wall from the map of Andrea Bianco.

7. Heaven, from a MS of the '*Amida* ("Standing" or "Eighteen Blessings") prayer, by J.R. Russell.



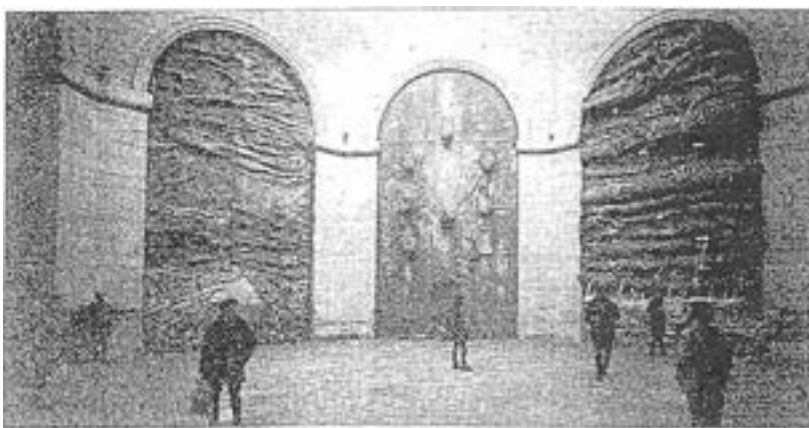
Plate 1.

Plate 2.



Plate

3.

*Shevirat Ha-Kelim*, Chapelle de la Salpêtrière, Paris

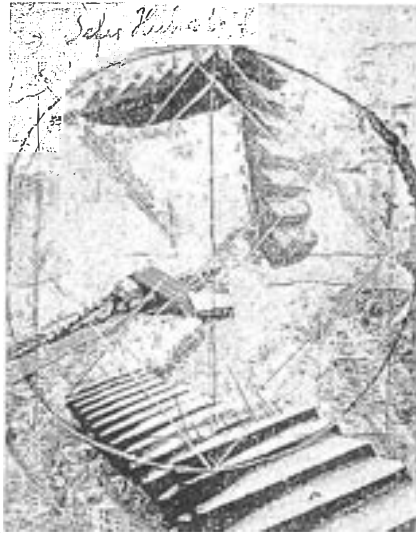


Plate 4.



Plate 5. 7. The Six Monks in the Garden of Eden

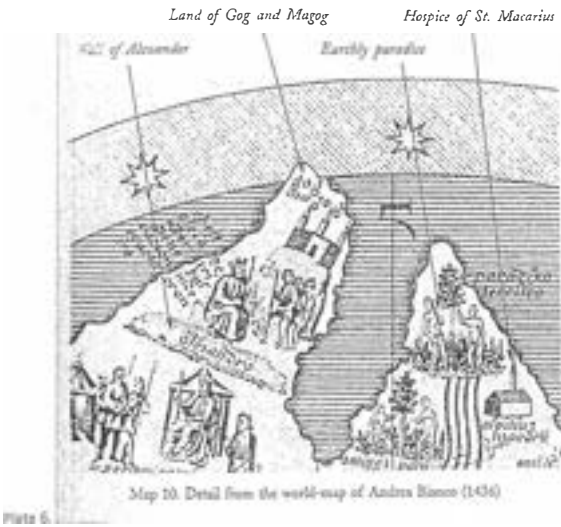


Plate 7.



THE INTERRUPTED FEAST.

By James R. Russell,
Harvard University.

"You bring forth a great feast, including a magnificent table, chairs, service, and food and drink. The feast takes 1 hour to consume, and the beneficial effects do not set in until this hour is over. Every creature partaking of the feast is cured of all diseases, sickness, and nausea; becomes immune to poison for 12 hours; and gains 1d8 temporary hit points + 1 point per two caster levels (maximum + 10) after imbibing the nectar-like beverage that is part of the feast. The ambrosial food that is consumed grants each creature that partakes a +1 morale bonus on attack rolls and Will saves and immunity to fear effects for 12 hours.

If the feast is interrupted for any reason, the spell is ruined and all effects of the spell are negated."

— "Heroes' Feast, Conjunction (Creation)": instructions for a computer game.

Philip of Macedon had a concubine named Olympias. The story goes that an Egyptian priest named Nectanebos, or perhaps the god Zeus Ammon, fathered a boy on her. Philip cast her out after some years and married his sister Cleopatra instead. The boy, by now a champion athlete, charged into the wedding feast and made a cutting remark; a joker named Lysius looked at the youth and added that he hoped Philip's next son might look like Philip. The young man, enraged, killed the jester with a goblet. Philip drew his sword but stumbled over his couch: the youth, mocking him, seized the sword and had at the guests, wounding most of them. It was the wedding brawl of the Centaurs and Lapiths all over again, or Odysseus and Telemachus massacring the suitors of Penelope as they dined, comments the narrator. Alexander the Great, in the *Romance of Ps.-Callisthenes*, had spoiled the party in truly classic fashion. The story was popular in Armenian translation and has echoes in later literature.¹

¹ A.M. Wolohojian, tr. from Arm., *The Romance of Alexander the Great by Pseudo-Callisthenes*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1969, pp. 41-42; on the tradition, see J.R. Russell, "The Mother of All Heresies: A Late Mediaeval Armenian Text on the *Yuskarparik*," *REArm* 24, 1993, pp. 273-293; and "Sasanian Yarns: The Problem of the Centaurs Reconsidered," *Atti dei Convegni Lincei*, 201, *La Persia e Bisanzio*, Roma: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 2004, pp. 411-438. This paper evolved during a seminar on Iranian apocalyptic at Harvard in the Fall Term of 2014 with Walter Scott Chahanovich, PhD candidate in the NELC department and friend, to whom I am grateful for many stimulating discussions and learned insights.

Dining, feasting, was and has always remained a sanctified activity in most human cultures, with special rituals and etiquette abandoned in many other areas and customs of modern life. In the Near East in particular, rules of hospitality so deeply rooted as to define the quality of human character itself form a protective ring around banqueting couch, dinner table, and seat cushion. The feast recapitulates and reaffirms the social order; and violation of its rules is social chaos. The order of precedence to be followed in seating arrangements was so strict in ancient Armenia that it was set forth in a special text, the *Gahnamak* or "Book of Places" that specified the place of each *naxarar*, or hereditary dynast, in the *xoran*, the banqueting pavilion of the king. In the *History* of P'awstos Buzand, the fourth-century Sasanian king Šābuhr II insults his guest in Persia, the Armenian king Aršak II, by seating him at the foot of the table at a feast: the Armenian disrupts the meal with a torrent of abuse, declaring the Persian king an upstart and usurper and ordering him to yield the head of the table to him, since it is his, Arsacid, line that are the legitimate rulers. Aršak is arrested on the spot and bundled away in chains to languish and die in the dreaded prison called the Fortress of Oblivion.² The Sasanian, at the behest of his Magian advisors, had earlier sprinkled Armenian soil under where the Armenian king was seated in the pavilion, hence Aršak's candor—the premise being that one speaks boldly and truthfully on native ground. Violation of the rules that guarantee the safety of a dinner guest and the sanctity of the occasion is so grave an offense that Armenian even has a special compound word which might properly be applied to the Persian's behavior, *selananeng* "being deceitful at table".³ One does not interrupt a feast; but one also does not violate its rules.

And there is also an order of the activities to which feasting belongs. In ancient Iran, the customary and cherished occupations of noblemen and kings form a rhyming pair, Persian *razm ō bazm*, "war and feasting", **in that order**. The former word is found in Arm. *pate-razm*, "war"; the latter, in *bazm-oc* "feasting couch". One went on the hunt, or to war, and then returned to feast: on Armenian funerary bas-reliefs the deceased is shown as an armed horseman, diadem of victory or blessing or both in hand, arriving at a banquet.⁴ That is the natural order of things, as much

² N.G. Garsoïan, tr. and comm., *The Epic Histories (Buzandaran Patmut'iwkn')*, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 8, Cambridge, MA, 1989, IV.iii (pp. 169-173).

³ See J.R. Russell, "Two Notes on Biblical Tradition and Native Epic in the *Book of Lamentation* of St. Grigor Narekac'i," *REArm* 22, 1990-91, pp. 135-45.

⁴ One such bas-relief is discussed in J.R. Russell, "On The Image of Zoroaster," lecture at the conference "Looking Back: Zoroastrian Identity Formation Through Recourse To The Past," School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 11-12 October 2013, in connection with the opening of the exhibition "The Everlasting

in the hereafter as in this world. When the order is reversed: when a feast is interrupted and the host, usually a nobleman and hero, is called off to fight— it signifies a moment of particular crisis, often a turning point that results in death. This study explores two such instances of what one may define as the *topos* of the interrupted feast in Armenian literature, both enshrined in highly ritualized genres— elegy within a lament, and heroic epic narrative within a chronicle. Both come from the same region and period: the Armeno-Syrian borderlands in the Crusader period, spanning the 10th-12th centuries. One text celebrates the heroism of a scion of the ancient Pahlawuni noble house; the other issues from the pen of a Pahlawuni patriarch of the Armenian Church. I compare both to a third and undated text, the folk ballad of prince Aslan, which sets out the *topos* in a stark, elemental way and elaborates it, engaging other psychological and spiritual themes with resonances in Ancient Greece and Buddhist India— one recalls that Armenia is at the midpoint between those western and eastern exemplars of the types of Indo-European poetics and thought.⁵ The ballad of Aslan was recorded in modern times from oral informants; but some form of it might have been a part of a heroic epic cycle of the heroes and princes of Sophene, Arm. Cop'k', in Western Armenia: an analogous tale supplies an ending to the Byzantine Akritic cycle that took shape in nearby Melitene (modern Malatya).

The Catholicos of the Armenian Church, St. Nersēs Šnorhali (ca. 1102-1173), wrote in the middle of the path of his life the *Lament* over the fall of the ancient Syrian Christian city of Edessa (modern Urfa, in Turkey) to Muslim invaders. *Oĥ Edesioy* belongs, then, to the Silver, or Cilician, Age of Armenian literature.⁶ Its language, though still a Classical idiom, is syntactically light and flowing; and the vocabulary is leavened by contemporary expressions and loans from the languages

Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination," Brunei Gallery, SOAS, in press in Sarah Stewart, ed., *Proceedings* (2014).

⁵ On the method of "triangulation" of an Armenian mythological theme or type between Greece and India, see J.R. Russell, "The Armenian Shrines of the Black Youth (*t'ux manuk*)," *Le Muséon* 111, fasc. 3-4, 1998, pp. 319-43.

⁶ Manik Mkrtč'yan, ed., Nersēs Šnorhali, *Oĥ Edesioy*, Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1973. The text was translated and annotated by Theo Van Lint, "Lament on Edessa by Nersēs Šnorhali," in K. Ciggaar and H. Tenle, eds., *East and West in the Crusader States*, II, Leuven: Peeters, 1999, pp. 49-105. All translations here are my own. For a study of St. Nersēs' life, works, use of pre-Christian motifs, attitudes towards Islam, and experience of its assaults see J.R. Russell, "The Credal Poem *Hawatov xostovanim* ("I confess in faith") of St. Nerses the Graceful," in J.J. van Ginkel et al., eds., *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*, Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta 134, Leuven, 2005, pp. 185-236.

of neighboring peoples. But it is still steeped in the vivid imagery and energetic oral narrative patterns of Arsacid Armenia, and thus has roots in pre-Christian antiquity, in the culture and religion of the Arsacid Parthian dynasty in Iran (250 BC-226 AD) and Armenia (where the dynasty endured to AD 429). St. Nersēs belonged to the ancient noble house of the Pahlawuni—“Parthians”—from which St. Gregory the Illuminator, Armenia’s patron saint, had sprung; and one of his kinsmen, Gregory Magistros Pahlawuni (ca. 990-1059), a warrior, administrator, and secular scholar, had preserved in his *Letters* precious specimens of pre-Christian Armenian oral epic including an elegiac lament of king Artaxias I (Arm. Artašēs), which would date from some time after the death of that monarch in the mid-second century BC. It is thus not surprising that one finds an elegy replete with ancient native *topoi* in the *Lament*, as well as the expected Biblical images and citations of a work firmly rooted in the Christian faith and worldview.

Edessa, “daughter of the Parthians”, home of Abgar—the first Christian king—was called “the blessed city”. Literary Syriac was born there; but Armenians have since ancient times also regarded it (and, indeed, Abgar), as their own. It lies near Harran; and legend has it that Abraham underwent a trial by fire there at the hands of Nimrod and emerged victorious.⁷ Its fall in 1144 was a bitter blow and a dire portent of more disaster to come, as Christian power waned in the lands of the birth of the faith. Nersēs, who resided at Hromkla near Aintab, not at all far away, heard eyewitness accounts of the battle from his own kinsmen. The final section of the *Lament* is apocalyptic, a venomous denunciation of Islam and its founder Muhammad and a vengeful foretelling of the longed-for destruction of Mecca and the extermination of the Muslims. Islam had come on the Armenian scene with the seventh-century conquest of the capital, Dvin, and subsequent military occupation of the country by the Arabs and their clients, who ruled “Arminiya” from there and from Xlat’ (Ar. Aḥlat), on the northwest shore of Lake Van. The revolts of the ninth century, that of the mountaineers of Sasun in 840 in particular against the depredations of the Turkish general Bugha, led to the liberation of much of Armenia under the rule of the native Bagratid and Arçrunid dynasties.

Armenian visions of the end times in particular, and apocalyptic literature of the Christian East generally, were to draw upon the *Apocalypse* of pseudo-Methodius, which was most likely composed in the eighth century, at a time when the Aramean⁸ Christian community began to be seriously depleted by mass

⁷ See J.B. Segal, *Edessa, “The Blessed City”*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

⁸ I employ this useful term, which has recently been adopted as an official designation by the State of Israel, broadly to define the Church of Persia, Jacobite,

conversions to Islam. Unlike the Armenians, who compared themselves to the Maccabees—defenders of both a faith and a nation—the Arameans had no articulated national aspirations or sense of a secular identity that might complement their cohesion as a religious community, and, rather like the Copts in Egypt they were reduced to the permanent status of a tolerated but often precarious second-class minority in the Islamic world. Yet even though the vision of Nersēs deals with the situation of his own time and is to some extent informed by the tradition after ps.-Methodius, it also is suffused by strong patriotic themes independent of Christian ideology that express a hope of political, national liberation. And we may still discern, besides, some local and ancient affinities to Zoroastrian apocalyptic in the Armenian material. Some of this Iranian material is a substratum in tradition; and some of it is not so much loaned as simply parallel, for Iranians, too, had a national consciousness and martial mettle like that of the Armenians. They had to deal with the consequences of what was to them Arab aggression and oppression: in the Iranian case, the gradual conversion of the majority of the Persians to the new religion and the consequent degradation of the Zoroastrians in their own country.⁹ In the *Lament* of St. Nersēs (text p. 130, line 969) salvation takes a highly symbolic but also vividly concrete form, as the conquering Franks *Zk'arn glen zseworak, / jgen Karmir covun yatak*, "roll away the black-hued stone [i.e., the Ka'aba] / and cast it to the bottom of the Red Sea." One might compare to the image the assertion in the short ninth-century poem in Zoroastrian Book Pahlavi on the coming of the redeemer Wahrām ī Warzāwand (Bahram the Miracle-worker): *ān šāh Wahrām ī Warzāwand az dūdag ī Kayān be āwarēm kēn ī Tāziyān Čiyōn Rōdastahm āwurd gurz *dlz kēn ī gēhān a-šān mazgitihā frōd hilēm be nišānēm ātaxšān uzdeščārīhā be kanēm ud pāk kunēm az gēhān* "We will bring that Bahram the Miracle-worker from the house of the Kayanians for vengeance upon the Arabs like Rostam the mace-bearer, for *long (*darāz?*) vengeance upon the material world.

Chaldaean, "Nestorian", and other Christians of the Middle and Near East who employ(ed) in ritual and/or principally speak/spoke Syriac or other dialects of Aramaic.

⁹ On the elegy of Artaxias preserved by Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni, with comparison to a similar poetic composition in Middle English, see J.R. Russell, "Some Iranian Images of Kingship in the Armenian Artaxiad Epic," *REArm* 20, 1986-87, pp. 253-70. On Armenian apocalyptic in the eleventh century, see J.R. Russell, "Revelations of Darkness: Medieval Armenian Apocalyptic in the Epic of Sasun and the Visions of Yovhannēs Kozeṛn," *Journal of Armenian Studies* 6.1, 1998-99, pp. 3-15.

And then we will tear down the mosques and establish fire [temples]; we will dig up the shrines of idolatry and purify the earth [of them]..."¹⁰

It is noteworthy that Muslim apocalyptic also envisions the uprooting of the black stone of the Ka'aba at the end of time— but in this case it is not to be plunged into the sea, of course, but to be transported from Mecca to the Temple Mount at Jerusalem, joining the storied stone that the Dome of the Rock encloses. The "straight path" of the opening chapter of the Quran, derived from the Zoroastrian Bridge of the Separator (Pahlavi *čīnvād puhf*), is the road of the souls to judgment: here it will spring from mount Moriah, arching over the valley of Kidron.¹¹ This vision clearly derives from and builds upon the night journey of Muhammad from Arabia to Jerusalem and his ascension on the steed Buraq from the Rock on the Haram al-Sharif, the Noble Enclosure, into the empyrean: the *mi'rāj*. Under Byzantine rule that enclosure, the Temple Mount, had been left intentionally in ruins, its desolation a rebuke to the Jews, who were besides forbidden even to dwell within their holy city. But in the seventh century the Muslim Arabs welcomed the Children of Israel home, reverently cleaned and restored the Temple Mount, and built the beautiful Dome of the Rock there— not quite mosque, but not temple either, but a commemorative shrine of a universally sacred place. These pious constructions were a reproach to the Byzantines and other Christians (and it is to be recalled that the Armenian presence in Jerusalem was especially prominent); so perhaps Nersēs' hoped-for disposition of the Ka'aba was in part a delayed retort to the Muslims.

There is an additional layer of symbolism to the plunging of the Ka'aba specifically into the Red Sea. The latter is the closest body of water to Arabia and to Mecca in particular, to be sure; but it is pre-eminently, in Biblical terms, the sea that parted for Moses and then closed over the pursuing Egyptian host, drowning them. Christians regarded the crossing of Israel from slavery to freedom as a typological foreshadowing of Christ's baptism in the Jordan, which was to free mankind from the bondage of sin. A widespread legend, minutely studied in many publications by

¹⁰ The Pahlavi poem was published by H.W. Bailey, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971, pp. 195-196. I have re-transliterated the text and translated it slightly differently, and propose the reading of a *long* vengeance on the basis of Zarathustra's apocalyptic prophecy in the *Gāthās* of *daragham dragvō.dabyō rašō* "long destruction for the followers of the Lie" (Yasna 30.11).

¹¹ Oleg Grabar, *The Dome of the Rock*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006, p. 56.

Prof. Michael Stone of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem,¹² held that Adam and Eve after their expulsion from Eden were terrified at the setting of the Sun. Satan assured them that it would rise again in a few hours' time, provided Adam put his signature (*cheirographos* is the term from Greek employed in the title of the apocryphon) to a document in which our forefather was tricked into swearing fealty to the Prince of Darkness till the unborn experience birth and the undying suffer death. A watertight clause, one would think, but the despairing Adam accepted. In the end, though, the unborn and undying Christ, through His Nativity and Resurrection, outwitted the deceiver. Accordingly, the stone bearing the Cheirograph of Adam was imagined (and sometimes portrayed in illuminated manuscripts) as lying shattered—abrogated—at the bottom of the Jordan at the feet of Christ. There is sometimes also a drowned Egyptian charioteer; and this would be the vanquished Satan. Perhaps St. Nersēs intended a third typological layer, in which the Ka'aba was to be seen as the latter-day satanic cheirograph; and the Pharaonic warrior, as the Muslim invader. For after all, in the closely contemporary Armenian epic of Sasun the Mesopotamian home of the "idolatrour" Arabs is stubbornly identified as Məsər, that is, Mišr, "Egypt".

The general theme of the Pahlavi poem on Bahram the Miracle-worker is related closely to those of the longer apocalyptic texts *Ayādgār ī Jāmāspīg* and *Zand ī Wahman Yasn*, which, however ancient their origins, crystallized in the form we have in around the ninth century. They are set, in pseudepigraphical fashion, in the times of the prophet Zarathustra and, for all their detailed *vaticinatio ex eventu*, do not evoke the strikingly concrete, shocking image of the demolished mosques. The passage about the mosques mentions also shrines with idols. This could be merely a stylistic parallel embellished by archaism: the third century Sasanian high priests Tansar and Kartīr both boast—the first, in his famous Letter; the second, in inscriptions—of having put an end to the ostensible religious diversity of Arsacid society. Kartīr suppressed image-cults, whether these were the *bagīns* of Armenian and other Zoroastrians of the Parthian era, or the temples of Hindus in the domains of the King of Kings. Or the disdainful reference to idolatry may refer to the *buddharupas*—statues of the Buddha—in the Buddhist monasteries, *vihāras*. (Richard Bulliet long ago suggested that the oft-encountered New Persian toponym Nawbahār may refer to these.) Monumental Buddhas, such as the two carven in niches at Bamiyan, Afghanistan—in historical Bactria—were in plain view along the roads. The most likely derivation of New Persian *bot*, "idol", is simply from

¹² See Michael E. Stone, *Adam's Contract with Satan*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2002 (reviewed by this writer in *IJCT* 10.2 (Fall 2003), pp. 309-312.

"Buddha". And if texts may be further adduced as testimony in support of the existence of Buddhist establishments with their images, a number of Buddhist texts, such as the famous *Bilawhar and Bōdasaf*, to be considered presently, came into Arabic literature through Iran in the early Islamic period.

However it is also possible that the Pahlavi text may refer to the Muslims themselves as idolaters: in the Christian West, Muslims (called Mohammedans!) were believed to worship a golden image resembling the Roman god Mercury called a Mawmet, i.e., a "Mohammed"; and in the Armenian epic of Sasun, which crystallized between the ninth and twelfth centuries and bears traces of the events of the early Islamic era, the Armenian heroes are called *xač'apašt*, "worshippers of the Cross"; their Muslim enemies, *krapašt*, "idolaters"! These designations are of course manifestly unfair, if not also supremely ignorant, since Islam is uncompromisingly monotheistic and iconoclastic in a way Christianity is not. But most religious polemic would not exist if its authors were deeply learned and eirenic in spirit. So the *uzdēsčārīhā*, "idol-temples", may perhaps be a Zoroastrian addendum to the thick Christian dossier of slanderous apocalyptic invective that slanders Islam as idolatrous.

Before the vengeful and apocalyptic vision, though, is the long lament over the fall. Nersēs takes us on a melancholy tour, bewailing Jerusalem, then Rome, then Constantinople, then Alexandria and Antioch. With Edessa, the bird's eye visionary journey across seas and land, and ages of destruction and loss, has arrived close to home. So at that point there comes a short but powerful elegy for the lost homeland, the fabulous realm to the north: *Mec Hayk'*, Greater Armenia— and for its Arsacid kings and their noble and delightful way of life. Line 75, penned in faraway Cilicia to the south, "here on this underside of the world", invokes greater Armenia, the house of T'orgom (i.e., Biblical Togarmah), and the clan (*azg*) and offspring (*cnund*) of Japheth, where stood the "throne of the sons of the Parthians, the Arsacid kings" (*at'oš Part'ewazanc' t'agaworac' Aršakuni*) at the holy city of Ējmiacin (lit. "The Sole-Begotten Descended", called in the poem by its older, Arsacid name, Valaršapat, "City of (King) Vologases") and where the patriarchal line of St. Gregory the Illuminator, "son of the Parthian" (*Grigorios Part'ewazin*, line 83)— St. Nersēs' kin!— held sway. "But I ask, O desired one,/ Seeking answer to my case" (line 99) cries Nersēs— and then his elegiac litany begins:

Ayžm ur ē t'agn k'o zardī ew kam psakn hrašali?
Ur zardarank'n dšxoyi: harsin ordwoy t'agawori?
Ur patmučan harsnarani kam oskehuš verjawori?
Ēr č'ē p'esayn i xorani, kam p'esawērkn i tačari?

Ur en mankunk'n aṭagasti, zi oč' hnc'en zergsn Dawt'i?
Ziard lṛeal oč' harkanen zp'oṭn hnc'oṭ Tarsonac'i?
Ur pararakn eznamoli, ziard i k'ez oč' zenani?
Kam matruakk'n bažakin zi oč' bašxen zanuš ginin?
Ur barekamk'n zuarčakic' and giwt ordwoyn anaṛaki,
Kam taraceal girk hayreni aṛ i hamboyr melawori?
Ur k'alc'rajaynn eražsti kam gelgelumn etanaki?
Ur ant'erc'oṭk'n en Surb Tari, kam vardapetk'n i handisi?
Ur ē at'oṭ hayrapeti, kam k'ahanayk' i surb bembī?
Ur sarkawagk' en i spasi, kam paštoneayk' pataragi?
Ur en xnkoc'n i k'ez burmunk', anerewoyt' 'w ereweli,
Kam žoṭovoc'n gumarumn yawur tonic'n tēruni?
Ur en gahoyk' t'agawori Vaṭaršapat k'o k'alak'i?
Kam naxarark'n ur ark'ayi Ayrarateand gawari?
Ur en išxank'n, or aṭaṭi, kam zinakirk'n, or en verji?
Ur zōrakank'n yasparizi, kam legēonk'n i čakati?
Ur mecameck'n i bazmoc'i, kam ur selann amenali?
Ur en azatk'n i tačari, kam teaṛnordik'n i caṭkoc'i?
Aha barjaw ays vaṭagoyṇ, yoyž heṭac'aw, oč' erewi:
Anurjk' 'w erazk' ēin yaytni, ard cackec'an i zart'mni.

"Where now is your crown (t'ag) adorned, or its marvelous diadem (psak)?
 Where are the decorations of the royal princess (dšxoy), bride of the son of
 the king?

Where is the robe of the nuptial chamber or its golden fringes trimmed
 (oskehuṛ verjawori)?

Why is the groom not standing at the altar (xoran) or his party (p'esawérk'n)
 in the temple (tačar)?

Where are the children bearing the canopy; why do they not sing David's
 songs?

Why have they fallen silent and do not play the trumpet of the Apostle Paul?

There is the pair of fatted oxen; and why are they not offered in you in
 sacrifice?

And the cupbearers— why do they not serve the flagons of sweet (anuš)
 wine?

Where are his boon companions to welcome back the Prodigal Son,
 Or his father's wide embrace— to hug the sinner in a kiss?

Where is the sweet voice of the musician, or the lovely lilting melody?

Where are the readers of Holy Writ or the priests at the convocation?

Where are the Patriarchal throne and the priests at the holy altar?

Where are the deacons at their service, or the ministers of the holy Mass?
 Where, O censor, are your incense spices, both the invisible and the seen?
 Where is the assembled congregation on the day of the high festivals of the
 Lord?

Where are the throne and the appointments of the king (*t'agawor*) in
 Vałaršapat, your city?

Where are the dynasts (*naxarar*) of the regal lord (*ark'ay*) of the province of
 Ayrarat?

Where are the princes leading up the front, or the arms-bearers that come
 behind them?

Where are the warriors in the field; the legions, on the battle line?

Where are the grandees (*mecamec*) on the banquet couch (*bazmoc'*), the
 groaning board (*sełann amenali*)?

Where are the freemen (*azat*) in the palace (*tačar*); or the sons of the lords,
 in the flower garden (*całkoc'*)?

Lo, all this was taken long ago;
 far away and no longer to be seen.

They were reveries, apparitions of a dream,
 now hidden in the wakeful day."

St Nersēs has constructed his elegy with care for a subtle symmetry and planned coincidence of images. It begins with a visual picture of the Arsacid crown and the diadem that was tied around it. The words for both are Parthian. But at an Armenian wedding the bride and groom are crowned and diademed with a band now called a *narot*; so the image of national sovereignty merges with that of a royal wedding. The wedding is held at the high altar of the cathedral church; but the Parthian words for both of these, *xoran* and *tačar*, mean also "banqueting pavilion" and "royal palace", the proper places for the wedding feast of a prince and princess. In the lines that follow, the poet deftly mingles images of secular feasting with Biblical themes: there is singing, but it is the Psalmist's; there is trumpet music, but it is that of Paul of Tarsus; oxen are killed and cooked, but the Prodigal Son and fatted calf are recalled; and there is wine. The latter is "sweet", and Nersēs selects not the common *k'alč'r* here from Indo-European, which he does employ elsewhere, but *anuš*, Clas. Arm. *anoyš*, from Iranian *anaoša*-, "ambrosia, nectar, immortal (drink)". One may sense secular, if not pagan, overtones as the guests get down to drinking.¹³ Nersēs then describes churches, palaces, kings, noblemen, and warriors in their glory— a concise but encyclopedic vision of ancient Armenian society. The

¹³ Wine was the main business of ancient feasts: Hebrew *mišteh*, "feast", comes from the root *šth*, "drink".

banqueting couch follows war immediately, as is the proper order; and the word *tačar*, meaning either “palace” or “cathedral church”, is used again towards the end, mirroring its appearance at the beginning. In the strophe it is parallel to *caṭkoc’*, “flower garden”: the freemen (*azat*) are assembled in one and the sons of lords stroll through the other and it is hard to tell which meaning of *tačar* we ought to understand—the royal *tačar mayri* of Arsacid Christian Armenia had been, after all, the **palace** forest or hunting preserve, a place attached to the royal residence as the *caṭkoc’* seems to be to the *tačar* here; and had nothing to do with churches. So the elegy ends as it began, with a royal feast and with apparent plays on the ambiguous term for cathedral and palace. But the feast that begins and closes the intricate, colorful, teeming vision is interrupted: it was a dream, and suddenly one is awake, in the new and disastrous reality.

The elegy, despite its somewhat dreary monorhyme in the Armenian (an unfortunate hallmark of Nersēs’ poetry, which is in all other respects so luminous and complex), is of astonishing poetic power. To the reader it may conjure the verses, yet to be written, of François Villon, Where are the snows of yesteryear; or even more powerfully, perhaps, a scene still farther in the future and more distant from embattled Cilician Armenia, in English. The consonance of the details are so uncanny as to suggest a relationship; but even though the last king of Armenia had pleaded his case before Parliament at London, and though the “Lytell Chronicle” of the Cilician Armenian king Het’um and the romance of Bevis of Hampton, with its Armenian setting, had been popular reading in Chaucer’s England, the Bard cannot have known of Nersēs. Their parallel visions, hint at a synchronicity, rather, an invisible affinity of great creative artists whose explanation may exist in the otherworld but cannot in this. Towards the close of *The Tempest* of Shakespeare the magician Prospero, having conjured an entertainment of spirits for the wedding feast of his daughter Miranda, suddenly interrupts it: “I had forgotten the foul conspiracy/ of that beast Caliban and his confederates/Against my life.” Ferdinand, the royal groom, is shocked; and the great mage comforts him: “... be cheerful, sir./ Our revels now are ended. These our actors, as I foretold you, were all spirits and/ Are melted into air, thin air;/ And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,/ The cloud-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,/ The solemn temples, the great globe itself,/ Yes, all which it inherit, shall dissolve.../ ... We are such stuff/ As dreams are made on, and our little life/ Is rounded with a sleep.” (IV.i.139-158) The play is a comedy and the noble sprite Ariel has already disarmed the plotters, thwarting their plan of a treacherous and cowardly attack. Miranda and Ferdinand are married, and Prospero is vindicated.

We meet the theme of an interrupted feast with grim consequences, but ones that will be set to right, in another kind of comedy, a text that long predated Nersēs and that found its setting in his neighborhood and in a cultural setting akin to that of the old Armeno-Iranian world evoked in his elegy. Most likely he knew it well. The apocryphal Book of Tobit, set in Nineveh, capital of Assyria; in Ecbatana, capital of the Medes; and at points along the road in between, is a sort of Oriental romance of the Hellenistic type with a strong Persian flavor: it includes the cameo appearance of the Zoroastrian archdemon of wrath, the only Zoroastrian demon known by name in Scripture. This is *Aēšma daēvā*, Hebrew Ašmedai, and English Asmodeus (in Armenian, Eznik refers to demonolaters at **hešmakapašt* and one common Georgian word for demon is *hešmaki*, from **aēšmaka-*).¹⁴ But let us return to the banquet table. In II.1-14, Tobit reclines to feast on the Jewish festival of weeks, Shavuoth, at a suitably groaning board; but before partaking of his meal he asks his son Tobias to go and see if he can find a poor man with nowhere to eat. Tobias returns, not with a destitute guest, but with the alarming news that he has found the body of a Jew who was murdered and dumped in a trash heap. Tobit leaves the table, his interrupted feast untouched, and rushes off to give the man's remains a decent burial. After a chain of bizarre mischances he is blinded. His wife chides him for having been so charitable: See what has come of it! chitters the shrew. But in the end all turns out for the best: his son Tobias and the comely Susannah (whose previous suitors a jealous Asmodeus had murdered, all seven of them) are married, and Tobit, cured of his blindness, dies happy and at peace.¹⁵ But now let us consider the second Armenian text, one without a happy ending.

The *Chronicle* of Matthew of Edessa (Matt'ēos Urhayec'i, ca. 1070-ca. 1140) deals with the struggle of the Armenian Christians against the invading Muslims and with apocalyptic visions brought on by the devastation wrought by the invader: its closing date is 1036. The early modern scholar Č'amč'ean suggested Matthew might have died in the siege of Edessa by Zangi in 1144— the very historical event that brought forth the *Lament* of St. Nersēs!— but this is unlikely. Towards the beginning of his narrative, Matthew evokes in the densely patterned language and imagery of epic the scene of a feast: Vasak Pahlawuni and his son Gregory (i.e., Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni, mentioned above) are at table making merry in the clan fortress of Bĭjni, in AD 972. The Pahlawunik' were to abandon that ancestral home as Seljuk attacks

¹⁴ See J.R. Russell, "God is Good: Tobit and Iran," *Iran and the Caucasus* V, Tehran, 2001, pp. 1-6.

¹⁵ For a discussion of the episode see N. MacDonald, "Food and Drink in Tobit and Other 'Diaspora Novellas,'" in Mark Bredin, ed., *Studies in the Book of Tobit: A Multidisciplinary Approach*, London: Continuum, 2006, p. 175.

and conquests pressed the Armenians to emigrate westwards into Byzantine-held Cappadocia, where Gregory was to become a military administrator and deeply educated man, one of the few in medieval Armenian tradition with no ecclesiastical connection. The fateful Battle of Manzikert (Arm. Manazkert), 1071, took place around the year of Matthew's birth, and the memory of these defeats and losses might add some retrospective poignancy, a sense of impending doom, to the setting. Vasak sees a man hastening on foot towards his party of revelers, and predicts he is bringing bad news. The messenger indeed bears tidings of the fall of the district of Nigk'. "Roaring like a lion," Vasak girds himself for battle, stopping only for communion and confession on his way to the fray. They confront the Muslim army and Vasak engages in single combat with "a dark Ethiopian", cleaving him in two.¹⁶ I have broken up the printed Armenian prose text¹⁷ into strophes, to give some sense of the underlying narrative flavor of its style, which owes its narrative power to the strength, color, and cadences of such oral epic as the cycle of Sasun:

Yaynm žamanaki
zōražořov arareal t'agaworn Delumnac':
ew ankarcs gayr hasanēr
i Nigs gawařin Hayoc'
merj i yamurn Břni.
Ew Vasak asparapetn Hayoc'
sirec'eal ordwovn iwrov Grigoriw
ew ayl p'ařawor azatōk'n nsteal
kayr i mec uraxut'ean:
ew hayec'aw Vasak i yařapars čanaparhin,
ew aha gayr mi i štaps
and hetewak gnac's čanaparhin:
ew teseal Vasakay asēr:
Gužaber ē ayrn ayn.
Ew hasanēr ayrn i duřn berdin Břnoy:
jayn ařařaki barjeal asēr:
Gerec'aw amenayn gawařin Ngac'.

¹⁶ See Christopher MacEvitt, "The Chronicle of Matthew of Edessa: Apocalypse, the First Crusade, and the Armenian Diaspora," *Dumbarton Oaks Papers* 61, 2007, pp. 157-181, esp. p. 168, who astutely notes the epic quality of the scene though he does not further analyze it. He uses the text edition: Matt'ēos Ūřhayec'i, *Žamanakagrut'iwn*, Vařaršapat, 1898, p. 11 (I employ in this study the Jerusalem text of 1869); tr. by Ara Dostourian, Matthew of Edessa, *Armenia and the Crusades*, Landham, MD, 1993, p. 14. All translations here are my own.

¹⁷ *Patmut'iwn Mattēosi Ūřhayec'woy*, Jerusalem: St. James', 1869, pp. 13-16.

Yaynžam orpēs zariwc goč'eac'
 k'aj zōravarn Vasak,
 ew yaruc'eal zgenoyr zgest erkat'apats:
 ew zkni nora ewt'n azat,
 ew ast patahelay žamun ayl hecelazōrs zkni noc'a.
 Ew kazmec'an azatk'n zkni Vasakay:
 ew sranayr k'aj P'ilippē
 ew Gorg Č'ortuanēln
 ew aylk' omank':
 ew ays ark' k'ajk' ew yałt'ołk' i paterazmuns,
 ew oč' karac' Vasak hamberel srtin,
 minč'ew zōrk'n žofovesc'en,
 vasn zi kayin and jeřamb nora ars ibrew hing hazars:
 ew ař hpartut'ean zōrut'ean iwr,
 ew hing hariwr aramb
 yařajeal orpēs zariwc i Ngac' gawařin:
 ew yanjn arareal ztun ew zamurn Bjni
 ordwoy iwrurn Grigori.
 Ew hasanēr Vasak i vank' mi:
 hałordec'aw ink'n ew amenayn zōrk'n
 ew xostovanec'an zmets iwreanc'
 bari xostovanut'eamb or i K'ristos Yisus.
 Ew i čanaparhin handipeal i giwł mi,
 ew tesin zi aylazgik'n
 ař hasarak kotoreal ēin zamenayn giwłn,
 ew zōrk' aylazgeac'n
 pateal ēin šurj zeketec'eawn:
 ew zhawatac'ealsn or i nersn ēr,
 kayin ew kotorec'in anxnay srov.
 Ew teseal zayn k'ajin Vasakay,
 jayniw koč'eac' orpēs zariwc,
 ew yarjakec'aw i veray zōrac' aylazgeac'n:
 ew kotorec'in znosa ars erek' hariwr,
 ew mnac'ealk'n p'axstakank' leal
 ankanēin i zōrs aylazgeac'n.
 Ew šarženal gayin bazmutiwnk' banakin
 i veray zōrac' k'ristonēic':
 ew ibrew anč'ap' ant'iw tesanēin
 bazmut'iwn zōrac' aylazgeac'n,
 ew yaynžam miaban zmah ařaji edin

ew sksan aṛak'inanal i paterazmin,
 ew orpēs gayls i mēj ayceac',
 ew kam orpēs zarcuis i yerams caguc',
 aynpēs ariabar ant'anayin i mēj paterazmin,
 ew zbazums xoc'eal diat'awal yerkir jgēin.
 Yaynžam axoyean mi eleal i zōrac'n aylazgeac',
 seaw xap'šik ew ayr k'aǵ,
 or ew Eot'n gayl koč'ēin zna:
 vasn zi, zinč' ē ewt'n gayln i joks oč'xarac'n,
 gorcēr na ews aṛawel i mēj paterazmin.
 Ew aha gayr xap'šikn
 ibrew zseaw amp orotalov,
 or boc' hatanēin i zrehac' nora.
 Ew jayn tueal ew yanuanē yuzēr zVasak.
 Hayec'aw k'aǵn Emran,
 ew etes zna zi gayr orpēs leaṛn mrrkeal:
 darjaw aṛ Vasak ew asēr:
 aha ayr anparteli ew k'aǵ,
 or ayl č'ēr cneal i veray erkri.
 Ew asac' Vasak:
 Ov aṛiwc ew k'aǵ Emran,
 vasn ēr zarhurec'ar and tesil nora:
 aha es elic' anddēm nora,
 ew tac' nora zpargewk'n
 zor et Dawit' Goḥiat'u
 hayhoyč'in Astucoy.
 Yaynžam hasanēr gazanabar ayṛn ayn,
 řumb edeal k'aǵin Vasakay,
 orpēs zi aṛc'ē zna i cayr geṭardeann iwroy:
 ew i štaps leal Vasakin, erags dimeac',
 ew poḥovat t'rovni i veray saṭawartin gaheac':
 ew erkus herjeac' zxpap'šikn k'aǵ,
 or ew masunk' marmnoyn yerkir ankanēr.

"At that time

The king of the Dailamites mustered his forces
 Against the forces of the Christians,
 And suddenly came upon them
 In the Armenian province of Nigk'
 Near the fortress of Bjni.

And Vasak, commander of the Armenians,
With his beloved son, Gregory,
Seated with other freemen glorious
Was making merry.
And Vasak looked upon the rocky way
And lo! A man was making haste
Along that path, on foot.
And Vasak, seeing, said:
A bearer of ill tidings is that man.
And the man reached the gate of the fortress of Bĭjni
And raising his voice in a loud cry said:
All the province of Nigk' is taken prisoner!
Then like a lion roared
The brave commander Vasak,
And rising put on his clothing, iron armor,
And seven freemen after him,
And other riders after them as chanced upon the hour.
And the freemen formed their ranks behind Vasak:
And brave Philip coursed swift,
And Ć'orduanēl the Wolf,
And others still.
And these were men brave and winners in war;
But Vasak's heart could not stay patient
Till his forces all assemble,
For some five thousand men stood at his hand.
But out of pride in his strength
With only five hundred men
He went forth like a lion into Nigk' province.
(He entrusted the house and castle of Bĭjni
To Gregory, his son.)
And Vasak reached a monastery:
With all his forces received Holy Communion
And they were shriven of their sins,
With good confession to Christ Jesus.
And on the way they came upon a village
And saw the ones of alien race
Had slaughtered all the villagers at random,
And the armies of that alien race
Had surrounded the church
And all the faithful who were within

They mercilessly put to the sword.
Brave Vasak when he saw
Roared loud-voiced as a lion
And fell upon the alien horde.
And they killed some three hundred of their men
And the ones remaining fled,
Escaping to the army of the alien race.
And the multitudes of the camp began to move
Against the Christian army.
And when they saw that without number or measure
Was the alien army's horde,
Then they set death before them, all together,
And began to excel in the virtue of war.
And like wolves in the midst of goats
Or like eagles in a flock of fledgling birds,
So they coursed heroic in the fray
Ran through many and cast their corpses on the ground.
Then a champion came forth from the alien army,
A black Ethiop, a brave man.
They called him also Seven Wolves
For what seven wolves do with a flock of sheep
In the deeds of war he did still more.
And lo! The Ethiop advanced
Thundering like a black cloud,
And lightning fires from his armor leapt.
He called and named and stirred Vasak.
Brave Emran looked,
Saw the man like a mountain wreathed in storm,
Turned to Vasak and said,
This is a man brave and invincible
Whose like earth never bore.
And Vasak said,
O lion, brave Emran,
Why are you terrified at his sight?
Now I will come forth against him
And give him all the gifts
That David gave Goliath,
That blasphemer against God.
Then like a wild beast that man came upon him
Swinging his mace at brave Vasak

So as to take him on the point of his lance.
 But Vasak was swift, and quickly turned,
 And brought the steel saber down on his helmet, hard,
 And cleaved the brave Ethiop in twain
 So his body in parts fell to earth."

The Armenian term used in Matthew's time of a Muslim, *aylazgi*, literally means one of alien race; and it is the term he uses repeatedly in the text. It is pejorative and contemptuous, as designations of unfriendly outsiders tend to be, so one has retained its literal meaning in the translation.¹⁸ Besides, an inscription on the bas-relief of David and Goliath on the Church of the Holy Cross on the island of Ałt'amar, Lake Van, Armenia, AD 920, identifies the armor-clad Philistine (i.e., *mutatis mutandis*, "Palestinian") giant towering over the comely Israelite slip of a lad as an *aylazgi*. So the equation of the Armenians, whose Bagratuni royal clan claimed Davidic ancestry, with the embattled Chosen People of God, was already a long-established topos in iconography: here is its literary echo, with Vasak promising to give Seven Wolves as good as David gave Goliath.

Hacking an enemy down the middle with a saber is not a unique feat of martial strength, but Vasak does roar like a lion when roused to battle (and when he is in the thick of it, too). In Armenian tradition the *locus classicus* for lions and tearing down the middle is the defining episode in the career of the hero *Mec* ("Great") or *Ariwc* ("Lion") Mher (i.e., Mithra) in the second of the four "branches" of the oral epic cycle *Sasna crer*, "The wild men of Sasun". Mher's great feat of strength—killing a predatory lion by gripping it by its jaws and tearing it in half, which is probably the hardest way to do the job—earns him the epithet *ariwcawjew*, pron. *arryutsadzev*, which can mean either "tearing a lion in half", from the verb *jewel*, "tear in half" or "leontomorph", from the noun *jew*, /*dzev*/ "shape". An apposite prototype for this heroic deed of prodigious strength is Samson, of course; and he is depicted performing the feat, and named, on a bas-reliefs at Ałt'amar. There are also local prototypes. Bas-reliefs on the walls of the *apadāna* at Persepolis¹⁹ depict Achaemenian kings in single combat with leonine monsters, so this is at once a regal and heroic image. It was very much alive in the medieval Armenian imagination: the portrait in bas-relief of a medieval Armenian prince on

¹⁸ The modern term for any non-Armenian is *ōtar*, an Iranian loan and the equivalent of Sanskrit *avatara*, "avatar", though without any of the reverential and supernatural associations of the latter.

¹⁹ The Old Persian word is loaned into Arm. as *aparan(k')*, "palace"; its more truncated New Persian form, *ayvān*, has the correspondingly more limited meaning of an open arch in a building.

his tombstone portrays him as a lion.²⁰ In the Roman Mithraic order the initiate in the ritual of his fourth degree had to pass the statue of a fearsome leontocephalous man, the Deus Areimanius, or god of death (the epithet is a loan from Persian Ahreman, the name of the demonic opponent of the good Creator God Ohrmazd). As he did this, his old self was symbolically burnt out of him with a blast of flame issuing from the mouth of the statue, and his symbolically reborn soul was anointed with honey, the latter with its yellow color and energy seen as a liquid form of fire. This was the death and rebirth of the Mithraist. The tale of Lion Mher is the second part of the four "branches" of the Armenian epic, and at its conclusion the hero suffers a tragic death, which serves as both the nadir of the cycle and its great turning point, as the greatest of the heroes of Sasun, David, is born just as his parents die.²¹

In the Sasun epic, the great hero David (Arm. Dawit') is to perish by treachery: a seductive Muslim princess, like a latter-day Clytemnestra, kills him naked and defenseless in the bath. The *topos* suggests that certain men, like the American folk hero Jesse James, are invincible in a fair fight but their very nobility makes them vulnerable to the wiles of low men: "the dirty little coward/ Who shot Mister Howard/ Done laid poor Jesse in his grave." So the listener or reader of an epic might expect the death of Vasak Pahlawuni to happen through the cunning of an inferior, and indeed it does, right after the slaying of the Muslim champion Seven Wolves.²²

*Yaynžam k'aġn Vasak darjaw miac'eal
ew gnayr ġbrew zatiwc zayrac'eal
and mēj zōrac'n aylazgeac' anc'anēr
ew ēr janjrac'eal i meci paterazmin
ew dimeac' elanēr
i leaġn or koč'ġ Serkeweloy,
ew i bazum halacanac' paterazmin
nsteal and hovaneaw k'aranc'.
Ew tesimal zna šinakanac'n
ork' p'axeal ēin.*

²⁰ See J.R. Russell, "The Armeno-Iranian Roots of Mithraism," in J.R. Hinnells, ed., *Studies on Mithraism*, Rome: Bretschneider, 1994, pp. 183-193.

²¹ See most recently J.R. Russell, "The Epic of Sasun: Armenian Apocalypse," in S. La Porta, ed., *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition*, Leiden: Brill, 2014, pp. 41-77, with refs.

²² Jerusalem ed., pp. 16-17; Dostourian tr., p. 26. The translation is mine: in particular I read *Kayeni spanoġin* as "Cain, the killer" not "the killer of Cain".

*Yaynžam mi omn nmanéal Kayeni spanoṭin
 ekeal gtanēr zna
 zi nnjēr i vštac'n užgin:
 baxeac' zna ew ankēc' zna
 ənd barjru k'arin:
 ew ayspēs katarec'aw
 k'ajn Vasak Pahlawunin.*

"Then the brave Vasak turned back alone
 And strode like a lion enraged,
 Passed through the midst of the alien host—
 And he was weary from the great fight—
 And he turned and went up
 On the mountain called Quince,²³
 And after all the troubles of the fight
 Sat down under cover of the rocks.
 And the peasants saw him,
 They who had fled.
 Then some one like the slayer Cain
 Came and found him
 Sleeping off his heavy pains.
 He struck him and cast him
 Down from the high rock,
 And thus was perfected in a martyr's death
 The brave Pahlavuni, Vasak."

There are two themes here: the obvious one is the death of the hero by the treacherous act of a lowly wretch. The verb *katarec'aw* "was perfected", used of the killing of a Christian martyr, adds the appropriate religious overtone to the death of a Davidic hero. But its very setting is an archaic topos as well: Vasak must rest after his martial exertions, and in that state he is at his most vulnerable. In an intricate poem preserved from an oral source by Movsēs Xorenac'i, the ancient and heroic dragon-slaying Armenian god of war and victory, Vahagn, is born of a fire in the sea; and one observes that the Vedic war gods, to whom the Irano-Armenian divinity is closely kin, must curl up in sleep, small as babies, and recover their strength in the

²³ Arm. Serkeweloy, Mod. Arm. Serkevli leṛ ("mountain of Quince"), in the region of Arakacotn of the province of Ayrarat; till the 1840s there was a village, Serkevli, nearby: see T' X. Hakobyan et al., *Hayastani ev harakic šrjanneri teṭanunneri baṭaran*, Erevan: Erevan University Press, 1998, 'vol. 4, p. 590.

sea after a fight.²⁴ They are vulnerable then. The image of the Armenian hero-king Tigran in Xorenac'i's transmission of epic tradition borrows from the image of Vahagn; so the scene of Vasak's rest under a rocky overhang is steeped in archaic associations.

The leonine, mighty Vasak evokes, then, a very particular kind of epic hero. But the scene in which he appears has wider resonances as well. We may now consider the Armenian epic ballad mentioned above, about the young prince Aslan (whose name means "lion" in Turkish, it is a fairly common Armenian name).²⁵ It opens with Aslan making merry at a feast with his retinue of brave young warriors. When they run low on wine he dispatches a servant to go and buy some. The man returns empty-handed, and when the prince asks why, he explains that on the road he came upon a pauper who had died and he gave all the money away to the man's relatives so he might have a proper funeral— shades of Tobit's beneficence! Young Aslan, who apparently has led a charmed and protected existence hitherto in which he was unaware of the grim facts of life— destitution, old age, sickness, and death— is enraged that this unfamiliar and uncouth intruder, death, has interrupted his feast. So he goes off to challenge the angel of death, Gabriel, and they engage in single combat. Aslan defeats the angel, at which point God Himself intervenes and strikes down the prince. After Jacob, perhaps, it will not do for mortals to wrestle angels to the ground. But to this reader it seems unfair, at least, if not treacherous in the manner of the foul varlet on mount Quince. Aslan thus comes to the unpleasant realization that he, like every man, is mortal. He does not accept his own death, though, and begs his parents and friends to die in his place. They turn him down, to his astonishment; the latter are in his debt for his boundless hospitality and the former ought to give their all for their son. Only his wife, Margarit ("Pearl"), offers to die in his place. It is left to the reader (or listener) to judge for himself whether this is an instance of deplorable servility like immolation in *suttee* or the ultimate fulfillment of the injunction of Holy Writ that man and woman leave their parents and become one flesh. Touched by her self-sacrificing devotion to her husband, God grants the couple 140 years of life— twice the Biblical three score and ten. In the

²⁴ See J.R. Russell, "*Carmina Vahagni*," *Acta Antiqua*, Budapest, Vol. 32, fasc. 3-4, 1989, pp. 317-330; and most recently, "Magic Mountains, Milky Seas, Dragon Slayers, and Other Zoroastrian Archetypes," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* N.S. 22, Ann Arbor, MI, 2008 [2012], pp. 57-80.

²⁵ See J.R. Russell, "An Epic for the Borderlands: Zariadris of Sophene, Aslan the Rebel, Digenes Akrites, and the Mythologem of Alcestis in Armenia," in R. Hovannisian, ed., *Armenian Tsopk/Kharpert*, UCLA Armenian History and Culture Series, Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces, 3, Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2002, pp. 147-183.

character of Margarit one can easily discern the theme that in literature we encounter first in Euripides' play *Alcestis*, itself based upon an ancient myth. And an earlier version of the ballad of Aslan, perhaps still with leonine epithet intact, might once have formed an episode of a longer epic cycle of the Armenian Zariadrid kings of Sophene (Arm. Cop'k').²⁶ The Armenian ballad, which exists in numerous versions in late Middle Armenian and most likely took shape in the later medieval period, when Aslan was a relatively common name, perhaps assimilated around then aspects of the life of the Buddha, which were transmitted through the Christianized tale of Jehosophat and Barlaam, Arm. *Yovasap' ew Barałam*— Biblical Jehosophat (Heb., "God is Judge") renders Bodhasaf, i.e., Bodhisattva! According to the well-known narrative of the *Buddhacarita*, Siddhartha's father wanted his son to succeed him as a great king and not go the way of a religious teacher; so he kept the prince in a kind of false paradise, an enclosed palace of gardens, youth, health, and pleasure. But the prince was curious about what lay outside and exacted permission to go out on a tour. Although the king contrived a kind of Potemkin village along the predetermined route, lest unsettling impressions intrude, the gods manifested themselves as a beggar, a sick man, an old man, and a corpse. These distressing spectacles spurred the prince to ponder the question of suffering in the world, and so he left his home, wife, and son. The scene of his Great Departure, on the noble steed Kanthaka, inverts the iconic theme of a warrior riding to battle: the Buddha is not going to inflict death, or even to engage in combat with it (as Aslan does) but to overcome it, and all the suffering of sentient beings, through meditation and enlightenment.²⁷

The motif of the interrupted feast, then, is a *topos* worthy of interest in the continuing decipherment of the great code of Armenian epic poetry. We have seen the image of feast employed by Nersēs to evoke all the splendor and panoply of a vanished world: the sudden interruption of the feast as though it were a dream carries all the emotional strength of the loss. Matthew of Edessa uses the interrupted feast as the starting point of a short epic replete with vivid imagery, it close wrapped in the lineaments of archaic tragedy. The ballad of Aslan stands in timelessness, even as it is undatable: its hero is the archetypal adolescent standing

²⁶ See J.R. Russell, "An Epic for the Borderlands: Zariadris of Sophene, Aslan the Rebel, Digenes Akrites, and the Mythologem of Alcestis in Armenia," in R. Hovannisian, ed., *Armenian Tsopk/Kharpert*, UCLA Armenian History and Culture Series, Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces, 3, Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2002, pp. 147-183.

²⁷ On the Buddhist text and its diffusion, see Donald S. Lopez, Jr., *In Search of the Christian Buddha: How an Asian Sage Became a Medieval Saint*, New York: Norton, 2014.

on the threshold of adulthood, testing an ennobling heroism, recoiling from fundamental truth, and discovering in love all the consolation a human being can have. Such compressed images and themes in the type of the interrupted feast, then, augment their power by resonating with local cultural values of particular depth—the particular obligations of hospitality, the order by which fight should precede feast, and so on—and with archetypally human, moral concerns—life and death, innocence and deceit. But without art these are all arid and bloodless: only the skill of a deft storyteller setting the scene and selecting the sounds of words, can bring them to immortal life. And he must have the companionship of a good reader. The demiurgic artist enfleshes the dream and enfranchises the dreamer, affording him the mental pleasure that is the province of the imagination; and that is the true purpose of its kingdom, literature.

James R. Russell

Hārūt and Mārūt: **The Armenian Zoroastrian Demonic Twins in the *Qurʾān*** **Who Invented Fiction**

The Zoroastrian divine guardians of the plants and the waters, Haurvatat and Ameretat, find themselves demonized in the Qurʾan as two demonic beings, *Hārūt* and *Mārūt*, biding their time in a well in Babylon and teaching magic, apparently having taken on the roles of another winsome pair, the fallen angels Shemhazai and Azazel. Their tuition is offered after the caveat that it is all a lie. Why then does no customer ever refuse their services?

Haurvatāt and Amərətāt, “Wholeness” and “Immortality” are the rhyming pair amongst the seven Aməša Spəntas, the “Holy Immortals” of the Avesta who preside over the seven good creations of Ahura Mazdā: in the forms Xordād and Āmurdād they survive in modern Persian as names of months. In a Manichaean Middle Persian to Sogdian glossary, MP *ʾ(mwr)dʾd hrwdʾd* is glossed as Sgd. *hrwwt mrwwt*, i.e., *Amurdād Harwadād* as *Harwōt Marwōt*. The names do not occur in a known Manichaean text so one does not know what the translator understood by them; and since the *h-* is not Sogdian, Henning suggested that the forms in the latter language “were probably borrowed from the same source from which Armenian *Haurot Maurot* are derived.”¹ Armenian sources know the Aməša Spəntas as the “seven helper/adjutant (*hamharz*) gods (*astuac-kʾ*)” but unlike a number of prominent *yazatas* they are not remembered as objects of cult and the names of only three are attested. Spəntā Ārmaitī, Phl. Spandārmad, “Holy Devotion”, the female guardian of earth and mother of mankind, in the NWMĪr. form *spandaramet-akan* with a Pth. adjectival suffix translates the Biblical Gk. Dionysian revels detested by the Maccabees. The probably older form from SWIr., *sandaramet-kʾ* with *pluralis tantum* is the generic underworld; and by the Middle Ages the radically shortened *sandarkʾ*, cf. the analogous form *Sondara* in Cappadocian, are a class of chthonian demons². As for *hawrot mawrot*, it is the name of a flower.

On Ascension Eve (Arm. *Hambarjum*), unmarried girls sprinkle its petals into a bowl of water in which they also place identifiable personal items and then stand vigil overnight under the stars. The heavens open then (so does the cave of the apocalyptic hero of the Sasun

¹ Henning 1940, pp. 16, 19 (=1977, pp. 17, 20).

² Russell 1987, Ch. 10 on Spandaramet and Ch. 12 on Hawrot Mawrot.

epic, P'ok'r Mher, "Little Mithra") and their secrets stream down to earth. On the morn as each girl's object is removed a quatrain about her future fortune in love and marriage is recited. Such a vernal *vičaka-xat*, "game of lots" in ancient Iranian culture may have been a source of Heb. Pūrīm and Esther³. The water and flower reflect the original associations of the twin divinities. In Arm. dialects there is attested a form *xorot morot* with diminutive *xorotik morotik*: in central Armenian Van and Muš the words mean "lovely, beautiful"; and in the northeast — Javaxk' and Širak — they refer also to a blossom with a rosy hue and sweet scent. The word *xorotik* (or *xorot*, without the diminutive suffix *-ik*) alone also can mean "beautiful"⁴. This suggests that the semantic development of the word(s) as "comeliness" was assisted by association with the unrelated but homonymous *xortik*, "delicious, choice morsel" from Mĭr. *xwartik* (Malxasyanc', s.v.); cf. Tk. *parça*, Mod. Heb. *ḥatīx(ā)* "piece", said of a desirable girl or boy⁵. Such association would foster a *volksetymologische* understanding of the paired form as analogous to others in X + privative prefix *m-X*, even though the second element in such compounds is often actual, e.g., Arm. (*v*)*olor-molor* "wandering around lost" or Č'inumač'in, the latter literally China-and-*Mahā*-China, but it has the same force as Yiddish *Ek Velt*. And at the proverbial world's edge skulk the giants of Biblical apocalyptic myth Gog and Magog, whom we shall encounter again presently, known to Armenians also by their Arabicized forms *Yajuj* and *Majuj*, from which Arm. *joj*, "giant", may derive⁶. The *xorotik-morotik* compound when it means "beautiful" always refers to a loved and desired person, not a thing. So in the Arm. folk song *Tehkonda: Xorotik, xorotik, xorotik-morotik im yarn ē* "Pretty, pretty, lovely is my beloved!" — or *Ay! Xorotik-morotik, Ay! Sirunik kak'avik* "Oh lovely, oh lovely little partridge!" The strutting partridge gives its name to the generically lewd dance in Arm. celebrations of physical love and early medieval polemics against it.

Though it might appear that the divine names underwent degeneration to become common nouns the reality could be more complex. One recalls for instance that the Parsi Gujarati form, Ordibehešt, of the name of another Aməša Spənta, Aša Vahišta, who presides over fire, can be used simply for "fire" — so closely is the visible creation suffused for the Zoroastrian with the presence of its tutelary divinity⁷. So plants and waters might have been called *hawrot* and *mawrot* by pre-Christian Armenians who still knew what the names meant. The Armenian "game of lots" is now a sanitized and innocuous rite of young girls sanctioned by church

³ Russell 1990, pp. 33–40.

⁴ Dialect dictionary 2002, p. 363.

⁵ And here in the Ebonic parlance of the USA of my youth, the happy exclamation when a lovely girl walked by uptown, "Mmm, mmm, MMM! Sho' like a piece o' dat!" For the other amorous uses of English "piece" one need only consult the constantly-growing Urban Dictionary on the Internet.

⁶ The rhyming *šogmog(-em)*, "delation, flattery, lie" perhaps inspired another form of the name of the pair in which initial *j-* is altered to *sh-*: Zaruhi Pōtosean of Šāhbāyī, Van, told her son Grigor, *Eđt'ə glxani hrēšə piti gay Hayastani vray ew mec paterazm piti əllay, isk al Šugug Mugug piti gay anor dēm*, "The seven-headed monster will come against Armenia and there will be a great war; and Šugug Mugug as well will come against it" (oral comm. by Krikor Boghosian). The seven-headed dragon and Gog and Magog are standard fare from the Book of Revelation.

⁷ Russell 1988.

and society. But it might once have been a nocturnal (and therefore perhaps goetic)⁸ ritual of lecanomancy and love magic — or, indeed, something more malevolent — on the fringe of a Mazdaismicate⁹ society employing sacred names imbued with poetic rhyming potency and manipulating herbs and possessions of the subject or target person of the rite. Such a magical rite, employing several of the central features of the Armenian *vičakaxal*, is indeed attested in a source whose roots are in late antiquity. In the *Sēfer ha-Rāzīm*, “Book of Secrets”, a compendium of spells that advertises itself as having come to king Solomon from the personal library of Noah, there is a list of eighty angels of the “second encampment” who serve one TYGRH. In order to cause various kinds of dire harm to an enemy, or to do other damage, one may call on these four score malevolent beings by taking water from seven springs on the seventh day of the months in the seventh hour of the day in seven different unfired pottery vessels. These are to be exposed beneath the stars for seven nights, after which one is to pour their contents into a glass vial over which one has pronounced one’s foe’s name. One then smashes the seven vessels and scatters the shards to the four directions, reciting appropriate incantations¹⁰. So the innocent quatrains of latter days may but palely reflect what were defixions of yore. Much magic in antiquity was specifically love magic, which was employed not only to arouse desire but also, more sinisterly perhaps, to destroy the bonds of wedlock: one need only peruse that *locus classicus*, the historiola of St. Cyprian of Antioch, to see how the black art worked. So *hawrot* and *mawrot* may have to do with a lioness of a magical rite that in later centuries becomes an Armenian folkloric pussy cat.

So now we consider the two Aməša Spəntas in the 102nd verse of the second *sūrā*, *al-Baqara*, of the *Qur’ān*. This is a scripture that still awaits its Kittel, but this longest and doubtless latest, summarizing chapter adds an immense quantity of regional oral lore to the basic teachings of the new religion, probably as it approached century mark. The passage is taken to be an admonition directed specifically to Jewish believers at Medina. “Solomon did not disbelieve; but the demons (*aš-šayātīnu*) disbelieved. They taught mankind magic (*siḥra*) and that which was revealed to the angels twain (‘*ala ‘l-malakaynī*) in Babel, Hārūt and Mārūt, but they did not teach it to anybody till they said, ‘We are naught but a temptation (*fitnatun*), so do not disbelieve (*fa lā takfur*).’ And from these two, people learn that by which they can cause division between husband and wife: but they injure no one save by God’s leave.” Islamic tradition confines the two angels to a well in Babylon¹¹ and mentions

⁸ Compare the “black *yasna*” described by Plutarch in *Peri Isidos kai Osiridos*, where Persian witchcraft inverts the canonical rite even as witchcraft in Christendom perverts the Mass.

⁹ Pardon the neologism; but it is a useful construction and why should Islamicate societies have all the fun?

¹⁰ Morgan 1983, pp. 25–28.

¹¹ Why Babel? Presumably because of the babble of tongues (and, in early Islam, of creeds) there since God’s hand smote the proud tower of the rebellious, the din reminiscent of the whisperings (*waswasa*) of the *jinn* and the mutterings (*zamzama*) of the *majusis* (Magians; magicians!) with their *niranjiyyat* (spells, lit. Zoroastrian *nirangs*, sacred formulae of power). Dr. Geoffrey Herman has called my attention to Goldziher 1884–8, p. 124: in A.H. 102 Mujahid at Babylon requested that the Jewish exilarch show him Harut and Marut, who hung upside down, great as two mountains, in their well. So it would seem that in the early Islamic period the connection was still strong of the Koranic myth to Jewish tradition in the lands that had only recently been the center of Sasanian power.

the incident with the girl who became the star Zuhra, i.e., Venus. Muslim legend elaborates the myth considerably; and the reliance upon Jewish sources, as will be seen, is palpable. So in the Persian-language Lahore *Tafsīr*, for instance, we read: “Khwāja Imām, may God be pleased with him, said: We heard it said in some commentaries, There came to ‘Ā’īša, may God be pleased with her, a certain woman and said, My husband took another woman to wife and I am tormented by jealousy. A woman told me, I’ll take you to a place where they will teach you something. You pronounce it over your husband and he will not even touch that other woman. At night she arrived, leading two of what could have been either cats or dogs, God knows. She mounted one and seated me on the other and off we went. We traveled till we reached a place where we saw two people suspended upside-down. She led me to them and left me there. They said: Do not learn what we say, or else you will become an unbeliever. But I said, I must learn it. If you have to, they said, then go to that furnace. And I saw a place like a furnace. When I went there I was frightened, turned around, and said, I went to the furnace. They replied, What, then, did you see? I said, I didn’t see anything. They retorted, That means you didn’t go there. So, go back! Don’t learn or you’ll become an unbeliever. I did not obey. So they said, Go on then, go right up to the furnace, to see. I didn’t go all the way that second time either. I went up to the furnace only the third time, looked, and saw something like a horseman clothed in white. White cloth covered his head. He rose out of the furnace and flew up to the sky. I returned and related what I had seen. They said, That was your faith, and it flew up and away. Now learn. And they pronounced those words. I committed them to memory and returned home. As they taught me, I cast a kernel into the earth and pronounced those words. In the same instant a stalk grew, became green, rose, and started to sprout leaves. As soon as that plant appeared, I immediately repented.” Idris intervenes on behalf of the woman to God¹².

The names are familiar; but the narrative alludes to a longer story concerning another pair of angels known from the corpus of texts on Enoch concerning the giants or *nephilim*; in the cycle of legends about king Solomon; and in later Jewish mythological literature. Originally the two are Šemihaza or Šemhazai¹³, and ‘Azael; and the former has two sons, Hiya and Hiwa. The rhyming names of the latter were chanted, the Talmud notes, by boatmen as they strained at their ropes. The Manichaean version of the Book of the Giants knows Šahmizād and his sons Ohyā and Ahyā. A Sogdian text equates the former with Sām; and the twin angels are in Persian named as Sām and Narīman. The Avestan epic hero of the cycle of the *kavis*, Kərəsāspa, belongs to the Sāma clan and is called *naire.manah-*, “manly-minded”; so the Iranizing version of the narrative has equated the fallen angels, it would seem, with him. In Pth. the giants themselves are *kaw-ān*, “kavis”. Later Jewish lore stresses the rhymed character of the twins’ names by calling them ‘Aza and ‘Azael. The giants in the earth practice telling lies (Aram. šqrh, kdbyn); and in the apocryphal Book of Jubilees (8.1–4) the Watchers

¹² Abdullaeva 2001, p. 84, who cites also the comment of Ḥasan Baṣri on a tradition that the two teachers of magic were Zoroastrians that one should therefore read not *malakayn*, “twain (fallen) angels” but *malikayn*, “two kings” (p. 82). This suggests that some remembered the Iranian origin of the names of the two.

¹³ The name sounds, as Shaked has suggested, as though it might be simply Heb. *ha-šēm ha-zeh*, lit. “this name”, maybe a cautious circumlocution. Pious Jews refer to God discreetly as Hashem, “The Name”.

(Gk. *egrēgoroi*, Aram. *‘irin*), who unlike the vigilant angels of the heavenly host are fallen beings, are said to have initiated divination using astrology¹⁴. So the apocryphal literature of Jews, Christians, and Manichaeans that existed at the dawn of Islam had a pair of fallen angels whose names sometimes rhymed and who lied and invented magic.

As to Solomon, he is said to have traveled on the pinions of an eagle to Tadmor in the Mountains of Darkness to visit ‘Aza and ‘Azael. He forced them by his ring with the holy Name to teach him mysteries. This is but one episode of Solomon’s many-faceted career as a magician; and again there seems to be considerable cross-fertilization between Jewish and Iranian myth, especially in the Islamic period. For Muslim tradition attributes the origin of the Persian vernal New Year, Nō Rūz, which became a popular and carnivalesque feast as far afield as Egypt, variously to the primordial king Jamšīd and to Solomon — the latter having established it to commemorate the day when that same potent seal ring (*khatam*), which had been stolen by a demon (*jinn*), was recovered¹⁵. In the texts of the *Testament of Solomon* that demon was none other than Ašmedai, i.e., the Avestan Aēšma Daēva. Jamšīd’s fatal hubris in Persian epic culminates in the demand that men worship him rather than God since he can cure every disease. This finds a parallel in the legend that Hezekiah concealed (Heb. *gānāz*) Solomon’s *Sēfer Raḥū’ōt*, the book of cures that included every disease and its remedy and therefore might tempt the sick to pray to the king rather than the Creator. Zoroastrians consider Ahreman the author of disease and do not see the demonstration of human excellence in medicine as overweening pride, but as an aspect of the lifelong “martial striving against the demons” recommended by the Phl. credo¹⁶; so perhaps here the vector of influence ran from the monism of Israel, where God is author of good and evil, life and death — eastwards¹⁷.

The story of the two angels, called most often ‘Aza and ‘Azael in the later Jewish sources, may be summarized as follows. At the time of creation the angels who begged of God that they be let loose upon mankind to prove our iniquity — and unworthiness to receive their worship — were allowed to become the precious stones, gold, and purple dye that entice people. ‘Aza and ‘Azael in particular protested that, whatever the conditions of the world, they would acquit themselves better in it than men. But they tried instead to rape the girl who escaped to become Istahar/Venus/Nāhīd. Opting for punishment in this world rather than hell, they were sent to the Mountains of Darkness beyond the river Sambatyon. This is where Gog and Magog are, as well as the Ten Lost Tribes, all behind the security barrier erected by Alexander the Great. They are imprisoned in a deep mountain cavern: one of them repented and, though chained upside down, can see; the other sulks below in the dark. But their social life is rather busy. Afirra and Kastimon, two even nastier demons from a world below, sometimes come to bother and scare them. Naamah — Ašmedai’s mother — tempts them. Genun the Canaanite, son of Lamech, invented musical instruments there: ‘Azael entered them, and that is how music became seductive and led men into promiscuity. After they had discovered

¹⁴ Reeves 1992, pp. 44–45 n. 100, 76, 77–78; and Milik 1976, pp. 330–331.

¹⁵ Shoshan 1993, pp. 40–41, citing Shaked 1991, p. 90, n. 5.

¹⁶ Phl. *razmīg ayōzišn padērag dēwān*, in the *Čīdag andarz ī pōryōtkēšān* “Select counsels of the primordial faithful”, attributed to Ādurbād ī Amahraspandān.

¹⁷ See Russell (in publication), and Halperin 1982, pp. 269–292.

rock and roll, the Canaanite went on to invent beer, pubs, and iron weapons¹⁸. So God created the Sabbath and the *sitra aħra* took care of Saturday night.

The most frequent visitors to the angels in the Mountains of Darkness are humans like Solomon seeking to learn magic. 'Azza the recalcitrant sulks in his pit; but 'Azzael sees people approaching. Then they both cry out and burning serpents surround them. They dispatch their animal familiar, a *Mischwesen* called *unimata* with the head of a snake, the body of a cat, small paws, and two tails. The postulant must then cover his face and make an offering of the ashes of a white cock. The *unimata* then conducts him to the fallen angels' binding chain, which he must strike thrice. The two then teach him magic over the course of fifty days¹⁹. The details are intriguing, and recall the epic myths of Zoroastrian Armenia: Movsēs Xorenac'i, whose *History of the Armenians* is often dated to the fifth century and at all events reached its present form no later than the eighth, provides the details of a much older oral epic still recited by the *gusans* ("bards") in his day. The epic of the Artaxiad dynasty contains many archaic elements and telescopes the events of the second and first centuries B.C. In one episode the Armenian king Artawazd, cursed by his father Artasēs, falls into the chasm of greater Ararat (Arm. Azat Masik'). He is chained there, held by giants called *k'ajk'*. Since dogs are gnawing at the chains to free him, mediaeval Armenian writers report that blacksmiths begin their working week by striking their anvils thrice to strengthen the chains of Artawazd. Artawazd's mother, Sat'enik, was something of a witch; but there is no record of Artawazd receiving and teaching visitors. Nor are there any snakes in the myth, which is so reminiscent of the tale of Aži Dahāka, Zohhak, chained or crucified in Mt. Damāvand and tortured by the two snakes that spring from either shoulder. But Armenian lore abounds in *višaps*, serpent-dragons, in the region of Ararat²⁰. Perhaps the Jewish tale has shifted the serpents of an older version of the story to the *unimata*'s ophidian head and double tail. The offering is sinister: the harbinger of dawn and bird of the yazata Sraoša is holy to Zoroastrians; and Manuk Abelean notes in his work on Armenian folk belief that a heavenly rooster wakes the angels. Gabriel, whose name is popularly connected with "rooster", is in Jewish belief the first to rise²¹. A 14th-cent. MS from Herāt of the *Mi'rāj nāme* depicts the Prophet Mohammed in the first heaven meeting a giant white cock whose feet touch the earth and whose comb brushes the foot of the divine throne²². In the context of Iranian religion killing a white cock would be a perversion, a reversal of the sacred analogous to a blasphemous parody of the Eucharist.

It seems possible that an Iranian Zoroastrian myth, or, more precisely, the pre-Christian Armenian reflex of one about an evil titan chained in a mountain chasm, was involved in the shaping of a Jewish tale first elaborated in the books of Enoch about two fallen angels who tell lies generally and more specifically teach magic. From their other associations with

¹⁸ Graves and Patai, 1963, pp. 100–106, with refs. to Dillmann 1853, pp. 92–93.

¹⁹ Bamberger 1952, pp. 178–181, with refs. Louis Ginzburg in vol. 4 of his *Legends of the Jews* and Angelo Rappoport in vol. 1 of his *Myth and Legend of Ancient Israel* report substantially the same details of the myth.

²⁰ On Artawazd, see Russell 1987 Ch. 13 "Captive Powers"; Russell 1994; Russell 1986–87; and Russell 2006.

²¹ Cited by Scholem 1965, p. 147 n. 4.

²² Ségué 1977, Pl. 9 (fol. 11).

seductive fashions, lewd music, and strong drink, love magic would seem to be their particular specialty. The tale evolved in a milieu where Iranian and Jewish traditions were strongly interpermeable; and this is apparent also in the Solomonic cycle where it is reflected. It entered Manichaean lore, where a secondary re-Iranization seems to have occurred: the angels are renamed Sām and Narīman and the tradition knows their Aramaic equivalents. It is not known whether a version of the myth known to Manichaeans in Sogdiana called them Harwōt and Marwōt; but if there was, it must have come from the west of the Iranian world, most likely from Armenia, where the legendry surrounding Hawrot and Mawrot was so deeply entrenched. The details of the legend also argue for an Armenian locus; and the names in the *Qurʾān*, Hārūt and Mārūt, are closer to the Armenian forms than to any others. De Menasce has explained the motif of twin beings with reference to the Indian legend of the two Aśvins who took a fancy to princess Sūkanya (*Mahābhārata* 3.123–125); and Dumézil saw in them an expression of the “fonction terrestre”²³. The two Aməša Spəntas at least personified water and plants employed in a magical rite. Many traditions like twins with rhyming names in any case: the Dioscuri do not rhyme but Remus and Romulus do; and closer to home the first generation of the heroes of the Armenian epic of Sasun consists of such a pair, the strong, heroic Sanasar and his smaller, weaker, more moody twin brother Baḏasar. By the seventh century of the Christian era and the end of the Sasanian age, the Jewish, Christian, Manichaean, and Mandaean mythology and demonology the early Muslims encountered in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and Israel was rich in Iranian names and terms: in a world where the king of the demons is named in the inscription on a Jewish magical bowl as Bagadāna, it comes as no particular surprise that there should have existed a version of the myth of ‘Aza and ‘Azel in which the two fallen angels bore the alternative Iranian names Harut and Marut and had a specific association to the water and plants used in a ritual by Armenians. One might have encountered the latter at every turn. In Mesopotamia, Mani’s mother Maryam had been of the Armeno-Parthian noble house Kamsarakan, and Armenians were ubiquitous at court; Armenians thronged the schools and streets of Antioch and Nisibis; an Armenian papyrus is known from Egypt (the poor historical Artawazd had also languished in captivity at Alexandria, a prisoner of Marc Antony); and Armenian monks and pilgrims in the Land of Israel were exceedingly numerous.

Unless the “two youths” (*šənēy ha-bākhūrīm*) invoked in the name of Samael in a Geniza fragment to afflict N the son of N with noise and discharges from the back are our demonic twins, they do not seem to appear in Jewish magical texts themselves. ‘Azel (ʿzʾl) is one of the angels who stand before the divine throne, on a Jewish Aramaic amulet from Aḡabeyli, near Maraş — clearly a pious sort and not one of our boys²⁴. But one of the Iranian twins may perhaps survive in an Armenian spell that, appropriately, deals with love. The late Dr. Levon Boyajian of New Jersey owned a magico-medical manuscript that had been copied by his grandfather, whose family had migrated from Čʾmškacag (Chemishgezek, the ancient town that was home to the Byzantine emperor John Tzimiscēs) in the province of Dersim (now Tunceli), Western Armenia, to Aleppo. He probably compiled the manuscript there in

²³ De Menasce 1947.

²⁴ On the two youths, see Naveh and Shaked 1993, p. 235 f. For ‘Azel in the amulet, see Naveh and Shaked 1985, p. 68 f.

the 1920's, copying both recent cures and old spells, and brought it to New York. Dr. Boyajian's son donated the book to the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research at Belmont, MA, where I have studied it. On p. 62 is a magical operation and spell to release the binding (Arm. *kap*) of a bridegroom. One is to clap one's hands, recite the prayer beginning "Heavenly God" and the Psalm beginning with the words "Ascribe might" and write the name of the afflicted man on two slips of paper. The bride and groom are to wash in water in which the first piece of paper has been placed; and the groom is to bind the second to his right arm. With God's help he will be released. On the paper is to be written the nonsense words of the spell: *Hasawil, mat'um, marum, mat'ëumn, mariwn, mahk'on, awasi, azawmi, marut'*. The final word may be a rendering of Arabic *Mārūt* as an Armenian heard it, with a trilled *r*: the rhymes of late medieval and early modern Armenian spells consist often of *voces mysticae* and actual lexical items drawn from the prayers and spells of Muslim — and, more rarely, Greek — neighbors. So the name of at least one of the two fallen angels may still be attested in an actual magical rite as well as in a women's ritual that may once have been such a rite as well: one notes in both the use of water in which objects have been immersed²⁵.

I have suggested that the imaginary place at the edge of the world of the confinement of the two fallen angels — the Mountains of Darkness, beyond the river Sambatyon and the wall built to contain Gog and Magog and their hordes (Ezekiel 38, Revelation 20) — was thought to be in the environs of Armenia, or at least a mythologized image of it. What evidence do we have for this? The ten lost tribes of Israel were also thought to dwell in these parts: God punished them for their sins and they were exiled by the Assyrians to the northeast, to Media somewhere beyond the river Gozan (cf. I Kings 14–15, II Kings 17.6). Talmudic tradition locates them around Adiabene and Hamadan and mentions a river Sanbatyon — in the third century Commodianus has them *Persida flumine clausi*. Their new abode, which came to be called Arzareth after *erets aheret* ("another land", in Deut. 29.28) seems to be a place of snowy mountains (if a word SLWG may suggest Heb. *šeleg*, "snow"). One candidate is the Elburz chain south of the Caspian. The latter is mentioned as a place where they were; and if one notes the testimony of Josephus (Wars 7.7.4) to the effect that Alexander built his wall to keep out the Scythians, whom he identifies with Magog, then that barrier would have been at the Caspian Gates near the western shore of that sea²⁶. The *Qur'ān*, Ch. 18, knows both the wall and its builder, Zeus Ammon's son the *dhū 'l-qarnain*, "two-horned"; and has the barrier between two mountains. This is a persistent detail: the 14th-cent. Swedish *Konung Alexander* adds that the twin peaks *waro hogh ok mykith lang* "were high and very long"; and ancient Armenian sources call P'ok'r and Azat Masik' — Little and Greater Ararat — *erkar*, "long"²⁷. And the turbulent river Araxes, that Tacitus writes will not bear bridges, (Virgil

²⁵ Though it is difficult to argue from silence, perhaps *Harut' (for Hārūt) was heard as too close to Harut', a common diminutive of the proper name Yarut'iwn, "Resurrection", to be suitable for a negative spell; while Mařut' carries the suitably frightening phonetic signature of Arm. *mah* "death", *ma(r)šel* "wear out, decay", *meřnil*, "die", and so on.

²⁶ Josephus, a native of the Galil, lived, rather ironically, not very far from the only town that is known to have borne the name of the ostensibly remote and fabulous Scythians, Scythopolis (Heb. Bēṭ Še'an). Presumably he even met a few serving in the Roman cavalry.

²⁷ In Movsēs Xorenac'i, *History of the Armenians*, I.26, the Mede Aždahak has a dream that foretells his doom: he finds himself "in an unknown land (*yerkr*) near a mountain long from the earth

follows him, making the Araxes the edge of earth and Empire on the shield of Aeneas), flows past it. The historian and the poet meant by the political metaphor that Parthia would never submit to Roman domination; but it can make of the river a Sambatyon as well, a limit of the known world. For is not the incursion of Parthians into the Land of Israel an apocalyptic har-binger of redemption in the Talmudic literature?

So the country where another troublesome couple, Adam and Eve, were expelled from a garden of delights and the Ark of Noah rested, might be a fair candidate near the Caspian Gates for the Otherworld of Arzareth. And as the tale developed, Gog, Magog, and the “hidden” tribes were blended together even as the two words of Deuteronomy had been: John Mandeville speaks of “they of Caspye... Iewes of x. lynages, that men clepen Goth & Magoth.” That is all very well; but the *topos* of confinement implies another of escape. Orosius in the fifth century warns that the Jews teeming around the Caspian will break out (*erupturus*). *Pesikta Rabbati* 31.10 has the exiles migrating home-wards in *meḥilīm*, “tunnels” — like the *gilgul* of the bones of the men to be resurrected at Doomsday in the vale of Jehosopha, perhaps. In the uneasy folklore of the Middle Ages the belief was widespread in Germanic lands that the hordes of Gog and Magog waiting to burst from their confines and ravage Christendom were indeed the ten lost tribes — not the weak and despised Jews they knew, though, but Jews called either *rote* “red” (and oversexed) or *groß* “big” (like the giants, *‘anaqīm* and *nefilīm*). And what the persecutors feared, their victims hoped for: David Reuveni came to Rome in 1624 boasting that he could harness the might of these muscular Jews to retake Jerusalem. Eldad the Danite, who appeared in Qayrawan with tales of the ten lost tribes, went one better, for he spoke in a strangely-flavored (as it seems to recent researchers, a Najrani-tinged) Hebrew. Mandeville claimed Jews learnt the old tongue in order to be able to communicate with the ten tribes, presumably when the latter might come as a conquering, liberating army²⁸. The Zionist project, with its sunny aim of *skazku sdelat’ byl’iu*, “making reality of a fable” (as a Soviet song promises; *Im tirtsū ēn zū agādā* was how Herzl put it), was determined to bring back the exiles. Yitzhak Ben Zvi in *The Exiled and the Redeemed* muses on those deported by Assyria long ago. And Eliezer Ben Yehuda, whose contribution was the revival of spoken Hebrew, muses in his memoir, “At that time [1881, the year of his *aliya*],

(*erkar yerkrē*) in height, whose summit seemed encased in the severity (*sastkut’eamb*) of ice; and they said, you would think, this is in the land of the progeny of the Armenians (*haykazanc*). And as I looked longer (*erkaragoyns*) at the mountain, a woman clothed in purple (*ciranazgest*), having a veil of heavenly color (*erknagoyñ*) about her, appeared seated on the edge (*i cayri*) of such a height, lovely, tall in stature, and red-cheeked (*karmrayt*), gripped by the pains of giving birth (*erkanc*). And I looked longer still (*yerkaragoyns*) at this apparition and was in wonder, suddenly the woman gave birth (*cnaw*) to three fully-grown men (*eris katareals*) of the stature and nature of the progeny of the gods (*diwc’azanc*). The first, gripping the flanks of a lion upon which he was mounted, sped west; the second, on a leopard, headed north; but the third, reining a monstrous dragon (*zvišap anari*), advancing upon our realm, attacked.” On the antiquity of this passage, its relationship to other Iranian epic material, and its poetics and encoding of material from the song of the birth of Vahagn, see Russell 2009.

²⁸ On the ten tribes and *rote Juden*, see Benite 2009; and Gow 1995.

Palestine was more like a fairy tale to most Jews, hardly more real than the kingdom of the sons of Moses across the River Sambatyon.²⁹

Ben Yehuda was partly inspired to resurrect Hebrew, and to use it as his everyday tongue in Israel, by the Russian translation of George Eliot's novel *Daniel Deronda*; and it has been argued that she invented a character who undertakes the project of personal and national liberation and renewal as a Jew because she could not face writing as candidly about the similar needs of women. Fiction thus writes reality; and by imagining as Arzareth the very land of which my nation now sings, *En li erets aheret*, "I do not have an Other Country", a mythologized land of exile is transposed and imposed upon an actual place of return. But irony seems as essential to writing as gravity is to physicality: the two angels fell and are confined in this Otherworld because they could not control their own libido, so now their profession is to teach others how to arouse and manipulate it, reminding their clients that everything they are about to say is a temptation or even rebellion (for *fitna* has both these senses).

The angels Hārūt and Mārūt, says the scripture, taught *sihr*, "magic". This much accords with the rest of the evidence; and their warning, that what they are about to say is all nothing but *fitna*, again agrees with the tradition already noted that the giants and their ilk specialized in lying and deceit. But two decades ago Cyril Glasse, the scholar of Islam, offered to me this haunting paraphrase of the angels' caveat: "Everything we are about to say to you is a lie; now then, listen carefully!" And everyone *does*. There is no implication that the warning effectively repels anybody. If it did, the Prophet would not be telling the tale. One might aver that any man who has just traveled to the terrifying limits of the world to learn witchcraft is not going to be deterred by the health warning on the package. But in a more general way, what is it that we know is not true, yet we listen to it despite that, or even precisely because it is untrue? It is literary art, fiction. Pindar (Nemean ode 7.22–23) writes of Homer, *epei pseudesi hoti potanai te makhanai/ semnon epesti te* "for on his lies and his winged skill something sacred is present." It is not very far from the *semnon*, the holy, to *sihr*, the magical; and indeed with reference to certain kinds of poetry and rhetoric, there is a famous *ḥadīth*: *Inna mina 'l-bayāni la-siḥran* "There is a kind of eloquence like magic."³⁰ Our little life is rounded by a sleep: aware of its confines and of the pain of the sentence and the sorrow of its end, literary imagination a lie we welcome, knowing it is a lie. It is magical indeed, providing wonder and relief and a sense of freedom. Suspending disbelief, we break down Alexander's wall and cross the river Sambatyon at will. Brian Boyd has argued of late that fiction is an evolutionary adaptation, a way of gaming out possible roles and situations in order to cope with them better, rather in the manner that a motorcyclist scans the road ahead and anticipates (imagines) potential situations he will have to deal with at very short notice. But fiction is more than a limbering up of the mind to deal with future challenges. It is also demonic, *fitna* in the sense of revolution, since it is man's protest against the way things are, an attempt to create in another fashion than the Creator, and to speak of matters such as the vagaries of human passion in which we, and not God, are at the center. Hārūt and Mārūt, not the unfolding genome, invented it, all right. Lev Nikolayevich Tolstoy perceived this in his old age, repented, turned from fiction

²⁹ Muraoka 1993, p. 62.

³⁰ Cit. by T. Fahd, "Siḥr," *Et* 2.

to Christ, and, Solomon-like, repudiated the great books of his earlier life. One evening his wife was reading such a book to him, though. It dealt with illicit passion and the problems of family life. "It's rather good," he admitted. "What is it?" It was, she told him, a novel entitled *Anna Karenina*.

Bibliography:

- Abdullaeva 2001: Firuza I. Abdullaeva, tr. and ed., *Tolkovanie Korana (Lakhorskil Tafsir)*, Pamiatniki pis'mennosti Vostoka 124, Moscow: Izd. Vostochnaia Literatura RAN, 2001.
- Bamberger 1952: Bernard J. Bamberger, *Fallen Angels*, Philadelphia: JPS, 1952.
- Benite 2009: Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Ten Lost Tribes: A World History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- De Menasce 1947: Jean de Menasce, "Une légende indo-iranienne dans l'angélogie judéo-musulmane: à propos du Hārūt et Mārūt," *Études Asiatiques*, Berne, L2, Juin 1947, pp. 10–18, repr. *Études Iraniques*, 1985.
- Dialect Dictionary 2002: Hayoc' lezvi barbaṛayin baṛaran ["Dialect dictionary of the Armenian language"], vol. 2, Erevan, 2002.
- Dillmann 1853: A. Dillmann, tr. from Ethiopic, *Das Christliche Adambuch des Morgenlandes*, Göttingen, 1853.
- Goldziher 1884–8: I. Goldziher, "Renseignements de source musulmane sur la dignité de Resch-Galuta," *Revue des études juives*, 1884–8.
- Gow 1995: Andrew Colin Gow, *The Red Jews: Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age*, Leiden: Brill, 1995.
- Graves and Patai 1963: Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths: The Book of Genesis*, New York: Crown, 1963.
- Halperin 1982: David J. Halperin, "The Book of Remedies, the Canonization of the Solomonic Writings, and the Riddle of Ps.-Eusebius," *JQR* 76.4 (Apr. 1982).
- Henning 1940: W.B. Henning, *Sogdica*, London, 1940, repr. in *Acta Iranica* 15, Leiden: Brill, 1977.
- Milik 1976: J.T. Milik, *The Books of Enoch (Aramaic Fragments at Qumran Cave 4)*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976.
- Morgan 1983: Michael A. Morgan, tr., *Sepher ha-Razim: The Book of the Mysteries*, Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1983.
- Muraoka 1993: T. Muraoka, tr., *Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, A Dream Come True*, Boulder, CO: Westview, 1993.
- Naveh and Shaked 1985: J. Naveh and S. Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity*, Leiden: Brill, 1985.
- Naveh and Shaked 1993: J. Naveh and S. Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae: Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity*, Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1993.
- Reeves 1992: John C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony: Studies in the Book of Giants Tradition*, Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1992.
- Russell 1986–87: J.R. Russell, "Some Iranian Images of Kingship in the Armenian Artaxiad Epic," *REArm* 20, 1986–87, pp. 253–70.
- Russell 1987: J.R. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, Harvard Iranian Series 5, Cambridge, MA, 1987.
- Russell 1988: J.R. Russell, "The Rite of Muikil Āsān Behrām Yazad amongst the Parsis of Navsari, India," *Barg-e Sabz: A Green Leaf: Festschrift Jes P. Asmussen (Acta Iranica, ser. Hommages et opera minora 12)*, Leiden, 1988.
- Russell 1990: J.R. Russell, "Zoroastrian Elements in the Book of Esther," in S. Shaked and A. Netzer, eds., *Irano-Judaica II*, Jerusalem: Makhon Ben-Zvi, 1990.

- Russell 1994: J.R. Russell, "Problematic Snake Children of Armenia," *REArm* 25, 1994, pp. 77–96.
- Russell 2006: "Argawan: The Indo-European Memory of the Caucasus," *JArmenSt* VIII.2, Fall 2006 [2007], pp. 110–147.
- Russell 2009: J.R. Russell, "Magic Mountains, Milky Seas, Dragon Slayers, and Other Zoroastrian Archetypes", Ratanbai Katrak Lecture, University of Oxford, 3 November 2009 (in publication, *BAI*, Anne Arbor, MI).
- Russell (in publication): J.R. Russell, "An Armenian Magico-medical Manuscript (*bēškaran*) in the NAASR Collection" (in publication).
- Scholem 1965: G. Scholem, *On the Kabbalah and its Symbolism*, New York, 1965.
- Séguy 1977: Marie-Rose Séguy, ed., *The Miraculous Journey of Mahomet (Mirāj Nameh, Bibl. Nat. Paris MS Suppl. Turc 190)*, New York: Braziller, 1977.
- Shaked 1991: Shaul Shaked, "Aspekte vom Noruz, dem iranischen Neujahrsfest," in J. Assmann and T. Sundermaier, eds., *Studien zum Verstehen fremder Religionen, I: Das Fest und das Heilige*, Gütersloh, 1991.
- Shoshan 1993: Boaz Shoshan, *Popular Culture in Medieval Cairo*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

THE CURVING SHORE OF TIME AND SPACE:
NOTES ON THE PROLOGUE TO PUSHKIN'S *RUSLAN AND LUDMILA*

James R. Russell

Золотое руно, где же ты, золотое руно?
Всю дорогу шумели морские тяжёлые волны,
И, покинув корабль, натрудивший в морях полотно,
Одиссей возвратился, пространством и временем
полный!

("Golden fleece, where are you now, golden fleece?
All the journey long roared the heavy sea waves,
And, leaving the ship that had worked a canvas of
the seas,
Odysseus returned, replete with time and space!")

—Osip Mandelstam (1891–1938)¹

As lucid as you like or as deep as you choose to dive.

—Adam Gopnik, on the *Alice* books of Lewis Carroll²

Preface

On a muddy winter morning in 1967, a ninth-grader was standing in a noisy, crowded line at the cafeteria of the Bronx High School of Science, memorizing Mikhail Yur'evich Lermontov's poem "The Sail" («Парус») from a mimeograph handed out in Ms. Meisel's first-year Russian class. An older boy ahead of him—a fearsome upperclassman—noticed, and, with a gentleness he never forgot, carefully wrote out for him in Russian script an enchanting poem about an oak by a curving shore, a learned cat, and a forest whose unknown paths bore the footprints of unseen beasts.

¹ Concluding lines of the poem «Золотистого мёда струя из бутылки текла...» ("Golden honey from the bottle streamed..."), 1917, in Осип Мандельштам, *Стихотворения, Проза*, Библиотека Поэта, Москва, 2001, 66 (Osip Mandelstam, *Poems and Prose*, Poet's Library, Moscow, 2001, 66). Mandelstam wrote the poem at the dacha of S. Sudeikin in Alushta, on the Black Sea coast of the Crimea, where he had gone for a respite from the chaos in revolutionary Petersburg.

² Martin Gardner, ed., Lewis Carroll, *The Hunting of the Snark: The Definitive Edition*, with an Introduction by Adam Gopnik (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), xvii.

The magic and beauty of Pushkin's poem, like first love, never left the boy as he grew into a man: beneath the playful verses he felt there was a great and powerful mystery. Most all Russians know every image in the *Prologue* to *Ruslan and Ludmila*; and I imagine many a reader has wondered what profundity of meaning lies beneath the limpid beauty of the light surface. (Pushkin's friend Küchelbecker thought *Ruslan and Ludmila* a lovely creation, but one without any substantial meaning.)

This essay approaches that question, albeit with respect to the *Prologue* rather than the larger poem: Is there the possibility of a profound, symbolic, spiritually fulfilling meaning? One starts with a cursory survey of the history of the text, its literary context, and its reception; this is followed by a close reading. One then employs an illustration of the poem after Pushkin's death by the rather obscure artist Ramazanov to establish a visual structure, as though the poem were ekphrastic, travelling from left to right and up and down, onto the temporally sequential scene established by Pushkin: curving seashore at the beginning, i.e., on the left; oak, Cat, and Poet at center foreground, with an undine in the branches above; and mysterious forest on the right. Supernatural beings from Russian folklore and myth emerge from the sea and fly through the air, creating a vertical pattern to the Otherworld vision.

One then maps Ramazanov's illustration of 1843 in turn upon William Blake's painting of 1821, "The Sea of Time and Space". Neither Pushkin nor his illustrator is likely to have seen it, though Pushkin and Blake shared some interests and common traits: they liked Ossian and were interested in the epic and mythological heritage of their respective nations, they saw themselves as prophetic voices in the cast of Isaiah, and they were both irreverent, transgressive figures in their societies trying to invent a fundamentally new aesthetic. So far, though we deal with parallels rather than filiation, we are still securely situated in the contiguous environments of 19th-century Europe. But then, for the interpretation of Blake's painting, we must resort to material that, though very much more remote, is—one would plead—not at all irrelevant. This is where the New York high school boy deploys the weapons of the mature Orientalist.

Blake's sources for his painting, unlike Pushkin's for his poem, can be traced to various Neoplatonic texts of Late Antiquity, notably to Porphyry's *De Antro Nympharum* ("On the Cave of the Nymphs"), an esoteric interpretation of a mysterious image in the *Odyssey* of Homer; and from these it can be established that the English poet has evoked a vision of a place outside the normal continuum of time and space, a point of transit where some souls enter physical incarnation and others depart from this world

on the journey to heaven. There is a Gnostic religion, Mandaeanism, most of whose adherents now live in southern Iraq and Iran whose founders, rebelling against the established Temple cult of Israel, settled to the immediate south and southeast of Armenia. In the third century a man named Patteg, a proto-Mandaean, and his wife Maryam Kamsarakan, whose name suggests Christian and Armenian connections, had a son they named Mani who went on to found the great Manichaean faith: apparently he had close Armenian associates and actively propagated his new religion in Armenia.

The layout and architecture of the Mandaean temple complex, the *manda*, explicitly embody the structure, symmetry, and symbolism—for concrete ritual purposes—of the painting by Blake. Such parallels, from the two antipodes of the Classical world, are striking, but not, ultimately, surprising: the ideological sources and casts of mind and imagination of Blake and his Gnostic precursors are in many respects kindred. Varied as the sources of Pushkin's mythological learning are, in folk tale, European poetry, and Old Russian epic, they are not Gnostic. The cosmic structure of the *Prologue* to *Ruslan and Ludmila* is his very own: he has come up with a Slavonic Cave of the Nymphs by the power of his own vision. There is his profundity; there, the mystery of his beautiful poem.

The second part of the essay explores the work of several visionary Russian writers after Pushkin: Vladimir Nabokov, Velimir Khlebnikov, and Daniil Kharms—who have been inspired by elements of the *Prologue*. They employ in their encounters with the poem new insights into the imagining of an Otherworld: “trans-rational” (Rus. *zaum'*) and absurdist lexicons and thematic structures (inspired in part by the inventions, known to the Russians this time, of another Englishman, Lewis Carroll), non-Euclidian mathematics, intentionally supernatural connections, the mystical teaching known as Kabbala, and graphic experimentation (personal ciphers, and the enigmatic Voynich manuscript).

1. *The Prologue to Ruslan and Ludmila*

Pushkin's first great *poema*,³ *Ruslan and Ludmila* (RL), was approved by the censor Timkovsky on 15 May 1820 and published in late July or early

³ The useful Russian word *поэма* has no exact English equivalent. It can be characterized as a composition in verse, verging on the scale of an epic in length, whose theme, however, is more that of a novel or romance.

August 1820: he had begun it in 1817, while still a student at the Lycée of Tsarskoe Selo; and he read the completed text to friends at the end of March 1820. But before it appeared in print at St. Petersburg, the poet himself was exiled to south Russia and Moldavia; in July 1820, in the Caucasus, Pushkin composed a sad Epilogue in which he mourns the departure of poetic inspiration. *RL* is the second-longest poetical work in the corpus of Pushkin's writings, after the "novel in verse" *Evgenii Onegin*: it consists of six Cantos of 2,822 lines in all, in iambic tetrameter. The sources from which Pushkin drew inspiration and background material are numerous: Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso* and Voltaire pervade the tone and spirit of the work; and Pushkin borrowed happily from the texts of Russian epic (the controversial Old Slavonic *Slovo o polku Igoreve*, "The Lay of Igor's Campaign", or, simply, the Igor' Tale), of folk tales (*skazki*), and of heroic ballads (called now *byliny*, a conscious neologism of Pushkin's day). He drew also from contemporary artistic treatments of these old and folk sources: Karamzin's *Il'ya Muromets* and Zhukovsky's ballads—especially "Rusalka of the Dnepr". Like many other Russian and European poets of his time, he was fascinated and moved by Macpherson's *Ossian*. The modern Irish novelist Colm Tóibín, in his foreword to the first full, book-length English edition and translation of *RL*, offers a vivid evocation of the contrary energies that find harmony in the *poema*, as in so much of Pushkin's *oeuvre*: "Pushkin thus came to the story of Ruslan and Lyudmila with all the ironies and sense of crafty distance which his education had offered him. He had the energy of a natural storyteller and the resources to usurp that energy... He managed what is almost unmanageable: to offer parody and enchantment at the same time. He offered the mock heroic without losing the heroic."⁴ This evaluation shares the Russian critical insight into Pushkin's "lightness" (лёгкость), by which is meant poetry whose playful gracefulness of style seems effortlessly to convey an extraordinary depth of meaning and feeling. Yuri Lotman has observed that *RL* prepares the reader of *Eugene Onegin* for the irony and contrast of Pushkin's style.⁵

Zhukovsky's acclamation, "To a victorious pupil from a defeated master," has come to epitomize the immediate popularity and success of the poem amongst the Russian reading public. The first edition sold out at once, with some paying 25 rubles for a copy. Critical acclaim was to

⁴ Roger Clarke, *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (trans. Alexander Pushkin; London: Hesperus, 2005), viii.

⁵ Ю.М. Лотман, *Пушкин* (СПб: Искусство-СПб, 1997), 194; Yuri M. Lotman, *Pushkin* (St. Petersburg: Art-St. Petersburg, 1997), 194.

come somewhat later: some critics found *RL* indecent, and I. Dmitriev, for example, wrote “A mother orders her daughter to spit upon this tale” («Мать дочери велит на сказку эту плюнуть»). Pushkin took all such insults to heart; so years later he replied, in *Eugene Onegin*, “Of course the mother would have ordered/ Her daughter to read his [works]” («Еро [труды] конечно мать/ Велела б дочери читать»). Though the criticism was trivial in this case—the censor had approved *RL* for publication, as noted above, and had done so without requiring any revisions or excisions—one has to notice the dark clouds gathering. Pushkin is the author of the *Gavriiliada*, an obscene parody of the Annunciation; his own “Exegi monumentum” is a *blague*, a practical joke, about Derzhavin’s earlier ode; he called Falconet’s equestrian statue of Peter I an idol (Rus. *kumir*) and aroused the ire of the Emperor. There must inhere in Pushkin’s lightness and playfulness a tendency to intentional *transgression* that characterizes much artistic innovation but necessarily leads to confrontation with the established order and its canons of propriety and taste. Pushkin suffered ostracism, persecution, and death at the hand of d’Anthès, partly because of his own transgressive character, and that of his work.⁶

Pushkin composed the *Prologue* (text 1.1: «У лукоморья . . .», “By the bow-curve of the seashore . . .”) to the poem late in 1824, during his sojourn at his estate at Mikhailovskoe in 1824–1826. On 12 October 1826 Pushkin read the *Prologue* and other compositions to a gathering of friends in Moscow at the home of D. Venevitinov; and in a memoir written forty years later M. Pogodin professed still to feel the excitement of that occasion. It was published in the second edition of *RL* at Petersburg, 1828. The reviews of the new edition stressed the novelty, individuality, and originality of the *Prologue*, which sketched out, enthused the *Moscow Telegraph*, “a whole

⁶ Anthony Julius, a British lawyer, literary scholar, and art critic, offers a forensic exploration of the legal ambiguities of the frequent conflicts between artistic creativity and conventional morality in *Transgressions: The Offences of Art* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002). The aspect of sexual misconduct, in the artist’s work or his life, seems to be a particularly frequent component of the confrontation. An artist’s defiant response makes clear that the transgression is not an all-too-human peccadillo but an ideological stance and protest, and thereby makes the rift radical, sometimes tragic. The painter Thomas Eakins, whose use of nudity and whose possible homosexual leanings scandalized the prim academic establishment of the arts in Philadelphia, declared in 1894, “My honors are misunderstanding, persecution, and neglect, enhanced because unsought” (Julius, 44). That is, Eakins considered everything he did natural and right. Two generations later, the Armenian poet Charents, a Pushkin scholar to be discussed in a note below in connection with the poem “The Prophet”, was to be persecuted, then murdered by the puritanical Stalinist régime, whose disapproval he incurred not only by his work, but by his defiantly transgressive sexual behavior. *Plus ça change . . .*

world of Russian tales presented by the hand of a great master of Russian realities and fantasies."⁷ The Epilogue, which, as noted above Pushkin had in fact written in 1820, when he completed the body of *RL*, was also included with the text only in the second edition, though in 1820 it had been published separately. John Bayley wrote that *RL* leaves the "feeling... of a society apprehending itself... in a sort of microcosmic idyll."⁸ The *Prologue* evokes a microcosm of its own; and it is on it that this study focuses. Pushkin based the first part of the *Prologue* on one of his nurse-maid Arina Rodionovna's tales, which he jotted down in his notes (text 1.2); and Bayley observed that in reworking the passage for his poem, Pushkin strove for the greatest conciseness, stripping the first line, for example, of the unnecessary verb *stoit*, "stands":⁹ the microcosm was to be as micro as possible. Pushkin pared his own draft down further, excising the adverb *tam* "there" (which will play a major, and contrastive, role in lines 7–29) and a whole extraneous line (*I den' i noch' tam kot uchenyi/ Ne skhozhi ni s odnim kotom* "And day and night there a learned cat/ Unlike any other cat there is").¹⁰ The *Prologue* to *RL* is not unique as an addition to a large work: Pushkin was to write one to *Eugene Onegin*¹¹—but "By the bow-curve of the seashore" is an extraordinary, independent poem that merits discussion on its own. It is a powerfully compact work of visionary, mythological lyricism, and nothing decisively links it to the poem it introduces. Indeed it is at variance with the latter: Pushkin heard the tale from a "monastic chronicler" (*RL* V.225–228), not the Learned Cat of the *Prologue*. Lotman, noting the contrast between the *Prologue* and the rest of *RL*, seeks to explain how the poet might have justified to himself its

⁷ *Московский телеграф*, 1828, ч. 20, № 5, с. 78: «целый мир русских сказок, в эскизе представленный рукою великого мастера русских былей и небыллиц.»

⁸ John Bayley, *Pushkin: A Comparative Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), 49.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 51.

¹⁰ See A.C. Пушкин, *Полное собрание сочинений*, т. 4, (Москва: Изд. АН СССР, 1937), 276 ("Черновой отрывок пролога"): A.S. Pushkin, *Complete Works* (vol. 4; Moscow: Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1937), 276 ("Draft excerpt of the Prologue").

¹¹ "Разговор книгопродавца с поэтом", "The bookseller's conversation with the poet", it should remind one of another series of prologues situated in ironic detachment out-side the action of the work underscoring the artificiality of the latter. This is the prologue in Heaven (cf. the setting of the Biblical book of Job) and the prologue in the theater (cf. the play *Shakuntala* of Kalidasa) preceding the first part of Goethe's *Faust*. The Prologue to *RL* is characterized, in contrast, not by an attitude of detachment, but by its opposite: an immersion in the mythological material that is, if anything, deeper than in the *poema* itself.

inclusion in the second edition: "When working on *RL*, Pushkin was not yet able to penetrate the genuine world of Russian folklore as deeply as he could after his stay in Mikhailovskoe. However, in preparing the new edition the poet did not go about redoing his earlier *poema*. He introduced into it the excerpt 'By the bow-curve of the seashore...' and this illuminated the text in a new way, without changing it."¹²

The *Prologue* can be divided into three parts: the introductory lines 1–6 that set the scene; the main narrative and list, lines 7–29; and a coda partially recapitulating 1–6 but with an intrusive element. To the third part belongs a concluding couplet that serves in part as a transition to the body of the poem. The lexicon of the *Prologue* stands out, both from the rest of the work and from Pushkin's corpus in general: the characters come from Russian folklore, and some of them—Tsar' Kashchei, the witch Baba Yaga, a Learned Cat—appear only here.¹³ The *Prologue* is exceptionally, densely populous:¹⁴ between lines 1 and 29 we meet the Cat, the Forest Sprite, a Mermaid (*Rusalka*), beasts, a hut on chicken feet, thirty Knights, their Seaborn Sire, a Prince, a fearsome King, a Wizard, a Hero, a Princess, a Brown Wolf, the witch Baba Yaga, a walking mortar, and king Kashchei gloating over his gold. That makes fourteen named, more or less animate

¹² Lotman, 758: Работая над «Русланом и Людмилой», Пушкин ещё не обладал той мерой проникновения в подлинный мир русского фольклора, которая стала доступна ему после пребывания в Михайловском. Однако, готовя новое издание, поэт не стал переделывать свою раннюю поэму—он ввёл в неё синтезирующий фольклорные мотивы отрывок «У лукоморья дуб зелёный...», и это по-новому осветило текст, не меняя его.

¹³ The *leshii*, a forest sprite or hamadryad, appears once more in Pushkin's oeuvre—but in an autobiographical sketch that is more explanatory background to *RL* than it is a different work: Не смотря на то, что всем окружающим нас строго было запрещено пугать нас ведьмами, лешими, домовыми, няньки все-таки иногда говорили о них между собою, "Even though it was strictly forbidden to those around us to frighten us with witches, forest sprites, and house spirits, the nannies still sometimes talked among themselves about them": see АН СССР, Ин-т языкознания, *Словарь языка Пушкина* (Москва: Госиздат иностранных и национальных словарей, 1957), 2:479 s.v. (Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Institute of Linguistics, *Dictionary of the Language of Pushkin*, Moscow: State Publishing House of Foreign and National Languages, 1957, 2:479 s.v.). On Pushkin's word for the bow-curve of the seashore, *lukomor'e*, see 2:512 s.v. In his works, Pushkin used the word *koldun* "sorcerer" 17 times (including *RL*, l.280, where it is a *koldun* who has kidnapped the heroine); *nevedomyi* "unknown", 35 times but *nevidannyi* "unseen" only twice; *rusalka* "mermaid", 10 times and *rusalochka* (diminutive), three.

¹⁴ See В.А. Кошелев, *Первая книга Пушкина* (Томск: Водолей, 1997), 199 (V.A. Koshelev, *Pushkin's First Book*, Tomsk: Aquarius, 1997, 199): "The condensed [Rus. *sgushchénnoe*] beginning anticipates as it were the world of Pushkin's tales, that were not yet created." The author also points out in support of his suggestion that in the Prologue Pushkin uses thrice the word *skazka*, "tale", which is found nowhere else in the *poema*.

individual characters, plus the Knights, the unseen “people” (*narod*), and an unspecified number of unseen beasts whose tracks appear on unknown paths. The other verbal material of the passage is rich; but the word *tam*, “there”, stands out for repetition: it is met fourteen times (corresponding, indeed, to the number of particular characters introduced), sure evidence that Pushkin intended his reader to regard the *Prologue* in part as a mythological list, reminiscent of the mnemonic *tour de force* of ancient epic—Homer’s catalogue of ships in the *Iliad*, for example. The provision of such a list establishes bardic mastery and authority.

It also creates an Otherworld strongly defined by the repeated adverb *tam* as separate from this world; and the dense foregrounding of mythological realia—Nabokov called it the “*it-ness*” of a story—is also a salient feature of the literature of fantasy.¹⁵ If one considers the *Prologue* as ekphrasis—a literary description of a picture—the hypothetical painting from which Pushkin worked would be a canvas full of characters on land, in the sea, and in the sky, with exemplifications of diverse opposites: faithful virtue (Princess and Brown Wolf) and degrading vice (the evil Kashchei with his golden hoard), or sorcery (Baba Yaga) and its overthrow (the Hero riding the vanquished Wizard). This is a magical world, so creatures that should be in one realm can appear in its reverse: Knights come out of the depths of the sea; but the aquatic Mermaid is seated high in a tree. This is not a forced effect: there are submarine knights, and the *rusalki* of Russian folk belief haunt the branches during the week of Rusalia, after the feast of the Trinity, to lure their victims to be tickled to death or drown in a watery grave. It enables one to see into places normally invisible, as one should expect of a cosmogram. (Pushkin plays on the roots *ved-* “know” and *vid-* “see”, with their derivatives, as we shall see presently, to stress this perception of the marvelous.) And the whole should be anchored by the central image of the oak, the world tree where the Learned Cat reproduces the diurnal revolution of the heavenly spheres (*i dnyom i noch'yu*: “by day and by night”) on his literal *catena aurea*, literally spinning the tales and songs Pushkin is there to transcribe.¹⁶ This World Tree is the

¹⁵ Adam Gopnik *apud* Gardner, xviii.

¹⁶ In one Russian folktale, «ходит по тому столбу учёный кот...вниз идёт—песни поёт, а вверх поднимается—сказки сказывает; голос его за три версты слышен» (“A Learned Cat walks at that pole...he goes down and sings songs; upwards he ascends, and recounts tales—his voice can be heard three versts away”). See А.Н. Афанасьев, *Народные русские сказки* (т. 1; Москва, 1984). 287 (A.N. Afanas'ev, *Russian Folk Tales*, vol. 1; Moscow, 1984, 287). In Derzhavin's *Царь-Девуца* (*Tsar'-Devitsa*, 1812), «И по веткам птички райски/ Скакивал заморской кот» (“And along the branches, paradisiacal

central point where the poet brings everything invisible into plain view through the Logos of his imagination.¹⁷ A painting cannot reproduce one effect, indeed: everything except Pushkin himself is in motion. The poet alone sits immobile at the very center of the composition.

After line 30, Pushkin enters this magic cosmos, his own fictional landscape: between lines 30 and 35, the personal pronoun "I", used five times (*ya*, 4x; *mne* [dat. sg.] 1x), is the only animate inhabitant of the coda, save for the Learned Cat, who belongs to the opening scene that is being recapitulated. In the coda, all the verbs are 1st pers. sg. past (*byl* "[I] was", *pil* "drank", *videl* "saw", *sidel* "sat") until the Cat's sole *govoril* ("he told me his tales"), after which the verbs are 1st pers. again, but now, strikingly, in the present tense (*pomnyu* "I remember", *povedayu* "I shall relate"). The density of the usage of the pronoun serves, again, to stress the sudden and visible entry of the author. And the distribution of verbs symmetrically from past to present, to either side of the Cat's narration, suggests that Pushkin, the Cat's interpreter, forms a bridge between the mythological world *in illo tempore* and the present time of the literary public. The unity of time of the *Prologue* is difficult to define and contrastive, which suggests an Otherworld quality of a great deal of time telescoped into a few sidereal moments. Pushkin recorded in his notebook that the "thirty splendid knights" («тридцать витязей прекрасных», who are to appear again in his *Tale of Tsar Saltan*) "are the same down to a hair in the timbre of their voices, their height, and their appearance; and they emerge from the sea for only one hour" («точь-в-точь ровны и голосом и волосом, а выходят они из моря только на один час»); in the poem this happens at dawn («о заре»). But the poet also avers that the Learned Cat recounted or spoke (Rus. *govoril*, in the habitual mode of the verb, as is *pil*, "drank", of the mead Pushkin there imbibed) its tales («сказки»), of which the narrator apparently remembers but one («одну я помню»); so there were more, and it all took much longer, then, than an hour. If the Learned Cat is

birds—/ Loped the Cat from Beyond the Seas"). Pushkin seems to have opted for a cat who like a planet circumambulates the oak to stress the tree's centrality, rather than go up and down or run through the branches—where, in any case, the undine is seated.

¹⁷ Koshelev, 200, notes that in 1820 Pushkin traveled in the company of General N.N. Raevsky through the Pridneprovsko-Azovskaya steppe: in those parts there still stands the *Zaporozhskii dub*, "Zaporozh'e oak", which received sacrifices in ancient times. It was a place where Cossacks gathered for councils, and is still sacred in Ukrainian tradition (see В.Д. Михайлов, «К локализации пушкинского лукоморья», *Временник Пушкинской Комиссии*, вып. 26, СПб, 1995, 192–196 (V.D. Mikhailov, "Towards a localization of Pushkin's *lukomor'e*," *Bulletin of the Pushkin Commission*, no. 26, St. Petersburg, 1995, 192–196).

standing in for Arina Rodionovna, then it is in fact all his early childhood that the poet telescopes into a single magic, radiant hour of dawn.

In the earlier section of the *Prologue* there is an incantatory, *mantra*-like couplet: *tam na nevedomykh dorozhkakh/ sledy nevidannykh zverei* "there on unknown paths/ are the tracks of unseen beasts" with the assonant, Indo-European etymological figure *ved-/vid-*: in the coda, Pushkin annuls both negatives with *videl* "I saw" and *povedayu* "I shall relate": these link knowing to seeing. Both *vid-* "see" and *ved-* "know" come in Slavic from proto-Indo-European roots whose assonance goes back to the primordial figures of the poetics of that giant language family. The poet has become seer and teller of what was unknowable and unseen, bringing it to the outer, present world (Rus. *svet*), and to light (also *svet*). The poet's seeing and knowing of the invisible and the unknowable is underscored also in line 13, *tam les i dol videnii pobny*. The forest (*les*) looms darkly to the viewer's right in the composition of the scene; but no dale (*dol*) has yet been mentioned, though the two form a nice, traditional figure. They are full of what Roger Clarke translates as "wraiths"; but *viden'e/videnie*, on the evidence of Pushkin's own usage, might be more precisely translated simply as "vision". The reference seems to be as much to phantasms one beholds in the dream state as to the prophetic or theophanic vision.¹⁸

¹⁸ In the *Словарь языка Пушкина* (*Dictionary of the Language of Pushkin*), s.v., are these citations: Германи... записал свое видение (Hermann... wrote down his vision); Тут он видит чудное виденье: на помосте валяются трупы (Now he saw a weird vision: corpses lay strewn on the platform); Однажды утром Чарский чувствовал то благодатное расположение духа, когда мечтания явственно рисуются перед вами, и вы обретае живые, неожиданные слова для воплощения видений наших... (Once in the morning Charsky experienced that blissful disposition when one sees one's dreams sketched plainly before one, and acquires vivid, unexpected words with which to embody our visions...); ...в неясных видениях первосония (...in those unclear visions one has when dropping off to sleep); На рассвете она задремала, но тонкий сон её был встревожен печальными видениями (She finally fell asleep at dawn, but her light slumber was disturbed by gloomy visions). Pushkin refers here to the conscious, waking dream, Rus. мечта, the dream in sleep, Rus. сон, and the intermediate state. A salient feature of Homer's strange, supernatural cave of the nymphs at Ithaka, to be discussed presently, is that it has two entrances—one for gods and one for mortals—and shortly after Odysseus arrives there, is entertained by Eumaios, and finds his way to Penelope, the latter explains to him that dreams have two gates: prophetic ones (i.e., divine ones) come through gates of horn, while false (i.e. personal, circumscribed, mortal) ones emerge through gates of ivory (*Odyssey* 19.562–565). There is a correlation here, structural and thematic, that is too obvious to ignore, of the point of entry of dreams and that of gods or souls. One scene is that of the meeting of the two worlds; the other, of the consciousness of the two. So with his use of *videnie* Pushkin intimates an oneiric state in which his mythopoetic landscape is perceived. On Pushkin's use of themes and images of dreams, and of their subsequent employment in Russian literature, notably in Gogol's absurdist writing foreshadowing

Either way, the poet sees and describes alertly, where others cannot; and this is precisely the quality of the prophet. In his poem of 1826 "The Prophet" (*Пророк*), Pushkin uses images drawn directly from the Biblical book of Isaiah to describe his painful transformation into a seer: his eyes and ears are changed, and he is able to perceive the tingle of heaven, the flight of angels, the tread of monsters beneath the sea, and the growth of the vine in the dale («дольней лозы прозябанье»¹⁹). That is, Pushkin sees and hears things in heaven, on earth, and below the sea that are invisible and inaudible to mere mortals—just as in the *Prologue*. The link between the situation of the poet as seer in this poem and his self-identification with Isaiah in "The Prophet" is of interest because, as we shall see presently, it is precisely Isaiah who occupies the same compositional place as Pushkin, in a painting whose general structure and wealth of mythological detail closely parallel the *Prologue*: William Blake's "The Sea of Time and Space".

Another collocation to the figure *neved-/nevid-* in the *Prologue* can be cited from Pushkin's most powerful work of Russian social and historical mythopoesis,²⁰ that archetypal *poema* of St. Petersburg, *The Bronze*

Kharmes, see Michael R. Katz, *Dreams and the Unconscious in Nineteenth-Century Russian Fiction* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1984).

¹⁹ The Soviet Armenian poet Eliše Čarenc' (Yeghishe Charents), 1897–1937, loved Pushkin; and an unpublished translation of the poem, entitled in Armenian *Margarē*, "(The) Prophet", together with a kind of fugue based upon it, are found in his MSS. See J.R. Russell, "Ch'arents' the Prophet," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 11 (2000): 11–38, repr. in J.R. Russell, *Armenian and Iranian Studies* (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9, Cambridge, MA, 2004), 1073–1099. It is worth noting, in connection with the collocation of William Blake's painting "The Sea of Time and Space" and the *Prologue* to *RL* in this essay, that Bayley in his monograph on Pushkin (*op. cit.*, p. 145), compares «Пророк» ("The Prophet") to Blake's "Hear the Voice of the Bard", the first poem of *Songs of Experience*.

²⁰ The scene of the *poema* is the disastrous flood of 7 November 1824: Pushkin in the text speaks of Peter's having founded a city under the sea, and thereby connects Petropolis to Atlantis as a place of hubris, divine wrath, doom, death, and enduring mystery. Since Petersburg itself survived both this inundation and another exactly a century later, the Neva becomes in the work of later poets the locus of mystery and dark kingdom of Persephone. That did not stop Mikhail Dmitriev from imagining in his poem «Подводный город» ("The City Under the Sea"), 1847, a descendant of the fisherman Peter saw mooring his boat to all that is left of Petersburg: the point of the Admiralty spire protruding from the waters (see В.В. Яковлев, *Петербург в русской поэзии XVIII-первой четверти XX века*, СПб: Филфак СПбГУ, 2002, с. 185–186; V.V. Yakovlev, ed., *Petersburg in Russian Poetry, from the 18th Century to the First Quarter of the 20th Century*, St. Petersburg: Faculty of Philology of St. Petersburg State University, 2002, 185–186). Evgenii, a poor young clerk of noble ancestry ruined by the flood, curses Falconet's equestrian statue of Peter and the idol (кумир, *kumir*: Nicholas I disliked the implication and struck the word from Pushkin's MS.), detaching itself from its pedestal, pursues the crazed wretch to his death. In one

Horseman (*Медный всадник*), 1833. Peter the Great (d. 1725), founder of Russia's "window on Europe" (he did not think to pound a door through the wall), stands on the shore of the "barren waves" («на берегу пустынных волн») of the Neva, where a sad Finnish fisherman casts his nets. Here and there behind the monarch, wooden huts loom black here and there («чернели избы здесь и там»)—"and the wood, *unknown* to the rays/ of the sun *hidden* in fog/ soughed roundabout" («и лес, *неведомый* лучам/ в тумане *спрятанного* солнца/ кругом шумел»). The tripartite spatial and thematic composition of this *opening* scene of the work: river or sea (the emperor stands at the place where the great river flows into the Gulf of Finland), central motionless figure in a space with marginal structures, mysterious forest—corresponds *grosso modo* to that of the *Prologue to RL*. Here instead of *nevid-* "unseen" Pushkin has employed the verb *spryat-* "hide", preserving the long, sonorous form, though, of a passive participial form in four leisurely syllables: *spryatannogo*. The poet perhaps intends by having the sun's visage hidden rather than merely unseen to introduce the sinister note of Divine disfavor that will swell as the city founded by the demonic autocrator is whelmed in dark floodwaters. The dark coloration distinguishes this poem sharply from the sunlit dawn of the *Prologue to RL*. The negative feeling of alienation and unease is intensified in other ways, too: one observes that the inhabitants of the gloomy landscape in this prologue to *The Bronze Horseman* are all non-Russians (финский рыболов, убор(ий) чухон(е)ц: "Finnish fisherman", "impoverished Finn"), in sharp contrast to the happy profusion of Slavonic creatures in the *Prologue to RL*: Peter, the Westernizing king, is building his new capital in an alien place!

The meaning of the word *svet* in the line *povedayu teper' ya svetu* should perhaps be limited here in the strict sense to high society—members of the Arzamas club, the customers of Smirdin's Petersburg bookshop, Pushkin's friends. He does not seem to expect for this light work, at this early stage of his life, the cosmic reading public of *Exegi monumentum*, "all Great Russia, and every tongue there spoken". But that was the public he actually did get—and *svet* still has also the broader meanings "world" and "light". In a prophetic poem about the fate of the world composed between 1910 and

stroke, Pushkin created the two dominating myths of the city: that of supernatural malevolence and that of the alienated man or "man from underground" (разночинец, человек из подполья, и т.п.)—that animate the uneasy visions of Gogol, Dostoyevsky, and their successors down to the present day.

1914, *Golos iz khora*, "A Voice from the Chorus", Alexander Blok speaks of the *kholod i mrak gryadushchikh dnei*, "the cold and *murk* [thanks for this elegant correspondence to V.V. Nabokov] of the days to come" and the insane whirling of the planets. The poem has the famous line *Vsyo budet chernee strashnyi svet*, "All blacker will shine the awful light." Though light cannot be dark save in the poetic imagination, and the image of the world and of planets pervades Blok's poem, the contrary image is still achieved in part because the primary meaning of *svet* is "light".²¹ One presses this observation because Pushkin is making the unseen visible, bringing it to light. The material of lines 1–29 of the *Prologue* to *RL* is unseen, not only because it belongs to a mythic Otherworld, but also because it belongs to the heroic age of the past, cf. the couplet from *Ossian* that was the original prologue and in the second edition precedes the first Canto: *Dela davno minuvshikh dnei, / Predan'ya stariny glubokoi*, "Deeds of days long gone, / Traditions of deep antiquity."

This invocation of Slavonic antiquity by a bard setting out to recount a heroic poem should remind one of a particular monument of the Russian heroic era, the *Slovo o polku Igoreve*: Pushkin begins the *Prologue* with the memorable words *u lukomor'ya* "by the bow-curve of the seashore", a phrase he uses nowhere else;²² but the Igor' Tale does contain a similar phrase, *iz luku morya*, which Nabokov identifies with a bend of the Sea of Azov (called Surozh in the epic) at the mouth of the river Don.²³

²¹ The English translation of this line in Mochulsky's *Blok* renders *svet* as "world", one of its two meanings, but this is definitely wrong. I doubted my intuitive understanding of the meaning of the word as "light" (cf. the Hermetic *nyktelios*, "nocturnal Sun", used notably by the Romantic poet Gérard de Nerval in his "El Desdichado") and polled a number of Russian friends at random. They all read the word as "light", not "world". However there may still be an implicit contrast with the standard Russian expression for the whole wide world, *belyi svet*, lit. "the white world". Yet note Mandelstam's phrase «ночного солнца не заметишь ты», "you will not notice the nocturnal sun", and, a bit farther afield but still illustrative of the poetic capacity to enfold impossible contradictions, these lines from the song "Gates of Eden": "Of war and peace the truth just twists/ Its curfew gull just glides/ Upon four-legged forest clouds/ The cowboy angel rides/ With his candle lit into the sun/ Though its glow is waxed in black/ All except when 'neath the trees of Eden" (Bob Dylan, *Lyrics*, 1962–1985; New York: Knopf, 1985, p. 174). One recalls also George Seferis' verse, *Angeliko kai mauro, phôs* "Angelic and black, light".

²² См. *Словарь языка Пушкина*, т. 2, с. 479 (*Dictionary of the Language of Pushkin*, vol. 2, p. 479) s.v.; this also places the action firmly in ancient Russian epic time, and indeed in *RL*, l. 57 (p. 7) he mentions the bard Bayan. It is worth noting in passing that the hermit Ruslan encounters who has failed in love as shepherd, hero, and wizard (*pastukh, geroi, koldun*), recapitulates the Indo-European social triad of herdsman, warrior, and priest.

²³ Vladimir Nabokov, *The Song of Igor's Campaign: An Epic of the Twelfth Century* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1960), 113, n. on line 366. In the "Lament of the Women of Rus'" in the

The poet's plunge into *glubokaya starina* takes him to the first *pamyatnik*, the first *monumentum*, of Russian literature itself: it is an assertion of his comparable stature. So Pushkin has not only crossed between worlds—from one *svet* to the high *Svet* of St. Petersburg²⁴—he has also conquered Time.

The coda contains one element that is not in the initial stanza of green oak and Learned Cat, and it is so casually introduced as to induce the reader to suppose the poet is concealing its novelty—a device that serves to focus one's attention more keenly. *I tam ya byl, i myod'ya pil*, "And there I was, and the mead I drank." What mead? We have been told nothing of it hitherto, though the heroes will drink it in I.96. Russian folktales often end with a requisite draught of mead; so the "and...and" could mean merely that Pushkin did that too, did everything that is expected in the conclusion of a tale. Who gives the cup to Pushkin, the Cat? The Rusalka? Baba Yaga, as she tilts past in her mortar? Or is this some divine potation, the very stuff of prophetic and poetic intoxication, gushing out of a dimension beyond even that of the sprites and witches? It is not the grape wine of Biblical climes, either, this drink—nor, indeed, the Bordeaux of *Eugene Onegin's* soirées—but honey-based, northern Indo-European stuff: the *madhu-* of Vedic India and Iran, that with which the earliest Greek was *methysmenos*, "intoxicated". The stressed appearance of the author's persona with potation, at least, is an intrusive element in the coda: Pushkin wants one to notice he has been there. He is an Isaiah-like prophet, a new voice in Russian poetry and life, the fulcrum and demiurge of his mythic cosmos, an Odysseus who has mastered space and time.

text of the *Slovo*: «...взмути рѣки и озера; иссуши потоки и болота, а поганого Кобыя изъ луку моря от желѣзныхъ великихъ плѣковъ половецкихъ яко вихрь, выторже» cit. by Edward L. Keenan, *Josef Dobrovský and the Origins of the Igor' Tale* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Ukrainian Research Institute/ Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies, 2003), 279 f. Keenan, whose monograph is intended to prove that the ancient Russian epic is in fact an inspired forgery based by a late-18th-century Moravian Slavist on other epic poems, notes that the phrase *luka morya* appears thrice in the *Zadonshchina* and in the Slavonic text of the *Wisdom of Ahiqar* (*Povest' ob Akire premudrom*) with which the MS. of the *Slovo* was bound. Dahl, s.v., explains the *lukomorskie polovtsy* as steppe-dwellers (Pechenegs, Polovetsians) of the Azov littoral.

²⁴ Pushkin finished *RL* on 26 March 1820. In mid-April the government learned of his political verses ("Freedom", "To Chaadayev", etc.); and rumor had it he was to be exiled to the far northern monastery of Solovki. But on 6 May of that year the poet was ordered from the capital to the South of Russia instead. He was not to enjoy the high society of Petersburg again for seven years.



Plate 1

2. Ut pictura poesis

In 1843, the year after the completion of Mikhail Glinka's opera *RL*, N.A. Ramazanov illustrated the *Prologue* (plate 1).²⁵ The oak, elevated on a hillock at the center of the composition, its branches spreading to either edge, balances and knits together a very intricate, busy picture and draws the viewer's attention to Pushkin and the Learned Cat. The Rusalka on her branch, the captive Princess and Brown Wolf on the left in the foreground, and king Kashchei on the right, form a light triangle pointing upwards, of immortal, mythopoetic hyper-realities, superimposed symmetrically against the dark, funnel-like, downward-pointing triangle of the oak, which has its roots in the black earth, the Slavonic *mat' syra zemlya*, source of the living-and-dying generations of leaves (and, metaphorically,

²⁵ See Министерство культуры РСФСР, *Всесоюзный музей А.С. Пушкин: Каталог*, Москва–Ленинград: Госиздат «Искусство», 1957, с. 45, 271 (Ministry of Culture of the RSFSR, *All-Union Museum of A.S. Pushkin: Catalogue*, Moscow-Leningrad: "Art" State Publishing House, 1957, 45, 271).

of men). The purpose of this arrangement is, again, to center poet and cat. On the viewer's left is the curving seashore, with the knights emerging from the waters and the prince in the air above them. On the shore, to the right of the tree and just before the forest begins, are Baba Yaga's mortar, the wooden hut on chicken legs, and so on. The hut is originally in folk belief the witch's; and it stands "as though on the invisible boundary between Home and Forest and was a special 'liminal' point for entry into the otherworld of folktale."²⁶ Thus, a horizontal tripartite analysis yields sea to the left, land with a world-tree and the center and liminal space to the right, and the dark forest to the far right.

If one approaches the picture using the vertical schema of reversed and superimposed triangular patterns, Ramazanov's own poetics of composition has, subtly and most certainly unwittingly, also reproduced the schema of a common and very important Hindu *yantra*. The latter, a Sanskrit term meaning something like "mechanism", is the graphic counterpart of the *mantra*—the latter means *hieros logos*, a word or sound of not only semantic value but intrinsic power. Some *yantras* are made for protective, thaumaturgic, or healing purposes; when they are cosmic maps, or *mandalas* (lit. "circle"), they are intended for meditation (*dhyana*). A *mandala* always has a central point (*bindu*) representing primordial consciousness (*chitta*); and if mantras are written on a *yantra*, then the seed syllable (*bija-akshara*) is placed on the *bindu*. Ramazanov's *yantra* is the six-pointed star consisting of two intersecting figures: a light upward-pointing triangle (*trikona*), generally symbolic of the male *lingam* principle, against the dark downward-pointing triangle that represents the female principle, the *yonī*. The *yantra* expresses the balance and harmony of the multifarious powers in the universe of male and female, life and death, good and evil, light and darkness. Pushkin, the Russian *kavi* ("poet-seer") and his *guru* ("teacher") Cat are *bindu* and *bija-akshara*: the center, capable of poetic perception and creative consciousness, that generates the whole through the *logos*—poet as *poietes*, "maker", in the literal sense.²⁷ When Andrei Sinyavsky noted Pushkin's lightness, or when Bayley characterized *RL* as a balanced mixture of the heroic and the profane, they perceived, this very cosmic clarity and symmetry, the serene and playful profundity

²⁶ В.Л. Пропп, *Исторические корни волшебной сказки*, Ленинград, 1986, с. 58–64 (V.L. Propp, *Historical Roots of the Magical Folktale*, Leningrad, 1986, 58–64), cit. by Koshelev, op. cit.: «как бы на невидимой грани между Домом и Лесом и было особенным 'пограничным' пунктом для входа в сказочный, потусторонний мир».

²⁷ See S.K. Ramachandra Rao, *Yantras* (Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1988), 12–16. I am grateful to Dennis E. Cordell for a copy of this book.



Plate 2

of Pushkin's lyric. The mythic geography of the *Prologue* invites comparison with two parallel, graphic schemata. Both have a serious religious and philosophical character, which sets them apart in intention from the Russian work; but the boundaries between secular and profane may be violated when discussing mythopoesis, even when it is as self conscious and even parodic as Pushkin's.

3. William Blake's Painting

One may compare to Ramazanov's ink-and-watercolor illustration, with its horizontal and vertical patterns, a painting dated 1821 by the English visionary poet and artist William Blake, *The Sea of Time and Space* (plate 2). The picture is strikingly similar in both general composition and particular details. There is a populous seascape to the left; a tree in the foreground center with a human figure nearby whose singularity and importance is indicated by the unique use of red color in his vestments; and more figures and an obscure cave on the right. It is also extremely and

intricately busy, a cosmically huge vista of land and sea full of humans, animals, mythological beings, and magical objects. It even has a watery sprite entangling a man. The painting is a microcosmic allegory, but of what? Kathleen Raine suggested that Blake was trying to represent the cosmic process of apogenesis and genesis: the descent of the soul into the material world, its fate here, and its ascent at death into spiritual rebirth. She argued that Blake's source was the treatise *De antro nymphaeum* by the Neoplatonic philosopher Porphyry: "On the Cave of the Nymphs" is an allusion to the grotto at Ithaka where Odysseus stored his treasures at his homecoming, in the *Odyssey* of Homer. Following several mysterious allusions in the epic itself, the ancient interpreters, regarding the Homeric text as a kind of sacred scripture, suggested that the grotto was an allegory of this world, a place where fate was spun, whose two entrances represented the points where souls entered the material world (*genesis*) and departed from it (*apogenesis*).²⁸ Raine's suggestion did not at first gain general scholarly acceptance; but recently Christopher Heppner has averred that Raine, even if she overstressed a particular text whose details did not correspond with satisfactory exactitude to those of the painting, was at least on the right track. *The Sea of Time and Space*, in his view, treats a Neoplatonic theme and portrays the human life cycle, but draws its inspiration from multiple sources, including Thomas Taylor's translations and commentaries on Plato and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. He also argues that the man painted boldly in red is the Biblical prophet Isaiah: Blake has combined the characters and symbolism of different cosmologies, with a view to exalt Scripture and condemn paganism.²⁹ But Blake also refers in his *poema*, *Milton*, to the sea of time and space after which the painting is named (text 2.3): the English epic poet tragically descends thither, and sees the noble giant Albion, who personifies the sacred essence of England, stretched out there in death. Blake was, like Pushkin, very fond of *Ossian*, the native British epic. The cosmology of the painting may, thus, combine not only Classical and Biblical material, but Blake's own mythopoetic

²⁸ See *Odyssey* 13.96–112 for a description of the grotto, which is by an olive tree (cf. the дуб зелёный) on the shore of the semi-circular bay (лукоморье!) of Phorkys, the Old Man of the Sea (дядя морской!) at Ithaka. Thomas Taylor's (1758–1835) translation of Porphyry, *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, was reprinted with an introduction by Kathleen Raine, by Phanes Press, Grand Rapids, MI, 1991.

²⁹ The painting "The Sea of Time and Space", 1821, was made with pen and ink, water-color and gouache on gesso ground on paper. It is reproduced, with discussion of Heppner's analysis, in Robin Hamlyn and Michael Phillips, eds., *William Blake* (NY: Abrams, 2000), 192–193 and pl. 240.

Albion as well. A few remarks on the aspects of Neoplatonism that might have attracted Blake most strongly are in order here.

It may fairly be said that although Plato regarded the world as a legitimate entity, a part of the great chain of being, physicality is nevertheless an inferior state to that of pure spirit. Consequently the sojourn of the human soul during the term of the physical life of the body is the result of a descent from a true and happier home. The meaning of our existence, so replete with suffering, is to be understood as a hard schooling and purification preparatory to re-ascent to the realms of our origin. The world is a kind of penitentiary (Gk. *phylakē*); and death is liberation if it follows a virtuous life. The Neoplatonist school emerged in the early Christian centuries, reflecting both a trend towards religiosity and spirituality in philosophical speculation itself, and a pagan encounter with the Christian faith. Another, related set of movements of religious thought in the period comes under the rubric of Gnosticism. Arthur Darby Nock saw the various trends of Late Antique religious speculation conveniently (and, by orthodox Christians, disparagingly) termed Gnosticism as an extreme, even deranged, form of Platonism, in which the sleep and forgetting of this life is not so much a trial to be endured as a deception to be overcome. Where Platonism situates the world low on a chain of being but still regards it as valid, the Gnostics tend to a radical dualism: the world is bad and was created by a devil who has deceived his unlucky prisoners into thinking he is a god. The world is not a hard but just penitentiary: it is a concentration camp run by a deranged cosmic sadist.

Gnostic thinking is revolutionary *kat' exokhēn*, since of necessity it must reformulate the world-affirming cosmology of the canonical religion that serves as its substrate in such a way as to demonize and overturn the creator-god of that previous creed. Though the third-century Neoplatonist philosopher Plotinus famously disparaged the Gnostics as rejecting the very universe to which they belonged, the Neoplatonists nonetheless did regard physical genesis as a tragedy; and apogenesis, as the true soul-birth. Blake's contemporary William Wordsworth, and other Romantic poets who had access to the same translations of the Neoplatonists as Blake, seem to have rediscovered the Gnostic ideology and the revolutionary sentiment that was inseparable from it, and so relevant to the spirit of their own age. A salient feature of Gnostic mythology is the introduction of a dense crowd of divine and demonic beings whose names derive from heterogeneous sources, and who inhabit a spiritual world whose imaginal geography is superimposed upon the template of an intimately familiar earthly one. We have already seen how Blake could combine Neoplatonic,

Biblical, and *sui generis* local, British imagery. He took an engraving of the Classical sculpture of Laocoön and his sons being smothered by serpents, and re-interpreted it as Jehovah flanked by Adam and Seth, surrounding the picture with dense graffiti proclaiming the truth of Hebrew art and decrying its Greco-Roman usurpation. Such inversion and co-optation of pre-existing material is typical of any new religion, but it is especially common in Gnostic writings.

William Blake's propensity to make up his *own* supernatural beings had as its proximate inspiration, as E.P. Thompson argued, the tradition of revolutionary, dissident personal visions cultivated by Protestant sectarians, particularly the Muggletonians of the 17th century. The same sectarians are the ancestors of a more structured and socialized new religion, Mormonism, that came into being in northern New York state in Blake's (and Pushkin's) lifetime. Blake's spiritual places and beings fuse Biblical, British, and imagined, glossolalic names. At this juncture, let us note some coincidences: Pushkin creates a similarly dense landscape to Blake's; and he populates it with his own, local Slavic mythical beings, much as Blake uses Albionic material: both were interested in their national mythologies and were inspired by *Ossian*. Though Pushkin identifies himself as the central figure in his composition, he regards himself, as Blake does, as a prophet in the mold of Isaiah (who seems to be the man in red in Blake's painting). As one has seen in the epigraph to this essay, Osip Mandelstam, the most uncannily Pushkinian of modern Russian poets, who wrote also a poem on *Ossian*, makes Odysseus himself the Sea of Time and Space, returning after his otherworldly wanderings to the Cave of the Nymphs!

4. *The Mandaean Connection*

One has likened Blake's religious and artistic creativity to the activities of the ancient Gnostics; and in adducing for closer comparison as a test case a discrete Gnostic system—a defined religion based on Gnostic ideology—we shall see a striking and illuminating parallel to Pushkin's *Prologue*.

Although it might be thought that Gnosticism, a fundamentally transgressive rebellion against the world-affirming stance of a pre-existing religion, should be opposed to any establishment or institution as part of the problem or deception it seeks to remedy, in fact there were in Late Antiquity at least two established Gnostic religious institutions: the Mandaean religion, and Manichaeism, which originated from it. The third-century religious reformer Mānī (the name seems to mean "vessel",

to which was appended Aramaic *da ḥayyē*, “of life”, hence “Manichaeus”) was born in Arsacid Mesopotamia to a man named Pattēg, who followed the cult of the *Mughtašila* (Arabic, “those who baptize themselves”, i.e., the Mandaean, as we shall see presently), and a woman Maryam (i.e., Mary) of the noble Parthian clan of the Kāmsārakān, which was well established in Armenia. Christianity in Armenia boasts of origins in the mission of the Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew. Though the Apostolic legend is strongly mythologized, it is at least indisputable that the practice of the faith in Armenia long predates the conversion in the early fourth century by St. Gregory the Illuminator of king Tiridates the Great. Given her Christian name, it is thus at least possible Mānī was the son of an Armenian mother. A list of his writings mentions two Epistles to the Armenians; a Manichaean Apostolic narrative may be a recasting of an Armenian Christian Apostolic legend; and one of Mānī’s companions at the time of his martyrdom was a man bearing a name, Bāt, that is best attested in Armenian. Manichaeism certainly existed in Armenia thereafter, though it became a catch-all term for heresy in Christian polemic. Even so, the Paulician, T’ondrakite, and later heresies that flourished on the Armenian plateau have a distinctly Manichaean/Gnostic flavor to them.

Mānī created a complex, multi-tiered Gnostic cosmogony and cosmology, in which he created some beings and borrowed many others from Christianity, Zoroastrianism, and Buddhism, averring that the followers of these religions had misunderstood and corrupted the original revelations of their prophetic founders. It was probably this strategy of re-interpretation of pre-existing teachings that earned the Manichaeans the designation *zandīg*, “explicator” in Middle Persian, which was maintained into the mediaeval period in the Near East, cf. the Arabic loan *zandīq*, pl. *zanādiqa*. Of course the seventh-century Arab religious reformer, Muḥammad, was to do much the same thing, presenting his new Scripture-in-verse, the *Qur’ān* (“Call”), not as an innovation, but as a clear (*mubīn*) exposition of the truths of the Old and New Testaments that the Jews and Christians had muddled over time. The Manichaean strategy was parasitical: in the West, the translators of its scriptures gave their work a pseudo-Christian cast; in China, the same teachings were phrased in such a manner as to make the Buddhist element predominant. Cultural variation may account for some of this; but, given the malignant effect of Manichaeism on the earlier faith communities it infiltrated, one might better liken the process to the adaptation of a virus to a host it is invading. It is noteworthy that the one prominent, revealed religion of antiquity that Mānī made no attempt to co-opt was Judaism. Though Gershom Scholem perceived a

Gnostic aspect in Kabbala, an internal mystical trend in Judaism of uncertain beginnings, the Manichaeans hated rootedly the pro-cosmic Creator God, the teleological history of the nation of Israel, and the Temple cult of Jerusalem. Part of the reason for this seems to be that the cult of the abovementioned *Mughtašila* came into being precisely through a radical rejection of and rebellion against Second Temple Judaism.

Though Manichaeism is long dead, the sect to which Pattēg adhered still survives, as the religion of the small Mandaean community of southern Iraq and Iran. The Aramaic designation *manda'* (*dā ḥayyē*), "knowledge (of life)" (Mandaic Aramaic *manda d hiia*), is an obvious equivalent of Gk. *gnōsis* itself, with the mention of life familiar from the second element of the name of Manichaeism, though it has been suggested that the Mandaic word *manda* is a loan from Persian meaning "dwelling".³⁰ According to native tradition, the early members of the community fled to a mountain in Media—northwestern Iran—they named Harran *gawait̰ha* ("the Inner"),³¹ in the days of king Ardban, i.e., in the Arsacid period. The foundation of their faith is the belief that the creative and sustaining force of the universe is the Great Life, which comes to us through the waters of the *Yardna*, i.e., Jordan—this and other Biblical references in Mandaean cosmology suggest their ancestors were native to the Land of Israel. But, as one may expect of the precursors of Mānī, Mandaean Gnosticism radically inverts the religion of the Chosen People: a Hebrew name of God, *Adonai*, in Mandaean designates the *melka*, "king", of darkness; and, scandalously, Madaeans commemorate in *mourning* the wicked host of the pursuing Egyptians whom God drowned in the Red Sea in the Exodus!³² The Madaeans employ a form of Aramaic script peculiar to themselves: it is employed talismanically, and each letter possesses a symbolic value. A salient feature of Mandaean manuscripts is the employment of vividly angular line drawings of sacred beings, objects, and scenes. It is a tradition that cherishes, as the Manichaeans did, long poetical texts, mysterious spells, calligraphic writing, and the production of graphic art. William

³⁰ See E.S. Drower, *The Madaeans of Iraq and Iran* (Leiden: Brill, 1962), 10.

³¹ The "outer" Harran would be the ancient city of Abraham's sojourn, which lies a few miles south of the ancient Syro-Armenian stronghold of Christianity, Edessa (modern Urfa, in Turkey). For centuries Harran was the center of the Neoplatonizing, Gnostic Sabian religion, whose connections to the Mandaean faith are numerous and obvious. So many of the early Madaeans lived in regions contiguous to, or overlapping, Armenia and territories inhabited by Armenians, on the south and southeast: Maryam's Kamsarakan kinsmen would thus have been likely to encounter them.

³² Drower, *The Madaeans* 76, 89.

Blake would have found it most congenial. The complex of Mandaean cosmology and mythology presents a richly heterogeneous plethora of beings, from the gods and heroes of ancient Iran (e.g., Bahrām, the *yazata* Vərəθraγna of the Avesta; and the Saka hero Rostam familiar from the *Šāhnāme* of Ferdōsī) to the Egyptian creator-god with Hebrew divine suffix, Ptaḥil. That is, where William Blake lodges an individual creative protest against the Creator God of the establishment of the Age of Enlightenment, whom he calls Urizen (i.e., “your Reason”) and shapes a cosmology within his aesthetic craft, drawing from diverse sources, the Mandaeans do all this as an established religious system. So when Blake paints a cosmic painting of the sea of time and space, with tree and prophet and cave, expressing Neoplatonic and other values, one might hope to find a Mandaean parallel. And it is found, indeed, as a concrete object, as no less that the central locus of the principal rituals of Mandaean life and faith.

The name of the Mandaean temple complex in the literary language is *mashkhana*, lit. “dwelling place”.³³ This is, of course, none other than the Aramaic equivalent of Hebrew *mishkan*, a designation of the holy Temple at Jerusalem. In common Mandaic the place is called simply the *manda* (plate 3), as though it embodied everything essential to the Mandaean system. (It is noteworthy that the *manda d hiia* is often represented as a great tree: cf. the tree at the center foreground of Blake’s painting, and Pushkin’s green oak.) The *manda* is a hut enclosed by a fence within a sacred precinct. Only priests may enter the building itself. It must be constructed near a source of “living” water, i.e., a *yardna*. Two channels—one flowing in; the other, out—from the latter are dug, forming a bow-curve in front of the cult building. The *manda* is, correspondingly, the place where the rites of the soul’s earthly *genesis* and *apogenesis* are consecrated: the former being the baptism whose prominence is indicated by the early Arabic designation of the sect; the latter, the liturgy of *masiqta* (“ascension”) performed at death. The enfranchised soul travels North over the great white mountain Sur, up past the guard-houses (*maṭaratha*) of the imprisoning planetary demons to Ptaḥil: it boards a ship of light and travels across a kind of celestial Styx to the shores of the worlds of light and bliss from which it originally came before the descent into matter.³⁴

Since William Blake and the Mandaeans worked from kindred sources of inspiration—the Neoplatonism of his *De antro nympharum* is not

³³ Ibid., 10.

³⁴ Ibid., 123–125, 197–199.

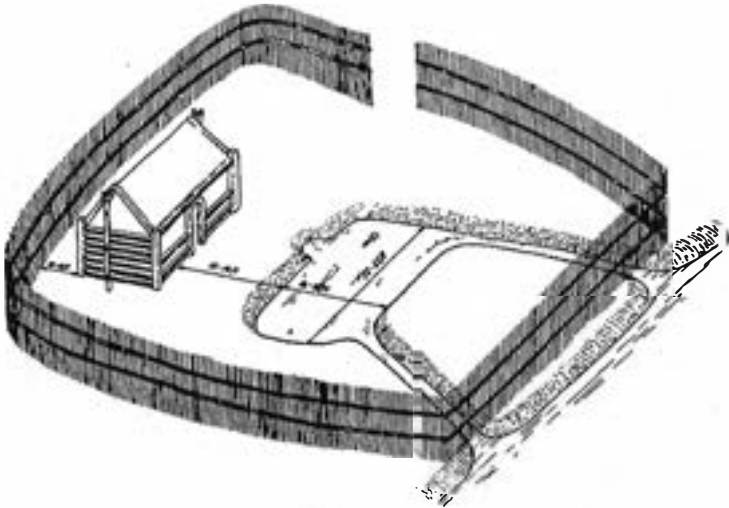


FIG. 7. The Manda

Plate 3

remote in time or ideological and religious orientation from the Gnostic movements of the Second Temple period in Israel and the Arsacid period in Armenia and Parthian Mesopotamia—it is not surprising that their visions of the geographic particulars of the meeting-point of the spiritual and material worlds should, *mutatis mutandis*, coincide. There is no documentation to suggest that Pushkin saw Blake's painting; and it is equally certain he was innocent of the intricacies of Mandaean orthopraxy. Yet his *Prologue* has its curving seashore, sacred tree, a kind of precinct, and all sorts of beings coming in and out of the Otherworld. In the middle is the human figure observing or controlling it all: Blake's Prophet, the Mandaeans' Priest, Pushkin himself.

In considering the Russian poem, one must concede that we deal with coincidence. C.G. Jung might have preferred the term synchronicity—his acausal connecting principle—to coincidence; and perhaps he would have adduced the Pushkinian correspondence as an example of the operation of an archetypal pattern of the collective unconscious. *Pace* the critics of Jung's methodologies: though scholarship is defined by methods depending upon argument from material evidence and must exclude therefore the inherently supernatural categories of synchronicity and archetype, it is also, on the same grounds, not possible for a scholar to reject outright

the possibility that synchronicity, archetypes, and the supernatural may in fact exist, even if they cannot be adduced in a study of this kind.³⁵ It is, however, reasonable to propose that Pushkin, in a manner *parallel* to Blake and the Gnostics, employed a “poetics of composition” (the term belongs to the Russian Structuralist Boris Uspensky) in which the various symmetries of the scene: curve of sea, space of shore, dark line of forest; central tree and author, drawing in the viewer; the sense of entrance and exit at the meeting point of the mythological and the quotidian—have a pleasing harmony that observant human inhabitants of the same world (with seas, trees, forests) are likely to represent in much the same way, whether for ritual (Mandaeans), a painting (Blake, Ramazanov), or a poem (Pushkin).

It is time now to consider the effect the *Prologue*, or elements of it, exerted upon some visionary Russian writers after Pushkin; and how they developed these themes. The image of the Polaris-bound Mandaean soul, freed from the body and rocketing over a great white mountain, reminds one of the memorable confusion of white *fountain* and *mountain*, the punning misprint not nonsense but a web of sense, in the near-death experiences recounted in the novel *Pale Fire* of Nabokov.

5. After Pushkin 1: Nabokoviana

Vladimir Nabokov completed another work by Pushkin, the unfinished drama *Rusalka* (1832). The *Rusalka*-Mermaid is the mythological creature mentioned in the *Prologue*; so the striking appearance of Pushkin in the poem is the element that surely inspired Nabokov's final line in his completion of *Rusalka*, where the poet is made abruptly, even absurdly, to appear with mildly comic alliteration: «Пушкин пожимает плечами» *Pushkin pozhimaet plechami*, “Pushkin shrugs his shoulders.”³⁶ In his first

³⁵ However one must stress that if an artist reads Jung's books, for instance, it is merely perverse not to acquaint oneself with Jung's ideas when studying and interpreting the artist's work. It is worth quoting in this connection the important observation of James Elkins, *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art* (NY: Routledge, 2004), 52: “The difference between the art studied in universities and the wider world of art practices can almost be defined by the acceptance, or rejection, of Jung. Inside academia scholars make use of Lacan and other post-Freudians; outside it, and in studio practice, people read Jung and Joseph Campbell.”

³⁶ One should note, in addition to the obvious alliteration with the initial *p*-, the subtler employment in all three words of an affricate series: *ж-з-ц*. Cf. Nabokov's cunning alliteration of the cluster *gn-* in the following note. Nabokov published his addition under his *nom de plume* Sirin in *Новый Журнал* (*The New Journal*), NY, 1942.2, 181–184; see discussion

novel in English written in America, *Bend Sinister*, Nabokov enters the narrative at the end and allows the hero, Adam Krug, to see him. This intervention reaches farther in thematic effect than Pushkin's, since Nabokov's authorial entrance allows his character to discern a transcendent reality beyond the firing squad within the fiction.³⁷ But it is reasonable to suppose that the *Prologue* inspired it. As Jane Grayson has noted, Nabokov in his completion of the drama drew upon mermaid tales going back to Classical myth and prehistory. The myth of the mermaid, who avenges love betrayed by luring victims down to her watery realm, evokes themes important to Nabokov: lost treasures, kingdoms, people. It is a tale also of metamorphosis, of communication between two worlds.³⁸ The *topos* of submersion, like that of ascension, can be used to evoke transit from this world to the next, which Nabokov believed conceals a meaningful symmetry we are to discover. So he uses the image to describe a point of literary criticism, in *Pale Fire* (Library of America ed., p. 444): "Actually, it turns to be beautifully

by J.R. Russell, "A Scholium on Coleridge and an Armenian Demon," *J. of the Soc. for Armenian Sts.* 10 (1998, 1999 [2000]), 70 n. 24, repr. in J.R. Russell, *Armenian and Iranian Studies* (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9; Cambridge, MA, 2004), 996. From their correspondence we know that Edmund Wilson expected that Nabokov would provide an unorthodox ending to *Rusalka*; but Nabokov responded, in a slightly condescending, didactic way, that Pushkin would not have done so. An ineluctable quality of Pushkin is lightness and richness without innovation or, sometimes, even sublime content. But what Nabokov leaves unsaid in the exchange is that he considers "Pushkin shrugs his shoulders" to be within the bounds of Russian classical conventionality. So the basis for this conviction has to be its precedent, this Prologue.

³⁷ Nabokov adumbrated this effect in an earlier novel written in Russian, *Приглашение на казнь* (*Invitation to a Beheading*), where the hero Cincinnatus simply walks away from the scene of his execution and through the flimsy fabric of the fictional reality, towards a world inhabited by people like him. Since he has been accused by a ludicrous totalitarian tyranny of *gnoseologicheskaya gnusnost* ("gnostical turpitude") for being insufficiently transparent, one must conclude that he is headed for what is to him the Otherworld—and for the reader, this sublunar world—in which his libertarian, individualistic creator dwells. Nabokov would have noticed that in *RL* the *Rusalka* provides a wonderful Otherworld for a knight whom *Ruslan* hurls into the Dnieper: «... И слышно было, что Рогдая/ Тех вод русалка молодая/ На хладны перси приняла/ И, жадно витязя лобзая,/ На дно со смехом увлекла,/ И долго после, ночью темной/ Бродя близ тихих берегов,/ Богатыря призрак огромный/ Пугал пустынных рыбаков» (A.S. Pushkin, *Полн. собр. соч.*, т. 4, с. 36= *PL* 2.496–504; A.S. Pushkin, *Complete Works*, vol. 4, 36= *RL* 2.496–504) "And it was heard that Rogdai/ A young mermaid of those waters took/ To her cold bosom/ And, covering the hero with greedy kisses/ Conducted him away in laughter to the bottom,/ And long after of a dark night/ The knight's gigantic shade/ Wandering near the quiet banks/ Did frighten lonesome fishermen."

³⁸ See Jane Grayson, "Rusalka and the Person from Porlock," in *Symbolism and After: Essays on Russian Poetry in Honour of Georgette Donchin* (ed. Arnold McMillin; London: Bristol Classical Press, 1992), 171.

accurate when you once make the plunge and compel yourself to open your eyes in the limpid depths under its confused surface."

In the seventh chapter of the novel *Bend Sinister*, which Nabokov had originally intended to call *The Man from Porlock*, with a nod to the *locus classicus* of a vision interrupted, Coleridge's "Kubla Khan", there is a scholarly fantasia in which Ophelia, the *Russalka letheana*, or Mermaid of Lethe, floats in the waters of a Coleridgean river god Alpheus; and her lover Hamlet's mirror-double is Telmah, i.e., Telemachus: another prince in search of a lost father. (This is an early example of the use of meaningful looking-glass words to multiply realities and evoke *potustoronnost'*, "Otherworldliness", that Nabokov was later to employ in *Pale Fire*.) It is plain that Nabokov had Pushkinian *rusalki* in mind for many reasons; but one can also prove that the mermaid of the *Prologue* to *RL* in particular was of importance to him. The center of *Pnin* is the Joycean "Pninsday" chapter, in which through the citation in a Russian class of Pushkin's poem of 1829, *Brozhu li ya vdol' ulits shumnykh* ("Whether I wander down noisy streets..."), and other machinations, the author links the chronology of Pnin's own life to the fateful dates of Pushkin's. This is preceded by the visit of Pnin's estranged wife, Liza, a cruel and shallow woman whose poems are obscene (and hilarious) parodies of Anna Akhmatova's lyrics—the verses enraged Akhmatova when she learnt of them.³⁹ Pnin is the opposite of Liza in every way: his love and telepathic empathy with their son Victor (this is a reprise of the Hamlet/Telemachus theme) is in contrast to her neglect; his loyalty and kindness are brighter against the background of her callousness. Liza is a cheap imitator of Akhmatova; Pnin shares an occult connection to Pushkin himself. After Liza leaves, the distraught, despairing, lost Pnin sits crying in his American landlady's kitchen: Joan tries to distract him with ads in a magazine, one of which shows a sailor, cat, and mermaid on a desert island. The sailor's thought-balloon converts the semi-human, semi-ichthyic *rusalka* into a full woman; the cat's, into a whole fish. But the marooned sailor is perhaps an intrusion of Pnin, who is called the "water-father" at various points in the book. Is the shipwrecked feline a certain Learned Cat? If so, then Pushkin, communicating astrally across the *poshlost'* ("vulgarity") of American consumer culture, is telling Pnin that it's all right. You are not lost. I'm here in the

³⁹ She should not have taken umbrage. The Russian equivalent of Lewis Carroll's parody, "How doth the little crocodile..." in Nabokov's translation of *Alice in Wonderland* is a parody, too—but of "God's little bird no labor knows, no care..." in Pushkin's *The Gypsies!* On the influence of Carroll's "Jabberwocky" on Daniil Kharmis, see text 5, below.

poem, and so are you—as me. As noted above, the fates of the two will become similarly merged in the next chapter of *Pnin*, through Nabokov's manipulation of dates.

It seems to me that Nabokov perceived in Pushkin's lightness the liberating, luminous hope of his *potustoronnost'*. In one stanza of *RL*, the kidnapped Ludmila decides to commit suicide by drowning—in the original plan, Nabokov's "My Poor Pnin", the water-father, was to kill himself—but doesn't. Early on Pninsday, the hero teaches the poem in which Pushkin wonders where death will find him: *v boyu li, v stranstvii, v volnakh* "in battle, wandering, or waves"—and this strophe is repeated in a reverie towards the end. The triplet: *V volnakh reshilas' utonut'; Odnako v vody ne prygnula/ I dale prodolzhal put'* (II.351–353, p. 32) "She decided to drown in the waves/ But did not jump into the waters/ And continued on her way." And the following stanza ends with and even more playful, resumptive triplet, to stress the cheerful lightness of the heroine's essential nature: *Ne staru est', ne budu slushat'; Umrui sredi tvoikh sadov! Podumala—i stala kushat'* (II.375–377, p. 32) "I shall not dine, I shall not heed:/ I'll die here in your gardens!/ She thought, and thereupon began to eat." Nabokov, who noticed that *volshebnik*, "sorcerer", was a partial anagram of his name and encoded it into his *ars poetica*, the poem "Fame" ("Слава"), must have delighted in the wittily Voltairean and quite disingenuous avowal by Pushkin, the greater magician, in *RL*: *Ya kazhdyi den', vosstai ot sna,/ Blagodaryu serdechno Boga/ za to, chto v nashi vremena/ Volshebnikov ne tak uzhe mnogo* (IV.1–4, p. 50) "Every day, arising from sleep/ I give heartfelt thanks to God/ That in our times/ There aren't very many sorcerers."

Another of Nabokov's concerns, allied to the problems of the Otherworld, of memory and loss, and of preternatural affinity, was that of time. *Speak, Memory* begins with a disquisition on it,⁴⁰ and towards

⁴⁰ Nabokov mentions a friend who had a particular horror of films made before his own birth, for they depicted a world going about its business utterly without his existence. (After our death, we are not so entirely absent, since some remember us, and our deeds leave their traces and effects.) It is certain that Nabokov knew the writer and poet Delmore Schwartz: the latter wrote about the former's work in correspondence with the editor of the publishing house New Directions; and Mrs. Mary Kennedy of Cambridge, Mass., who was then married to the Faulkner scholar Prof. Calvert Collins, recalled to me that Schwartz and Nabokov were often in the same company as evening guests at her home near the Harvard campus during World War II. So one wonders whether Nabokov ever read Schwartz's short story, "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities", in which the narrator dreams he is seated in a cinema watching a film of his parents' courtship. He jumps up from his seat to shout: his horror does not come, though, from a perception of his previous

the end of his earthly life the writer had Van Veén append an essay on it to *Ada*. Pushkin, as one has suggested above, managed to transcend time in his *Prologue*. The *rusalka*, by appearing seated in a tree, is a markedly Russian mermaid, different from the undines of other European folkloric traditions. But she also serves as an emblem of the poet's unique ability imaginatively to command the two worlds, to transform both, and to effect their intercommunication. The seated *rusalka* prefigures the seated Pushkin. His introduction of her is homage to Zhukovsky, whose ballad inspired Pushkin's; and Nabokov in his time further refracted with characteristic cunning the sorcery of his predecessors.

6. *After Pushkin 2: Into the Fifth Dimension with Khlebnikov and Kharms*

The aspect of glossolalia that one finds in the poetry of William Blake: the invention of names or words that are phonetically impressive but often nonsensical or only para-semantic, like *mantras*—is of particular importance when one considers how poets of the 20th century were to encounter Pushkin's mythopoesis and craft their own. The creative manipulation of sound and speech, whether to express the personal apperception of a religious reality that normal language is inadequate to represent, or to shape a new and mythopoetic literary vision, is common to early Christians and Gnostics, and to Russian Futurians and absurdists, including two whose work is particularly indebted to Pushkin's *Prologue* to *RL*, Velimir Khlebnikov and Daniil Kharms. The latter in particular acknowledges a debt to Lewis Carroll, the author of the poem "Jabberwocky"—which has been invoked, in turn, to describe the operations of ancient religion! One can, in other words, reasonably adduce ancient Near Eastern religious data in the attempt to understand ostensibly secular poetry of recent times.⁴¹ We shall discuss a Russian Futurian transmutation of the landscape of the *Prologue* to *RL*, one in which time is made into a concrete object. So it is apposite to mention that one of Blake's likely sources, the 18th-century English Neoplatonist Thomas Taylor, has a rather tactile evocation of time that could have informed the image of water in Blake's painting: "Even

nonexistence, but from a desire never to have been born. It is no new sentiment. *Areion mē einai*, the Greeks averred; and W.S. Burroughs used latterly to quote with approval the Mexican adage, "The worst mistake is to have been born."

⁴¹ See the citations of Patricia Cox Miller, Morton Smith, and Hart Crane in the discussion of "Jabberwocky", texts 5.1, 5.2.

time, with restless motion, slides away/ Like living streames."⁴² If one juxtaposes the pictures by Ramazanov and Blake, the curvature of the shore of Pushkin's lyric may be not only Arina Rodionovna's traditional *incipit* to a *skazka*, but also a concrete evocation of time, in which the circle of repetition and the linearity of change merge as a curve, a bow.

But it is Velimir Khlebnikov who first reflects in subsequent Russian poetry on this possible facet of Pushkin's work: the reduction of the temporal to a mere dimension like those of space—the creation of a landscape of which the space-time continuum is but a component. The creatures and setting of the *Prologue* to *RL* are diffused through several poems and prose pieces (texts 2.1–6) written around 1907 by the *budetnik* "Futurian", who evokes concisely a higher-dimensional, poetically envisioned universe through neologisms in which such abstractions as time and feeling are made into concrete objects: beings fly on *grustyl'ya*, "sorrow-wings" (2.6); a *vidyaz'* "seer-knight" (2.3) accomplishes his quests; and the landscape is dominated by *vremysh* "time-grass" (2.1). The mead is that *vechnosti vino*, "wine of eternity", particular to Russia (2.4); and the *Rusalka* (2.2) expands from a mythical creature into a being who incorporates also the homonymic seasonal festival *Rosalia*. Pushkin's *izbushka* receives a neologistic epithet, *vremataya*, "made of time, chronish"; the forest itself is *vremovoi*, "timeful". As for the "Russian spirit" Pushkin extols in the *Prologue* (though playfully undermining Baba Yaga's sinister taste for Russians to eat), Khlebnikov underscores and celebrates the etymological link between the Slavs, *slava* "glory", and *slovo* "word, epic, lay" (2.5). Strangely, and coincidentally, the present-day British writer Scarlett Thomas within her novel *The End of Mr. Y* has composed a sonnet as Prologue to an imaginary work on an Otherworld. This Prologue begins with the evocation of a "time-wrought" seashore; and its structure parallels in important ways that of Pushkin's poem, through Khlebnikov's lens (see text 6.1). Thomas does share some interests, at least, with another Russian poet who revisited Pushkin's curving seashore: the absurdist Daniil Kharms.

Kharms (text 4.1) wrote two versions of a poem beginning with the line "Надо кикать лукоморье" ("The curving shore [*lukomor'e*] deserves a coo"). The shorter and earlier version is in his fourth notebook, dated 18 August–30 September 1925, in 34 lines on two pages. The incipit is pure

⁴² Thomas Taylor, *Works of Plato*, II, 672, cit. by Christopher Heppner, *Reading Blake's designs* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 250.

Pushkinian mythopoeisis: the use of the word лукоморье in the very first line is sufficient to show this—but with the simultaneous introduction of a rare but venerable verb from the Slavonic epic antiquity of the Igor' Tale that so interested Pushkin: кикать (*kikat'*). It is to be employed twice as an infinitive (l. 1,13), once in a form of the 3rd pers. pres. (кикает, l. 22), and once as a perf. ppart. reflexive (накикавшись, l.14). It is onomatopoeic, used of the call of a bird (e.g., «кичет лебедь белая», “the white swan cries”; in the Igor' Tale, Yaroslavna «зегзицею кычет» “coos like a cuckoo”);⁴³ and it appears in the standard Russian dictionary of Dahl (II, p. 107) immediately before the entry on кикимора, *kikimora*. This is a juxtaposition Kharmis is unlikely to have failed to notice. For this is the name of a Russian mythical house spirit who lives invisibly behind the stove by day and emerges at night to make mischief with looms and spindles. One who sees her spinning will die, so it is likely these instruments retain their ancient significance as symbols of fate. Variants of the name of this creature include кика and кыка, so a derivation from кикать is at least possible (the element *mora/mara* means by itself an illusory vision or sprite). If the *kikimora* is the “*mara* who cries (*kikaet/kichet/kychet*)”, though, then the derivation would have to do with a sound rather than the bird-like appearance of other mythical, siren-like beings such as the Sirin or Gamayun. For the *kikimora* appears as a woman with long, flowing hair: she is sometimes thought to be the wife of the male house spirit, the *domovoi*. The *kikimora* likes not only settled habitations, but empty houses as well; and she can be introduced into a new dwelling under construction by vengeful carpenters—who put a sort of little voodoo doll in the foundations—if the builder is stingy with the vodka!⁴⁴

The mythical creature *kikimora* makes a brief appearance, in fact, in a play based upon the *Prologue* to *RL*. Yulii Kim, whose bardic songs were popular among the Soviet generation of the 1960's and later, published

⁴³ Edward Keenan, *Josef Dobrovský*, 243, 258, provides a list of ten birds in the epic, for whose song nine different verbs are used. The *zegziitsa*, “cuckoo” (modern Rus. *kukushka*) uses *kykati* (modern *kikat'*).

⁴⁴ See *Русский демонологический словарь*, сост. Т.А. Новичкова, СПб: Петербургский писатель, 1995, с. 210–218 (T.A. Novichkova, ed., *Russian demonological dictionary*, St. Petersburg: Petersburg Writer, 1995, 210–218), s.v.; W.F. Ryan, *The Bathhouse at Midnight: An Historical Survey of Magic and Divination in Russia* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999), 43, 227; Linda J. Ivanits, *Russian Folk Belief* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1989), 57.

recently a play, "Rusalka on the Branches: A Pushkinian Tale",⁴⁵ in which Zhora, a New Russian thug who owns a holding company called Lukomor'e and plans to open a sort of Russian Disneyland, accompanies Sasha (i.e., Alexander Pushkin) to the real otherworld *Lukomor'e* in search of a mermaid for a sideshow. To underscore the role in Russian culture of the new kleptocracy, the author makes Zhora the latter-day catamite d'Anthès, who murders Sasha but ends up as the transgendered fake of his own freak show. Kim takes careful note of all the points where Pushkin has departed from the formulae of the folktale: of the unexpectedly brown wolf, for instance, this colloquy: "Sashka: He isn't gray. He's brown. Zhora: Brown means it's a *bear*, Sanya." (P. 378: «Сашка: Он не серый—он бурый. Жора: Бурый— это медведь, Саня.») Where Pushkin has the innocent, exultant "There is the Russian spirit—there is Russia's scent!" and Baba Yaga perambulates on the land in her mortar, Kim restores the Slavonic equivalent of a real witch's threatening, cannibalistic "Fee, fie, foe, fum! I smell the blood of an Englishman!" (p. 416: «Фу, фу...здесь русский дух...здесь Русью пахнет», "Foo, foo...there's a Russian spirit/scent...it smells here of Rus'."). In a nod to the masterpiece of 20th-century Russian mythopoesis, Mikhail Sergeyevich Bulgakov's novel *The Master and Margarita*, the Learned Cat introduces himself by the name of Woland's feline assistant, Behemoth (p. 374). So, on p. 379, the Wolf calls the noxious Zhora a "swamp demon" (*kikimora bolotnaya*). Kim writes in a literature permanently suffused in Pushkin's charm, where Kharm's has joined the stream of poetry loved and recited; so the appearance in this intricately self-conscious play of the *kikimora* may be the imprint of the echo of a Kharm'sian bird whose *kikat'* at the curving shore itself echoes both Pushkin and the archaic monument of the Igor' Tale.

The mixture of magical and folkloric resonances in a word reaching back to the beginnings of Russian poetry, together with the power and symbolism of its onomatopoeic sound, would have multiply appealed to Kharm's: the word *kikat'* would have lain on a boundary between the actual and the unseen, between the semantic and *zaum'*, rather like the obscure English words Lewis Carroll, whose work Kharm's read and liked, resurrected as neologisms in his compactly mythopoetic crypto-epic "Jabberwocky". Did Kharm's realize the layered powers of his terminology? Since he uses *kikat'*

⁴⁵ Юлий Ким, «Русалка на ветвях: Пушкинская сказка», *Моя бабушка Россия*, Москва: Время, 2003, с. 362–440: Yulii Kim, "Rusalka on the Branches", *My Mother Russia* (Moscow: Time, 2003), 362–440.

so often in so many forms, it means at least that he concentrated on the word—so perhaps he did. But as Lewis Carroll remarked in a letter of 1896 to young readers, “Words mean more than we mean to express when we use them.”⁴⁶

The rhythm of Kharms’ poem, the phrase «из за острова» (“out from the isle”), and the reference to Pechenegs, summon other old themes of Russian folk and epic culture: the ballad of Sten’ka Razin, and the Polovtsy/Pechenegs of the Igor’ Tale. The mention of Alyonka (Аленю, l. 15) refers to the genre of the Russian folk tale, or *skazka*; and Alexander, “half Asia”, the Minotaur, Phoenicia, and an Isle of Darkness, belong to the fantasia of the *Alexander Romance*, with its panoply of mythical monsters, miraculous locomotion, and adventures in remote, fabulous climes. Ammon may refer to the Egyptian god reputed to be the divine father of Alexander of Macedon, who was depicted on coins with the ram’s horns of the Nilotic divinity curling out of his leonine tresses (hence Alexander’s appellation in Qur’anic literature as *dhū’l qarnain*, “he of the horns twain”).

Kharms mentions also the word *kabala* (l. 6). The poet was fascinated by magic and the occult, by Egyptian symbols (especially the *ankh*), and by the Hebrew alphabet and the Jewish Kabbala.⁴⁷ In notebook 8 (18 October 1926–13 May 1927, l.139) he provides a careful diagram of the Kabbalistic Tree of Life, with the names of the *sefirot* transcribed into Cyrillic and translated into Russian; and in notebook 22, from the early 1930’s, he lists the letters of the Hebrew alphabet, with their symbolism noted both in Cyrillic and in a private cipher (I, 400; III.147). In the latter notebook (I.416) he has a shorter list of the Hebrew letters, alongside which is the Tetragrammaton, an apparent experimental mutation of it, and the phrase ГАМ ЗУ ЛИТЕЙВО, *gam zu liteyvo*, which is a transcription of an Ashkenazic pronunciation of the old Talmudic maxim *Gam zû lə-tôvā*, “This, too, is for the best.” So Kharms has taken the template of the mythical geography of the *Prologue* to *RL* and has widened its reach to include the Asiatic climes of mediaeval romance and the mysteries of the Kabbalah, whilst in his usage of *kikat’* deftly fusing the poetico-magico-linguistic practice of *zaum’* with the same springs of Russian folklore and

⁴⁶ Lewis Carroll, *The Hunting of the Snark: The Definitive Edition* with an Introduction by Adam Gopnik (ed. Martin Gardner; New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), xxi; see text 5.2.

⁴⁷ Pushkin was aware of his own Ethiopian ancestry; and one of his prized possessions was a seal ring with a Hebrew inscription. He had some interest in the occult themes so popular among the Gothic writers of the late 18th century; cf. his *Queen of Spades*, for instance.

mythology from which Pushkin had drawn. And how might Kharms have seen his own place within his fantastic landscape? Kharms and his fellow Чинари, "Chinars" (this neologism, used as a designation of their literary circle, may refer to the angelic ranks, Rus. *chiny*, in the mystical writings of Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite on the structure of the Divine world) were convinced that entities from a world or worlds that abut on or overlap ours can appear as emissaries.⁴⁸ So the idea of the *lukomor'e* as a transit-point of the Otherworld would not have seemed at all bizarre to him: Alexander's (?) island of Ammon, ships, perhaps a Kabbala in ruins like a sort of three-dimensional text (unless he means the homonym, old Rus. *кабала*, a form of slavery or indebtedness), storms "on order", golden domes, the black earth, and Alyonya and the Pechenegs present the diffracted geography of a mythical realm beyond space and time into and out of which the mind travels; and one imagines Kharms at home in it.

Conclusion

Pushkin's *Prologue*, immortally famous in every way a poem can be, and perfect as the Russian bard's every line was, has of course literally and figuratively echoed down the nearly two centuries since he wrote it. It is not surprising that later visionary geniuses of the Russian poetic art, perceiving the rich and strange intricacy beneath its bright and simple surface, have refracted its multiple meditations upon myth and story, poet and tradition, space and time and the joyful surprise that lies ever glimmeringly beyond. It can be, indeed, as lucid as you like or as deep as you choose to dive—a lively South Russian seashore where delightful creatures disport themselves around the Zaporozhian oak, or a sea of space and time lapping against a mystic shore where a poet seated by the World Tree draws his readers into a timely, multi-dimensional otherworld of transformation. One can enjoy the shimmering Voltairean surface or submerge oneself in Neoplatonist, Gnostic, Armeno-Irano-Aramaic Mandaean depths, or do both: Pushkin's art admits the dualities of aesthetic and intellectual, even spiritual, pleasure.

There is a final duality adumbrated in the poem. The Russian literature that all the world cherishes began with Pushkin, though it emerges from a written tradition, also, that is a thousand years old. The epic and

⁴⁸ See Eugene Ostashevsky, tr., *OBERIU: An Anthology of Russian Absurdism*, Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2006, p. xxvii.

mythology in the poem are fresh and new, the stuff of a highly self-conscious Romantic “discovery” of European antiquities. And Russia itself was the newest of the European state-empires: the sacrifice of Moscow and the victory over Napoleon in 1812, in a way, marked its entry into the politics of the continent’s great powers far more decisively than the reign of Peter the Great. The Slavonic languages are excluded from some surveys of ancient tongues, on the arbitrary and misleading grounds that their written monuments do not predate the fifth century AD. Yet the Indo-European poetic arts were pre-eminently characterized by their orality: the Russians are equally an ancient people, kin to the Venedi of Tacitus; and their undeniably ancient language is steeped in the deep poetic structures of millennia. (In this essay one has touched upon the play of *ved-* and *vid-*, for example.) Pushkin’s lightness and depth, his playfulness and seriousness together, reflect a duality of Russia as venerable sage and strong and cheerful youth, the nation’s antiquity and modernity. Taken together these are the wholeness of life, the integrity of vision, the balance of time at whose center sit, talking, Pushkin and his Cat.

Texts

1. Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin (1799–1837).

- 1.1. *Prologue to Ruslan and Ludmila* (А.С. Пушкин, *Полное собрание сочинений*, т. 4, Москва: Изд. АН СССР, 1937, с. 5–6; A.S. Pushkin, *Complete Works*, vol. 4, Moscow: Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1937, 5–6):

У лукоморья дуб зеленый;/ Златая цепь на дубе том:/ И днем и ночью кот ученый/Все ходит по цепи кругом;/ Идет направо— песнь заводит,/ Налево—сказку говорит.// Там чудеса: там леший бродит,/ Русалка на ветвях сидит;/ Там на неведомых дорожках/ (10) Следы невиданных зверей;/ Избушка там на курьих ножках/ Стоит без окон, без дверей;/ Там лес и дол видений полны;/ Там о заре прихлынут волны/ На брег песчаный и пустой,/ И тридцать витязей прекрасных/ Чредой из вод выходят ясных,/ И с ними дядька их морской;/ Там королевич мимоходом/ (20) Пленяет грозного царя;/ Там в облаках перед народом/ Через леса, через моря/ Колдун несет богатыря;/ В темнице там царевна тужит,/ А бурый волк ей верно служит;/ Там ступа с Бабою Ягой/ Идет бредет сама собой;/ Там царь Кащей над златом чахнет;/ Там

русский дух...там Русью пахнет!/(30) И там я был, и мед я пил;/
У моря видел дуб зеленый;/ Под ним сидел, и кот ученый/ Свои
мне сказки говорил./ Одну я помню: сказку эту/ Поведаю теперь
я свету...//

Дела давно минувших дней,/ Преданья старины глубокой.⁴⁹

By the bow-curve of the seashore there is a green oak;/ A golden chain
on that oak:/ And by day and night a Learned Cat/ Goes round con-
stantly on the chain;/ He goes to the right—chants a lay;/ To the left—
recites a tale.// Wonders are there: there a Forest Sprite wanders,/ A
Mermaid sits upon the branches./ There on unknown paths/ Are the
tracks of unseen beasts;/ A hut there on chicken feet/ Stands without
windows, without doors;/ There wood and dale are full of visions;/
There at dawn roll in the waves/ Onto the empty, sandy shore,/ And
thirty splendid Knights/ File out of the waters, bright;/ And with them
their Seaborn Sire;/ There the Prince in passing/ (20) Takes prisoner
the fearsome King;/ There in the clouds before the people/ Across
forests, across seas/ The Wizard bears the Hero;/ There in a dungeon
pines a Princess,/ But a Brown Wolf serves her loyally;/ There a mortar
with the Witch/ Wanders going by itself;/ There king Kashchei with-
ers over his wealth;/ The Russian spirit is there... there is the aroma
of Rus'!/ (30) And there was I—and the mead I drank;/ By the sea I
saw the green oak;/ Sat beneath it, and the Learned Cat/ Told me his
tales./ One I remember: this tale/ I shall recount now to society...//
Deeds of days long gone,/ Traditions of deep antiquity.

- 1.2. У моря лукоморья стоит дуб, а на том дубу золотые цепи, и по
тем цепям ходит кот: вверх идет—сказки рассказывает, вниз идет—
песни поет.

By the sea, the curving seashore, an oak stands, and on that oak
are golden chains, and by those chains walks a cat: he goes up and
recounts tales; he goes down and sings songs.

2. WILLIAM BLAKE (1757–1827). Text from *Milton* (composed 1804–1811),
in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, edited by David V.

⁴⁹ I have included this couplet, a translation from "Carthon" in the *Ossian* of James Macpherson, partly because in the first edition of *RL* it was both Prologue and Epilogue: true to the ancient form of ring composition, it concludes Canto VI. But the separate concluding couplet also allows one at least the fleeting feeling of the Prologue as a sonnet; cf. Scarlett Thomas' sonnet, a parallel in some respects to the Prologue, text 6.1.

Erdman, commentary by Harold Bloom (Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1982). Robin Hamlyn and Michael Phillips, *William Blake* (NY: Abrams, 2000), discuss the painting "The Sea of Time and Space" (pp. 192–193 and pl. 240) and agree with the interpretation advanced by Heppner, discussed above. The text from *Milton* in which Blake mentions the Sea of Time and Space, though, is not cited.

- 2.1. And all the Spectres of the Dead calling themselves Sons of God,/ In his Synagogue worship Satan under the Unutterable Name (p. 104, plate 11[12], lines 13–14).
- 2.2. The nature of Infinity is this: that every thing has its/ Own Vortex; and when once a traveller thro' Eternity/ Has passed that Vortex, he perceives it not roll backward behind/ His path, into a Globe itself enfolding, Like a Sun (p. 109, plate 15[17], lines 21–24).
- 2.3. First Milton saw Albion upon the Rock of Ages,/ Deadly pale, outstretch'd, and snowy-cold, storm-cover'd—/ A Giant form of perfect beauty, outstretch'd on the Rock/ In solemn Death: the Sea of Time and Space thunder'd aloud/ Against the Rock, which was enwrapped with the weeds of Death./ Hovering over the cold bosom in its vortex, Milton bent down/ To the bosom of Death: what was underneath soon seemed above,/ A cloudy heaven mingled with stormy seas in loudest ruin,/ But as a wintry globe descends precipitant, thro' Beulah bursting,/ With thunders loud and terrible, so Milton's Shadow fell/ Precipitant, loud thund'ring, into the Sea of Time and Space (p. 109, plate 15[17], lines 36–46).

3. VELIMIR KHLBNIKOV (1885–1921). Texts from the ed. Велимир Хлебников, *Собрание сочинений в трех томах*, СПб: Академический проект, 2001 (Velimir Khlebnikov, *Collected Works in Three Volumes*, St. Petersburg: Academic Project, 2001), cited by vol. and page no. In an autobiographical sketch of 1914, the poet notes that he was born 28 Oct. 1885 in the Astrakhan' steppe, and "in my veins there flows the Armenian blood of the Alabov [clan]" («в моих жилах есть армянская кровь (Алабовы)»).

- 3.1. (I, 61): Времыши—камыши/ На озере берегу,/ Где камня временем,/ Где время камнем./ На берега озере/ Времыши, камыши,/ На озера берегу/ Священно шумящие.

(1907, 1908)

Reeds of time, blades of grass/ On the shore of the lake,/ Where the stones are time's means;/ And time, a thing of stone./ On the lake

belonging to the shore,/ Reeds of time, blades of grass/ On the shore
of the lake,/ Sacred sussurus.

(In my translation I have rendered Khlebnikov's invented *vremysbi*, a compound, pl., of *vremya* "time" and *kamysh* "tall grass" as literally as possible, and have tried to retain the assonance of the final strophe. To convey the cultural markedness of tall grasses to Americans, Walt Whitman provides the echo. Khlebnikov himself was probably inspired to use these grasses as the incipit of his evocation of the mythical world by K.D. Bal'mont's Symbolist landscapes of the 1890's: the poem *Kamyshi*, with its echoes of Poe, and the famous *Bezglagol'nost'* ("Speechlessness"), with its strophe "Недвижный камыш. Не трепещет осока." ("The grasses are motionless; the reeds do not stir.") Here is the looser, though more tuneful, rendering by Velimir Khlebnikov, *The King of Time: Selected Writings of the Russian Futurian* (tr. Paul Schmidt, ed. Charlotte Douglas; Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1985), 16: "The streams of time/ On stone dreams,/ The rush of streams/ On time's stones./ Rustling sedge/ At the lake's edge—/ Reverent hush,/ Reverberant rush.")

- 3.2. (I, 46–47): Русалка телом голубым/ Немоб осенних красоту/
Воспеть хотела./ Туда, о, к ней! Туда, о, к ним!/ И вмиг к реке! И
вмиг в волну!/ Туда, где рень! Туда, где пена!/ Но где же цель? Но
где же тело?/ Но где же плен? Но где полон?/ Она, она, о ужас
слышу,—зеленая жена!/ И вопль ее, толпа испугом—/ О ужас,
ужас, о сором!..// На простыне к высокому небу/ Русалочьего
заманника подбрасывают.

(1907)

A mermaid with sky-blue body/ The beauty of autumnal mutenesses/
Wanted to extol in song./ There, to her; there, to them!/ Instantly into
the river and the wave!/ There, where the shoal is; there, where the
foam!/ But where is object; body, where?/ Where is captivity; the cap-
tive, where?/ She, she, I hear the fear—wife all green!/ And a fright-
ened mob is her howling,/ O horror, horror and shame!/ They toss the
mermaid's prey/ On a blanket high into the sky.

- 3.3. (I, 63): Видязь видений безликих/ Вероши в яви/ Есть узывностынь
редкой мечты,/ В русалиях яви голубоши,/ Безмерной, бесценной,
беспленной,/ Бестешной Мокоши/ Есть русалие хлябей мечты,/
Есть Русь хлябей домирного,/ Хлябей довещной черты/
Домирного мира.

(1907)

The visioknight⁵⁰ of visions faceless/ Of a thing of faith awake/ Is the hearkenfreezing of a rare dream,/ In the Rusalienes⁵¹ of skyblueness waking,/ Of boundless, priceless, uncaptured/ Mokosh⁵² light and unconsolated./ There is a Rusalience of the gulfs of dream,/ A Rus⁵³ of abysses before the world,/ Of gulfs of the shape before form/ Of the world before it was made.

- 3.4. (I, 58): Россия забыла напитки,/ В них вечности было вино,/ И в первом разобранном свитке/ Восчла роковое письмо./ Ты свитку внимала немливо,/ Как взрослым внимает дитя,/ И подлая тайная сила/ Тебя наблюдала нехотя.

(1907)

Russia forgot her potations:/ In them was the wine of eternity,/ And in the first scroll unrolled/ Fateful script she read./ You listened to the reading laxly mute/ As a child hears an adult out,/ And a stealthy secret power/ Regarded you against its own will.

- 3.5. (I, 63): Кто в славобе чародей,—/ Славодейное искусство/ Почитают, славянина/ Называя: соловей.

(1907)

Who is wizard in matters of glory:/ His praise-crafter's art/ Naming the nightingale/ Declares: Slav.⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Khlebnikov's neologism, *vidyaz'*, with *vid-* "see", patterned on *vityaz'*, "knight", cf. Pushkin's Prologue, line 16. On Khlebnikov's invented vocabulary, see Наталья Перцова, *Словарь неологизмов Велимира Хлебникова* [Natal'ya Pertsova, *Dictionary of the Neologisms of Velimir Khlebnikov*] (Wiener Slawistischer Almanach, Sonderband 40, Москва, 1995).

⁵¹ *Rosalie* combines Latin Rosalia, a festival of roses and waters (cf. Gk. *Anthesterion*, and the Armenian *Vardavar*, or Feast of the Transfiguration, to which Vyacheslav Ivanov devoted a dreamily lyric poem, to which in turn Vahan Teryan testily replied in verses on the Armenian massacres that were going on at that very moment), with *rusalka*. Nabokov's Pnin thinks of Ophelia, the drowned maiden, the *rusalka*, in connection with Russian summer festivals when garlands of flowers were cast upon the river waters.

⁵² A Slavonic god of the waters, cf. *mok(r)-*, "wet"; Khlebnikov connects the being to his other neologisms ending here in *-osh'*.

⁵³ Though many invoke Russia's archaic name, note in particular Pushkin's use of it in the Prologue: *Tam russkii dukh, / tam Rus'yu pakhnem!*

⁵⁴ On the issue of Slav-slovo-solovei, see J.R. Russell, "Solov'i, solov'i," St. Nersess Theological Review 10 (2005): 77–139; Rus. tr. in *Россия XXI век*, Москва, 2006.4, с. 156–197 (*Russia in the 21st Century*, Moscow, 2006, no. 4, 156–197). In his "star language" Khlebnikov asserted the connective identity Славянство–восход–звук: Слава слова и слава солнца. Сияние слов. Солнечная природа слов. "Slavonicity-ascent-sound: The glory of the word

3.6. (III, 32):

ИСКУШЕНИЕ ГРЕШНИКА

...И были многие и многия: и были враны с голосом: «смерть!» и крыльями ночей, и правдоцветиковый папоротник, и врематая избушка, и лицо старушонки в кичке вечности, и злой пес на цепи дней, с языком мысли, и тропа, по которой бегают сутки и на которой отпечатались следы дня, вечера и утра, и небокорое древо, больное жуками–пилильщиками, и юневое озеро и глазасторогие козлы, и мордастоногие дива, и девоорлы с грустильями вместо крылий и на любви вместо босови, и мальчик, пускающий с соломинки один мир за другим и хохочущий беззаботно, и было младенцекаменное ложе, по которому струились злые и буйные воды и пролетало низко над землей сомнениекрылая ласточка и пел влажокликий соловей на колковзором шиповнике, и стояла ограда из времowego тесу, и скорбеветвенный страдняк ник над водой, и было озеро, где вместо камня было время, а вместо камышей шумели времыши. И зыбились грустняки над озером. И плавал правдохвостый сом, и давала крути равенствозубая щука, и толчками быстрыми и незаметными пятился назад—справедливость—клешенный рак. И шествовала времяклювая цапля и глотала лягушей с мировой икрой на приятноватых ногах, и был старец, возделывавший лжаное поле, и молодежеперый кур застыл перед проведенной чертой...

(1907)

(Paul Schmidt, tr., Ronald Vroon, ed., *Collected Works of Velimir Khlebnikov*, vol. II, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989, 10: "A SINNER'S SEDUCTION. There were many of them, many of them black-birds with nightwings saying 'Death!' and truthflower ferns and a time-thatch cottage and the face of an oldwomer in eternity's tripes and a snapping hound on a chain of days whose tongue was thought and there was a path, and on the path one day followed another and left behind prints of daytime and evening and morning, and a skybarked tree eaten up by fiddle beetles and a youngering lake and horneyed goats and astonishing centipusses and girleens with whinings where they might have had wings and love instead of lore, and a boy setting

and the glory of the sun. The scintillation of words. The solar nature of words." See Barbara Lönnkvist, *Universe in word: Poetics of Velimir Khlebnikov*, Rus. tr. СПб: Академический Проект [St. Petersburg: Academic Project], 1999, 70–71.

one world after another loose from a straw and laughing for he cared about nothing and was a stretch of youngstones too and over it the swift and snapping water ran..."⁵⁵

4. DANIIL KHARMS (born ДАНИИЛ ИВАНОВИЧ ЮВАЧЁВ, DANIIL IVANOVICH YUVACHNEV, 1905–1942). Kharms a friend of Khlebnikov's and a member of the Орден заумников, "Order of Transrationalists"—practitioners of *zaum'*. Texts from (I) Даниил Хармс, *Полное собрание сочинений: Записные книжки, дневник, книга 1*, СПб: Академический проект, 2002 (Daniil Kharms, *Complete Collected Works: Notebooks, Diary*, vol. 1, St. Petersburg: Academic Project, 2002); (II) *Поэты группы "ОБЭРИУ"*, под ред. М.Б. Мейлаха, Библиотека поэта, большая серия, 3-ье изд., СПб: Советский писатель, 1994 (M.B. Meilakh, ed., *Poets of the Group "OBERIU"*, Poet's Library, Major Series, 3rd ed., St. Petersburg: Sovetskii Pisatel', 1994). For Kharms' cipher, Kabbalistic diagram, list of Hebrew letters, Osiris-symbol, etc., see I and Рисунок Хармса, сост. Ю.С. Александров, СПб: Изд-во Ивана Лимбаха, 2006 (*Kharms' Drawings*, compiled by Yu. S. Alexandrov, St. Petersburg: Ivan Limbakh, 2006).

4.1. (L45):

(*Лист п об./ Fol nb*) Надо кикать лукоморье/ для конюшенной езды/ из за острова Амонья/ винограда и узды/ и рукой её вертели/ и руина кабала/ и заказаны метели/ золотые копола/ и чего-то разбедянит/ (10) кацавейкою в дали / а на небе кораблями/ пробегали корабли/ надо кикать чернозёмом/ а накикавшись в трубу/ кумачевую Аленю/ и руину кабалу/ не смотри на печенегу/ не увидиш(ь) (кабалу) коче (2 *нрзб./ two lines illegible*) (*Лист 12/Fol 12a*) а в зазёрах другими азарными/ (20) телеграммою на верстах/ александру так и кажется/ кто-то кикает за кусты/ (от ура до) целый день до заката вечера/ от парчи до (закат) малевок князевых/ встанут (нелюди?) изувечено/ томами синими Полуазии/ Александра козят араби (*sic!*)/ целый остров ему бовекой/ Александр козит корабль/ (30) минотавра и

⁵⁵ Vasilii Kamensky gave Khlebnikov an advance for this piece, recognizing in it a completely new and exciting poetics. The poet promptly spent the money at a Caucasian restaurant, hiring musicians and dining on shashlik (see София Старкина, *Велимир Хлебников, король времени: Биография*, СПб: Вита Нова, 2005, с. 75; Sofia Starkina, *Velimir Khlebnikov, the King of Time: A Biography*, St. Petersburg: Vita Nova, 2005, 75).

человека/ И апостола зыда мокром/ через шею опракинул (*sic!*)/
в море остров в море Потемье/ в море шарка финикии

"The curving shore deserves a coo/ For riding from the stable/
Out from the isle of Ammon/ Where there are grapevine growing,
reins./ She was spinning with her hands,/ And there the ruins of
Kabbala are.⁵⁶ Snowstorms meanwhile have been hired/ To go with
golden onion domes./ And someone far away/ (10) In a fur-fringed
vest was crying woe,/ While in the sky passed/ Ships in the shapes
of ships./ One has to crow like *chernozem*,⁵⁷/ And having crowed
into the trumpet one's fill,/ red-bunting-decked Alyonka/ And the
Kabbalistic ruins, too,/ Stop looking at that Pecheneg:/ You won't
see Kabbala,/ Nomadic...⁵⁸/ While in the sudden lakes (?)⁵⁹ other
unexpected/ (20) Telegrams on the line,/ It seems to Alexander/ That
someone behind the bushes crows/ (From hurrah) at break of day to
evening—when the sunshine goes—/ From embroideries in silk to
princes' (sunset) canvasses in oil,/ Blue tomes of half of Asia/ Full of
monsters⁶⁰ will arise deformed./ in blue tomes of half of Asia/ Arabs
torture Alexander,/ and he's got half an isle;/ Alexander leaps to his
ship/ (30) Dragging man and minotaur on board./ But the Apostle
itches, damp,/ Throws the isle over his shoulder into the sea, the sea
of Darkness,/ Where date palms scrape..."

- 4.2. Kharms published a longer and revised version of the poem (4.1), completed in August or September 1925; it is reprinted in II, No. 257, pp. 484–487. On its relation to the foregoing it may be apposite to quote the general observation of M.O. Чудакова, *Рукопись и книга*, Москва: Просвещение, 1986, с. 113 (M.O. Chudakova, *The Manuscript and the Book*, Moscow: Enlightenment, 1986, 113): "The printed work in a new edition is not infrequently subjected to the author's revision. From another point of view, that which had seemed to the

⁵⁶ The Rus. *kabala* has two meanings: either Jewish Kabbala, or, with the very same spelling, an old Muscovite term for indentured slavery. Given Kharms' interest in Judaism and esoterica, I have opted for the former meaning.

⁵⁷ The rich Russian "black earth" of the nation's breadbasket.

⁵⁸ Two lines in the manuscript are illegible: I've taken a stab at "nomadic" for Rus. **koche*... because the Pechenegs were nomads.

⁵⁹ Rus. *v zazyorakh*: preverb *za-* + loc. pl. of *ozero*?

⁶⁰ Rus. **nelyudi* (restored), "unhumans", which I understand as exotic monsters, rather than a derogation, as in Marina Tsvetaeva's designation in 1938 of the German fascist invaders of Czechoslovakia as unhumans (Rus. *нелюдей*, gen. pl.) in the sense of reprobate subhumans.

author a preliminary variant of a poem now at a certain moment takes its place alongside the later variant. They seem to share equal rights. (Mandelstam's mature period, as is well known, is notable for such a relationship: to those who valued his earlier verses, the new ones seemed incomplete and not perfected.) The tendency to see in the poet's 'creative workshop' a necessarily progressive movement from the less successful to the improved played its role here, as it seems." The longer poem Kharms published is not necessarily the better or the more polished; I would argue that it stands in relation to the tighter, earlier poem much as the concisely epic *Drachenkampf* "Jabberwocky" (text 5.1) of Lewis Carroll, whose work Kharms loved—and whose absurdist experiments with language and theme must be considered a major inspiration of Kharms' work—does to the longer *Hunting of the Snark* (discussed in 5.2), which borrows transrational neologisms from the former.⁶¹

5. LEWIS CARROLL (REV. CHARLES LUTWIDGE DODGSON, 1832–1898). After listening to "Jabberwocky" in *Through the Looking Glass*, Alice exclaims to Humpty Dumpty "It seems very pretty, but it's *rather* hard to understand!" And in fact Carroll uses 28 neologisms (four of which are actually revivals of obscure words) in the poem of 24 lines, by the expert count of the English lexicographer Eric Partridge.⁶² This density of odd new word-creatures—some of which describe, indeed, fictional animals—recalls that of Pushkin's folkloric beings in the *Prologue* to *RL*; and it lends *Jabberwocky* the same pleasing compactness as a self-enclosed magic world. Carroll called the inventions that pack two meanings into a single word, portman-teaux. These occur in natural languages (e.g., blot, from black and spot or dot); and another feature of the binary quality of the neologisms is echoic reduplication. Thus, a sword goes *snicker-snack* ("snicker" means a knife blade). Partridge gamely attempts to explain the words Humpty Dumpty does not: *manxome*, for instance, is a rather overstuffed overnight bag with a maniac, a Manx (odd tailless cat, presumably), and the adjective

⁶¹ "Вот мои любимые писатели: Гоголь, Прутков, Метринк, Гамсун, Эдвард Лир, Люис Кэрроль" (Хармс, *Зап. Книжки*, II, с. 196, 14 ноября 1937): "Here are my favorite writers: Gogol, Prutkov, Maeterlink, Hamsun, Edward Lear, Louis Carroll" (Kharms, *Notebooks*, II, p. 196, 14 November 1937).

⁶² See his essay "The Nonsense Words of Edward Lear and Lewis Carroll," *Here, There, and Everywhere: Essays Upon Language* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1950), 162–188.

fearsome. The Jabberwock itself is to be understood as an echoic dialectal compound of “jatter” (shatter) and “whacker” (something enormous).

Why do this? Aside from the sheer delight of creative expression and the pleasure of vision communicated to the reader, it would seem that words combining the usual and the strange, or terms that seem half-known but just outside the perimeter of everyday sight, are meant to expand one's capacity to perceive, to enable one to accept the impossible as real. This is what makes a fantasy successful. So, in the third-dimensional world we cannot see grasses made of time, or wings whose motive power is the emotion of sorrow; but the Khlebnikovian portmanteaux *vremysh'* and *grustil'ya* transport one into a fifth dimension through the skillful manipulation of the conventions of language. In comparing the setting of the *Prologue* to *RL* to the mysterious landscape of William Blake's painting and, more remotely, to the sacred geography of the Mandaean ritual space, I have deliberately violated the distinctions generally drawn between profane and sacred modes of representation and expression, since a strict division of these categories impede the study of mythopoesis, an activity related to both. And indeed the use of invented or nonsense language in ancient religion was believed to enable the mind to grasp the ungraspable paradoxes of the supernatural. In the Gnostic text *Thunder, Perfect Mind*, for instance, the Goddess declares, “I am the hearing which is attainable to everyone and the speech which cannot be grasped. I am a mute who does not speak, and great is my multitude of words.” If that deity is one's reality, muses a modern scholar of the text, then how do you show you've learnt her speech?⁶³ The answer is, you alter your own language, introducing *voces mysticae*, glossolalia, and neologism. But perhaps the strongest vindication of one's method allowing application of religious material to the study of a secular text may be found in the converse evocation of Lewis Carroll by a historian of early Christianity in a study of proto-Pentecostal speech: “...denial of the relation between Christian and magical prayer overlooks the main problem—to explain, not why the spirit spoke to the churches, but why it spoke to them in jabberwocky” [emphasis mine].⁶⁴

⁶³ See Patricia Cox Miller, “In Praise of Nonsense,” in *Classical Mediterranean Spirituality: Egyptian, Greek, Roman* (ed. A.H. Armstrong; NY: Crossroads, 1986), 482.

⁶⁴ Morton Smith, *Clement of Alexandria and a Secret Gospel of Mark* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1973), 232, who points out that recorded Christian glossolalic lexical items are similar to pagan ones, and that correspondingly in the ostensibly pagan corpus of the Greek magical papyri, the divinity *IAŌ* (a Greek rendering of the Hebrew Tetragrammaton) is the most common, followed by *Adōnai*, a transcription of the Hebrew for “the Lord”.

It is significant that Kharms had an abiding interest in various kinds of magic and mysticism, all of which employed the manipulation of letters and sounds and the use of obscure and barbarous words. His matrix of interests overlapped considerably with those of the early Christians, magicians, and Gnostics.

But were Carroll or Kharms to require an advocate of their own literary jabberwocky, they could not have found a more eloquent one than their brother poet Hart Crane: when in 1926 Harriet Monroe, the Editor of *Poetry*, expressed bafflement at his poem "At Melville's Tomb", he wrote back, "...as a poet I may very possibly be more interested in the so-called illogical impingements of words on the consciousness (and their combinations and interplay in metaphor on this basis) than I am interested in the preservation of their logically rigid significations at the cost of limiting my subject matter and perceptions involved in the poem."⁶⁵

5.1. "Jabberwocky", from *Through the Looking Glass*.

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves/ Did gyre and gimble/ in the wabe;/ All mimsy were/ the borogoves,/ And the mome/ raths outgrabe./ "Beware the Jabberwock, my son!/ The jaws that bite,/ the claws that catch!/ Beware the Jubjub bird,/ and shun/ The frumious Bandersnatch!" / He took his vorpal sword/ in hand:/ Long time the manxome/ foe he sought—/ so rested he by/ the Tumtum tree/ and stood awhile/ in thought.// And as in uffish thought he stood,/ The Jabberwock,/ with eyes of flame,/ Came whiffing through/ the tulgey wood,/ And burred/ as it came!// One, two! One, two!// And through and through/ The vorpal blade/ went snicker-snack!/ He left it dead,/ and with its head/ He went/ galumphing back.// "And hast thou slain/ the Jabberwock?/ Come to my arms,/ my beamish boy!/ O frabjous day!/ Callooh! Callay!"/ He chortled in his joy.// 'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves/ Did gyre and gimble/ in the wabe;/ All mimsy were/ the borogoves,/ And the mome/ raths outgrabe."

- 5.2. *The Hunting of the Snark*, 1876. (Page references to: Lewis Carroll, *The Hunting of the Snark: The Definitive Edition*, with an Introduction by Adam Gopnik (ed. Martin Gardner; New York: W.W. Norton, 2006.) Carroll in his Preface to his *Agony in Eight Fits* explains, "...this poem is to some extent connected with the lay of the Jabberwock"

⁶⁵ Langdon Hammer, ed., *Hart Crane: Complete Poems and Selected Letters* (NY: Library of America, 2006), pp. 165 and 803 n.

(p. 10). Thematically it is also a quest for a monster; but the hunters do not catch the Snark, nor is it clearly described or describable. It is also likely to become a Boojum and catch them instead; and a number of commentators have suggested that the poem deals with the insanity of quotidian concerns and the horror of the approach of oblivion, of the senseless end of one's life. But *Snark* is just as likely an absurd and surreal work whose only logic is that of the shifting forms, dimensions, and rules of a dream. This much longer poem is largely in standard English, with the only neologisms *snark* and *boojum*; but Carroll reuses a number of invented words from *Jabberwocky*: in his Preface the author notes the proper pronunciation of slithy toves and borogoves; and in the body of the text we find beamish (p. 36), uffish (p. 41), galumphing and Jubjub (p. 45), outgrabe (p. 49), bandersnatch (p. 63), frumious (p. 65), and mimsiest, the superlative of the adj. mimsy (p. 65).

A reader who enjoys the clean thematic lines and consistent invented speech of *Jabberwocky*, from Carroll's earlier period, may like less this longer, darker, less manageable product of a later stage of the writer's career. *Jabberwocky* has the geographical and temporal integrity of a quest narrative: it starts in a sort of crepuscular (*brillig*) bower (*wabe*); after the father's instructions, the youth goes forth into the dense, dark forest (*tulgey wood*). He rests against a *Tumtum* tree at almost the exact center of the poem, too: compare Pushkin's Yggdrasil!—and when, having slain the Jabberwock, he rides swiftly (*galumphs*) back, all is now bathed in morning light. The boy himself is aglow (*beamish*), and the day is splendid (*frabjous*). By contrast, the hunters of the Snark set out with a blank map and at the end the Baker vanishes: all is deliberately anti-logical, so when the Pig is charged with desertion, for instance, it pleads an *alibi* in mitigation (p. 107)!

6. SCARLETT THOMAS (1972–). Text from *The End of Mr. Y* (Orlando, FL: Harcourt, 2006), 26–27. The novel deals with a young university lecturer of English at a provincial university in Britain: her name, Ariel, recalls that of Prospero's angelic sprite in *The Tempest* of Shakespeare. Ariel is writing a thesis on an obscure 19th-century novelist, T.E. Lumas, whose forgotten book, *The End of Mr. Y*, contains a recipe for a potion compounded of holy water and a homeopathic drug that takes the hapless hero Mr. Y—and can transport the reader—in a drugged trance called “*telemancy*” into a sort of fifth-dimensional noösphere called the “*Troposphere*”, where one has

telepathic connections to other people. Thomas includes large portions of the fictive novel in her text, including the Prologue (text 6.1), a sonnet in iambic pentameter whose geography and mythic otherworldliness reminded me strongly of the *Prologue* to *RL*. It is as markedly and eerily depopulated as Pushkin's landscape is crowded with strange beings. At the end of both Troposphere and novel is a Garden of Eden with its Tree, to which the heroine and her appropriately named lover Adam repair. Spatially, the poem can be plotted as seashore on the left, then forest with, among other things, a cave (cf. Blake's "Sea of Time and Space" and *De Antro Nympharum*) and an oak (Pushkin, also the twin-trunked tree at the center of Blake's painting). There is a cabin (though not on chicken's feet) and a key. The scene is time-wrought: this recalls Khlebnikov's Futurian refraction of Pushkin's mythic landscape, and Kharms' subsequent homage to it. The implication is that place=time=thought, the last being the determinant of duration: we are in the world, that is, that *includes* sea of time and space but is not submerged within the latter itself.

From a previous novel by Thomas, one learns she has been interested in higher mathematics, cryptography, and the Voynich manuscript with its unknown script, fanciful drawings, and associations with the magical and the occult. (John Dee, court astrologer to queen Elizabeth I, and Athanasius Kircher after him, owned the book; and its authorship is attributed, probably wrongly, to Roger Bacon.) One might compare to this matrix of interests the obsession of Daniil Kharms with Kabbala and the Hebrew language, his monograms and symbols based on Egyptian hieroglyphs, his cosmological drawings, and his frequent use of ciphers. (The one he used most often is a substitution script of his own invention whose characters are drawn from a variety of sources, including Chinese and Japanese, the Samaritan form of Hebrew, and an alphabet based on alchemical and astrological signs that has been employed by occultists for centuries, most recently in the "Cipher MS." of the Golden Dawn group to which W.B. Yeats belonged.) Thomas and Kharms also share an interest in non-Euclidean mathematics and the fifth dimension: Kharms' notebooks are full of mathematical formulae and speculation.

The structural and thematic parallels to Pushkin's *Prologue* to *RL* seemed striking to me, all the more so because text 6.1 is the sole passage in verse in Thomas' novel. I think sea, empty space, and dense forest is a symmetrically pleasing triadic composition, one often encountered in nature, whose multiple possible symbolisms make it attractive as a setting for an imaginative, mythopoetic writer, particularly one like Thomas whose set of interests matches so closely that of Kharms—the Russian

who responded so creatively to Pushkin's poem, his imagination fertilized by the linguistic experiments of his own countryman, Velimir Khlebnikov, and of Thomas', Lewis Carroll. Rather than speculate as to whether the kinship I perceived was a case of filiation or of parallel creative vision, I wrote to ask Prof. Thomas whether she knew the Russian writers, and received a gracious reply by electronic mail on Friday, 3 November 2006, 2:31 PM, which I cite in part herewith: "To answer your questions... No, I am ashamed to say that I have never read Pushkin, and so the echo is accidental. I've never been entirely sure why I decided to have Lumas introduce his novel in verse. I remember at the time thinking I'd cut it if anyone pointed it out; but I was rather fond of it and since no one said anything, I left it in... I was reading Thomas Hardy and Edgar Allan Poe at the time; I remember that. I have always been very interested in Blake. You're more than welcome to quote me if I say/have said anything interesting enough. All I can think of now is that something of Pushkin has leaked into my part of the Troposphere, and I've picked it up unconsciously. But then I'd be believing in my own novel, and that would never do...!" This leaves at least the possibility of inspiration by Blake's painting; but more likely we deal with an independent vision conditioned in part by the multiple factors mentioned above.

- 6.1. "PROLOGUE. I see ahead a time-wrought shore;/ A fishing boat lifts on a wave;/ No footprints on the sandy floor,/ Beyond—an unfamiliar cave.// Or—forest tree'd with oak and yew/ A dark mare waits to carry me,/ Where nothing stirs yet all is true,/ A cabin door, and here—the key!// Perhaps I'll wander in a field,/ With poppy-flush on carpet green:/ However thought has been concealed/ No sleeper's eye can now undream.// In any place that I take flight/ The dark will mutate into light."

2 Early Armenian civilization

James R. Russell

Introduction

It would be fair to suggest that every nation has an identity, a variety of geographic, linguistic, political, religious, cultural, and often physical features by which it defines itself, or through which others perceive it; and its history is bound up to some degree with the effort to preserve that identity, in the context of contacts with others. But to the same extent no self-defined nation, with perhaps the rare exception of peoples living in insular isolation, is homogeneous – national identity evolves, and changes, as a result of diverse influences and interactions with others. The Armenians today are no exception, though they are in some respects anomalous: their language and culture are perhaps the last surviving relic of the ancient Anatolian civilizations; and they are an east Christian island in a Muslim ocean.

The Armenian plateau, which forms the highest western rampart of the tectonically active mountain system stretching from the Balkans to the Himalayas, is divided by mountain ranges that run mostly on an east–west line, with the Taurus and Antitaurus rising over Syria and Cilicia to the south, towards the Mediterranean, and the Pontic range between Armenia and the Black Sea to the north. Because of this, the country, despite its temperate latitudes, has a harsh, continental climate of long winters with heavy snow in the mountains, being cut off from the temperate climate of the Mediterranean. There is little rainfall; all arable areas require irrigation. Of the large valleys of Armenia, the plain of Ararat, where modern Yerevan stands, is the lowest and is relatively warm and fertile. Though the Tigris and Euphrates both rise in the Armenian highlands, even these rivers, like the others, are fast-flowing mountain torrents, not navigable through most of the country.

There are many native grains: both wheat and barley. Xenophon drank beer during his winter sojourn in Armenia, to be mentioned below. There are also grapes and wine: tradition held that a vine at the little church of Akori on Mt. Ararat, buried in the earthquake of 1840, was the one planted by Noah when he alighted from the Ark. (Mediaeval



Map 2.1 Topography

tradition held Mt. Cudi, far to the southwest, to be the biblical mountain where angels gave St. James of Nisibis a piece of the wood from the Ark.) The country is good for herding sheep, for both meat and wool. And there are other food animals. Ancient Armenians ate a great deal of pork. The Urartians, somewhat oddly, decorated some of their war-helmets with hammered reliefs of chickens; the Romans, who got this fowl from an Armenia that was allied to Parthia, called it the 'Parthian bird'. Through Armenia the apricot, too, came to Rome. The ancient Armenians were good warriors and cavalymen: in Achaemenian times Armenia offered 20,000 foals to the Persian court every year. Armenia has gold and silver mines, and fine marble and the masonry stone tufa; the Romans imported red *sandix* pigment from the country, and Armenia exported the famous red dye extracted from the *vordan karmir* worm. Carpets and textiles were produced in antiquity, and Armenia is still famed for them.

For all their rugged and isolating features, the Armenian highlands stand athwart the busiest crossroads of world history: between the powers of the West (Greece, then Rome, then Byzantium, and now Turkey) and the East (Achaemenian, Parthian, Sasanian, and Islamic Iran); and between those of the North (Scythian, Cimmerian, Alan, and other Caucasian peoples, and now Russia) and the South (Assyria and later Mesopotamia, and then the Arabs). Armenia has been assaulted incessantly and conquered often, especially, given the prevailing layout of its mountain ranges, by the great powers to the West and East, though raids by Caucasian tribes are a constant through antiquity as well. Armenia's geography and history together militate against centralized rule, and Armenians have rarely enjoyed full political independence. The threat and reality of invasion and of foreign, often oppressive, rule is a constant in Armenian history, from ancient to modern times. It is to be expected, then, that Armenian identity is a vital issue, a political matter, sharply defined and generally contrasted to a world around it perceived to be threatening.

Armenian tradition expresses identity mainly in terms of conflict, enshrining at its core a struggle, ostensibly extending over millennia, to maintain and protect the nation's distinct character. The struggle is expressed in mythical, religious, and historical terms – very different sets of metaphors and events, through all of which, however, a continuity is perceived. This chapter will consider many of these formative narratives and images; but it will be concerned still more with the diverse heterogeneous factors, the influences that anciently shaped an Armenian people. Many of these – especially certain Anatolian and Iranian components – might be considered alien from the standpoint of the present, but would not have been so regarded then. Reflection on what is and is not considered alien leads to another issue. The balance of the evidence suggests that the Armenian language was introduced into eastern Anatolia from southeastern Europe some three millennia ago; its present-day speakers are the

descendants of those migrants and of various ethnic groups, some of which were present earlier (e.g., the Urartians), others subsequent arrivals (e.g., the Parthians, an Iranian people).

Armenian origins: myth, language and archaeology

Human beings lived in the river valleys of the Armenian plateau in the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic eras. In the fourth to third millennia BC arose the Kura/Araxes and Trialeti cultures, which practised metallurgy and developed sophisticated techniques of animal husbandry, but did not evolve urban systems of settlement. In general, Armenia did not have large cities in antiquity; where there were such towns, most of the inhabitants were foreigners, either immigrants or exiles brought in to develop trade. The hilltop settlements of Elar, north of Yerevan, and Šengavit', on the Hrazdan River that flows through the modern capital, date from the fourth and third millennia BC: circular houses, and elaborate stone altars and sanctuaries have been found there, with figurines of cattle and women that perhaps were employed magically for fertility. At Vardenis, from the second millennium, was found a disk divided into four, with human figures – perhaps a seasonal calendar; at Lēšašen, fourteenth century BC, was excavated a huge wheeled carriage used for burial, with bronze bird- and steer-finials, sun disks, and portrayals of helmeted charioteers. A strange sanctuary of the first millennium BC, with what look like multiple bowls and candelabra, was excavated at Metsamor. The Armenian mountains abound in indecipherable petroglyphs and drawings: the overall picture is of uninterrupted population, inventive technology, and a vital artistic and spiritual culture from the dawn of humanity to the present. Like other peoples, Armenians see themselves as the inheritors of the most ancient culture of their land, and doubtless the descendants of that culture's bearers were eventually assimilated and became Armenians. But the Armenian language – and thus, we may safely presume, a significant part of the Armenians' ancestry – came from elsewhere.

The vocabulary of the Armenian language consists largely of loan-words from Parthian, a Middle Iranian language. From the reign of the Medes (c. 685 BC) to the fall of the Sasanians (651 AD), Armenia was steeped in the political and religious culture of Zoroastrian (or Mazdean) Iran. The linguistic influence is so pervasive that, until the late nineteenth century, Armenian was thought to be an Iranian language. However, the great linguist Heinrich Hübschmann demonstrated that the core vocabulary of Armenian developed from proto-Indo-European according to sound laws profoundly different from those of Iranian. Armenian thus belongs to a separate branch of the *satəm* group of Indo-European: the mostly Eastern tongues that form the word for a hundred (reconstructed proto-Indo-European **kwomtom*) with an *s*, not a *k* (Russian *sto*; but Latin *centum*, etc.).

The Classical Greek historian Herodotus, writing in Ionia in the early Achaemenian period, describes the Armenians as Phrygian colonists who in

their speech resemble Phrygians; and linguists assign Armenian to the Thracio-Phrygian branch of that hypothetical construction, the Indo-European linguistic tree. Thrace is at the tip of southeastern Europe, facing Anatolia, and of its older languages only a remote descendant, Albanian, survives. The Phrygians, a people whose language is long extinct, and who inhabited Northwestern Anatolia in ancient times, were descended from settlers from Europe. By the mid-first millennium AD their language had been replaced by Byzantine Greek. Of the indigenous languages of Anatolia, Armenian alone survived Hellenization or Islamization. The Phrygians have left few inscriptions – though they wrote their language in a script derived from Greek that is not hard to decipher – and these are almost all epitaphs, so the content is very limited. But from these, a very few words that are closely cognate to Classical Armenian have been found. For example, *nise-moun*, the dative of the demonstrative pronoun, meaning ‘to this’, is so close to Armenian *smin*, which means the same thing, that it is a firm indication that the languages may indeed be closely related. Phrygian *soubros*, ‘pure, holy’, has cognates in various Indo-European languages, including, most closely, Armenian *surb*. Herodotus reports a somewhat fanciful story about an Egyptian pharaoh who performed an experiment designed to discover the world’s oldest language, which, the king supposed, would be the one a baby would speak of its own accord if not instructed otherwise. He had an infant isolated from all speech, till it pointed to a piece of bread and said ‘*Bekos!*’, which, Herodotus explains, means ‘bread’ in Phrygian. Prof. De Lamberterie connects the word to Armenian *bek-anem*, ‘I break’, from which he suggests the Phrygian term is cognate to Armenian and means ‘a piece, something broken off’. The Armenians probably had other cultural similarities to the Phrygians. For instance, the latter worshipped a rock-born god, Agdistis, while the Armenian oral epic cycle of Sasun begins with the rock-birth of the first generation of heroes, an episode probably derived from old Anatolian traditions, if not specifically Phrygian ones.

The first speakers of Armenian would thus have to have migrated eastwards across the vast Anatolian peninsula, probably in the mid- to late second millennium BC. There is evidence in place names for such migrations: the Muški, related to the Phrygians, gave their name to Mazaca (Armenian Mažak, Latin Caesarea, Turkish Kayseri) in Cappadocia, for instance; and a Greek reference to the Armenians as Melitenioi, i.e., people of Melitene (Hittite Melid, modern Turkish Malatya) still farther east, on the Euphrates, would place the proto-Armenian speakers even closer to the Van region, which, with the plain of Ararat to the northeast as a later centre, was to become the centre of historical Armenia. The lowlands around Van were called simply Hayoc’ Jor, ‘Valley of the Armenians’, a name that survived the 1915 Genocide and is still echoed in the Kurdish name of the place, Khavazor.

Professors Gamkrelidze and Ivanov dispute the hypothesis of Armenian migration, which is presented in greatest detail by Igor Diakonoff in his

Pre-history of the Armenian People, and argue instead that Armenian – and indeed proto-Indo-European itself – is native to eastern Anatolia. Their suggestion, which is perhaps understandably attractive to people anxious to prove the legitimacy of Armenian territorial claims back to remotest times, has not gained general scholarly acceptance for many reasons. It would seem from the numerous and far-reaching sound-changes of Armenian that the language developed in relative isolation from other speakers of Indo-European and in proximity to non-Indo-European speakers, particularly the Urartians and speakers of Kartvelian languages (i.e., early Georgian, Mingrelian, etc.). Armenian *erku*, ‘two’, derives from a proto-form **duo-*, but through two stages of sound change; *ji*, ‘horse’, corresponds to a poetic term attested in Sanskrit for a steed ‘impelled’ swiftly forward, *hayah-*; but the Armenian form of the base **ekwos-*, which also means ‘fast’, is *ēs*, ‘ass’. Indo-Europeans and horses are always found together: the Armenian development might mean that Armenian speakers migrating from an earlier place where there were horses found themselves in a place where horses had not yet been introduced, or at least were still very uncommon and gradually came to use the standard word for horse for the only equid they found there: the donkey. Conversely, the first Mesopotamians to encounter horses called them *anshukurra*, ‘mountain asses’.

However, the very survival of a poetic term for a noble steed in Armenian and across Indo-European poetic language indicates that the Armenians retained an early layer of Indo-European culture – oral poetry, mythology, and religious belief – which, with the application of suitable methods, one can recover. Armenia is more or less midway between the Hellenic and Indic spheres of Indo-European culture. In Greece much of the mythological material we now possess underwent a transformation of expression and purpose in the Classical period, becoming social and political metaphor. In India the same mythological stock material becomes part of religious storytelling and metaphysical theory. So, for instance, the Centaur, a mythical creature associated with sex and with the passions, appears in Greek mythology as the disruptive wedding-guest to be defeated by the founders of Athens. Marriage and political order control and sublimate the lubriciously chaotic power of the horse-man. In India, on the other hand, the probably cognate Gandharva is a divine musician who appears also as a kind of third power in human conception, the essence of the passion that generates a child. Armenia, in between, presents the myth through two layers at least: Iranian, then Christian. The rather dangerous creature who makes tempting music is identified with an Iranian mythical being that is part fairy, part randy ibex, the *yuškaparik*. Movsēs Xorenac’i, an Armenian historian who probably wrote in the eighth or ninth century but whose oral, mythological sources are often of immemorial antiquity, has no hesitation in identifying the *yuškaparik* with the Centaurs of Greek mythology; and a later mediæval text goes further in identifying the siren-like creature and its song not only with the impulse to promiscuous sex, but with the origins of heresy – the Centaur has been Christianized.

The same array of divergent interpretations from West to East of a common mythological figure or archaic antiquity can perhaps explain an enigmatic Armenian myth. Peasant women make offerings in ruined Christian chapels in various parts of Armenia to a being called the *t'ux' manuk*, the Black Youth. Folk songs describe him coming down out of the wild mountain forests along the course of streams to seduce girls at the village well. P. Vidal-Naquet, in his study *The Black Hunter*, considers a mythological figure named Melanthos, the Black One, who also lurks at the edge of settlements: his story is worked into the Athenian Apaturia ritual, which marks the socialization of the impulses of adolescent sexuality. In India the Black Youth is of course the Black god himself, Krishna, whose love-play with the cowgirls on the riverbank becomes the durable prototype of mystical love.

A third case is that of the legendary Armenian king Ara *gelec'ik*, 'the Beautiful'. According to Movsēs Xorenac'i, the Assyrian queen Šamiram (i.e., Šammuramat, Semiramis) fell in love with him, but he refused her advances. She ordered her armies to invade Armenia and capture him alive; but he was killed in battle, and the queen ordered his corpse placed in an upper room, where supernatural 'Ara-licking' (*aralēz*) dogs would come down from the sky to revive him. But, the Christian historiographer adds scornfully, the corpse decayed; so Semiramis dressed up a courtier and presented him to the credulous common folk as the risen Ara. Behind the Christian narrative one perceives the ancient mythological type of the beautiful youth, slain by reason of the lust of a powerful woman and lover (sometimes his mother or stepmother), who is then resurrected. This is the type of the Phrygian divine pair Attis and Cybele; in Greece, it becomes the complex tragedy, with political overtones, of Hippolytos and Phaidra. The Persian tale of Siyāvōš in the *Šāh-nāme* of Ferdōsi is a reflex of the same type. But there is also the added element of an other-world journey, in which the man dies, journeys to heaven and hell, and returns to life, bringing knowledge of divine retribution and reward, in the *Katha Upanishad* in India and the *Arda Viraz Namag* in Zoroastrian Iran. There is evidence to suggest that Armenian myth, midway between, combined this latter gnostic theme of the *Himmelsreise der Seele* – the heaven-journey of the soul – with the Hippolytos myth: the tenth book of the *Republic* of Plato, early fourth century BC, contains the myth of one Er, son of Armenios the Pamphylian, who is slain on the battlefield but returns to life and reports the reality of divine justice. Er is obviously none other than Ara. So in this third case as well, one must look behind various strata of later culture and ideology, and with judicious comparison – a kind of triangulation among surrounding, kindred Indo-European cultures – discover the Indo-European myth still present in Armenian tradition after at least three millennia of other accretions and colorations.

Much religious terminology still in use in Armenian comes from the Iranian vocabulary of Zoroastrianism: *patarag*, 'divine liturgy', is the

Parthian word for an offering; *hrašakert*, ‘miracle’, is Avestan *frašō.kərəti*, the renovation of the world after the defeat of evil. The pre-Christian Armenians used Iranian *bag* – ‘god’ in toponyms: Bagawan, Bagaran, Bagayarič, etc. But the chief term for ‘God’ still used, *Astuac*, is most likely native Armenian, of proto-Indo-European derivation. Prof. De Lamberterie has argued that it be connected to *ast-em* ‘wed’ and *hast-em* ‘create’, with cognates in Germanic. Mediaeval Armenian folk-etymology of *Astuac* as *hast-ol*, ‘creator’, is thus likely to be right, if not for sound scientific reasons.

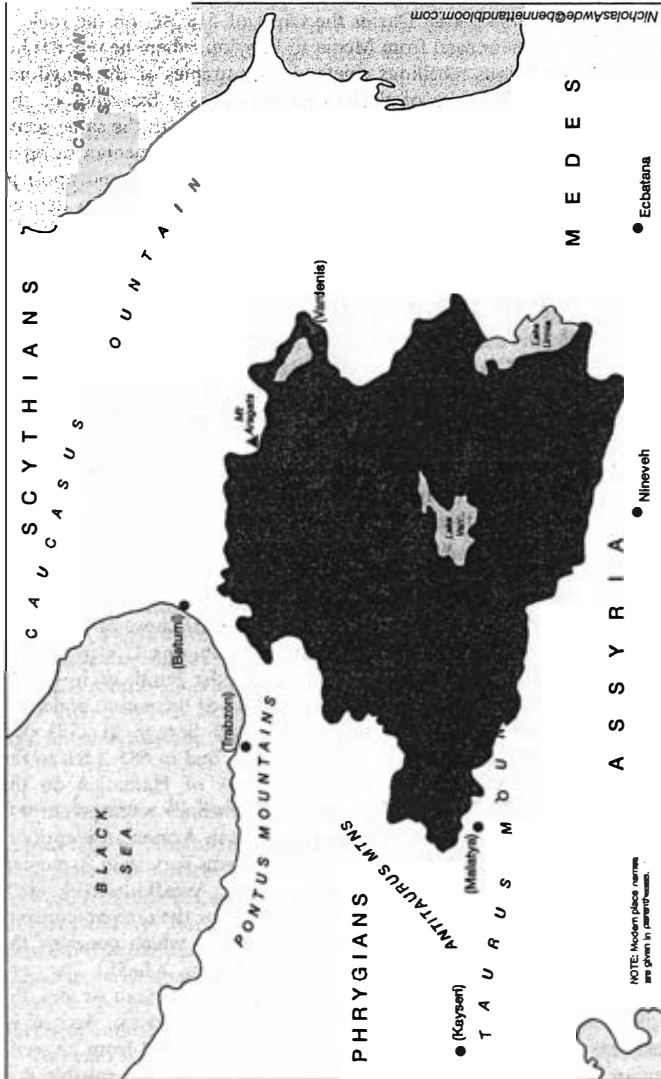
It is important to stress here that Indo-European is a term used of a language and cultural group that was, even at its early stages, probably large and widespread enough to be physically diverse; and over the centuries of migration, in which fairly small numbers of Indo-Europeans, moving in different directions, mingled with other populations of the same size or larger, this diversity was greatly augmented. To the extent that archaeology provides evidence, the migrations were peaceful and gradual, without evidence of mass destruction or of radical or sudden change. The image of the racially homogeneous, fair-haired and blue-eyed Aryan conquerors is a pernicious fantasy reflecting the imperialist attitudes of nineteenth-century Europeans, not a valid historical model. Correspondingly, the migrant speakers of proto-Armenian were probably comparatively few; and they intermarried over the centuries with the peoples of eastern Anatolia, Syria and Mesopotamia, and the South Caucasus. To this day, some Armenians are fair-haired, but most are dark: there is no single Armenian type. When at the end of the fifth century BC Xenophon’s mercenary army crossed the Armenian highlands to the sea in the retreat that their general chronicles in his *Anabasis*, there were various ethnic groups and building styles in Armenia. Roman historians centuries later knew of a score of languages spoken in the country, upon which Artaxias I imposed linguistic unity – by which is meant, most likely, the use of Armenian as an official language – only after 190 BC. Early Armenia was, undoubtedly, a country ethnically and linguistically heterogeneous.

The beginnings of Armenian history

Armenians call themselves *hay*, a word of unknown derivation: the country was called in ancient times simply by the plural form (*Mec*) *Hayk*, ‘(Greater) Armenia’; or else, with the Iranian toponymical suffix still used, *Hayastan*. *Hay-* has been connected to the place Hayasa-Azzi, but this province lay too far north of Van, and west of Ararat, it is argued, for its name to have been so important. And the *-asa* ending cannot simply be made to go away. So a better explanation must be sought. In Armenian forms of Indo-European root words the intervocalic *-t-* is lost and the initial *p-* becomes *h-* or is elided entirely: this is why the Armenian equivalent of Latin *pater* is *hayr*, ‘father’, and of Greek *poda*, ‘foot’, *otn* or *het*. So *hay* could come from a boastful **potiyos-*, ‘ruler, master’; or it might derive from

Hatti, for the proto-Armenians had to traverse the lands of the once-mighty Hittite Empire, and Hatti is the name the Hittites used of themselves. As for the word 'Armenian', it is first attested in the Old Persian version of the inscription of the Persian king Darius the Great of 518 BC on the rock at Behistun above the main road from Media to Babylon, where he records his victories over the various rebellious chiefs of the satrapies of the kingdom, including Haldita and Arkha of the *armina*-. There is a bas-relief of the captives before the king on the rock, too; and a sealing with the same scene was found recently at a site that may have been the Achaemenian satrapal residence, near Gyumri (formerly Leninakan, Kumayri, Alexandropol) in the Republic of Armenia. Igor Diakonoff thought the latter term derived from the place name Arme-Šupria, from whose second half would come *som-ekhi*, the Georgian word for an Armenian. Another possibility would be a derivation from the base *arm*- of Armenian *armat*, 'root', meaning 'native, indigenous', in which case the term might originally have been applied by Armenian speakers to the majority of the population, which consisted of non-Armenian speakers; and by outsiders to the country as a whole. In the Babylonian text of the Behistun inscription, the equivalent of Armenia is Uraštu, better known from the Assyrian form Urartu, or Hebrew Ararat (which properly denoted the whole mountainous country where Noah's Ark came to land, not, as in later usage, its highest peak). And indeed the Urartians were the people indigenous to the land that became Armenia.

The Urartians called their country Biain-ili; and this name survives in Armenian Van (the city, which the Urartians called Tušpa; the latter persisted in Tosp, the Armenian name of the district around Van city). Assyria was Urartu's main rival: Šalmaneser III (861–51 BC) depicts on the Balawat gates the capture of Arzašku, on the northeast shore of lake Van, and the flight of the defeated Urartians into the mountains. Under Sarduri, Menua, and Argišti I, Urartu expanded, reaching the zenith of its power around 750 BC. The country's political fortunes waned thereafter, under the successive blows of Tiglath Pileser (744–27) and Sargon II (721–05). Subsequently, Urartu was invaded by the Scythians, and in 585 it fell to the Medes, whose capital, Ecbatana, is today the city of Hamadan on the western edge of the Iranian plateau. Thereafter, Armenia's development was bound up with Iran. But the Urartian component in Armenian identity is significant. Not only do very many Urartian toponyms survive in Armenian form (Biaina>Van, Tušpa>Tosp, Erebuni>Yerevan, Arzašku>Arčēš, etc.), but also, it would seem, do some proper names. One of the *armina*-conspirators against Darius I was named Khaldita, a name which contains the name of the chief divinity of the Urartian pantheon, Khaldi. The very common Armenian name Aram is probably a form of Urartian Aramu, the name of a king who reigned 860–40 BC. The regal dynastic clan Arcruni of the Vaspurakan region believed themselves to be descended from an eagle (Armenian *arciw*, *arcui*). The latter bird-name in Armenian probably is a loan from Indo-Iranian (cf. Sanskrit *rjipya*-, Avestan *ərəzifya*-), but it is



possible that it may have entered the language *via* Urartean, where Artsibi, meaning 'eagle', is attested as the name of a swift, royal steed (the swiftness of the bird of prey is the poetic cliché: Artasēs in an epic fragment rides a black steed swift as an eagle – the blackness is itself potent, for there is an Urartean fresco of a splendid black horse, and one recalls that the name of the Iranian hero Siyāvōš, attested in Armenian as Šawarš, means 'black stallion'). And there was a noble clan called Artsiuniuni in Urartu. Urartu began as a confederation of 'the forty kings of Nairi', of whom this family had been one. These were probably clan-based dynasts, and this decentralized form of power, well suited to a country broken by mountains into cantons isolated by the harsh winter snows, carried on into the high Middle Ages in Armenia with the institution of the *naxarar*.

Naxarar is itself a well-attested Parthian term from Old Iranian **naxwa-dāra-*, literally, 'holder of the foremost (rank)'; so the pre-existing institution acquired the name known to us from texts, in either the Artaxiad (190 BC to the early decades of the first century AD) or Arsacid (c. 50–429 AD) dynasties. Its importance to Armenian society cannot be overestimated. The Mamikonean *naxarars* were the hereditary commanders-in-chief of the Armenian forces; so the great Christian warrior-saint and martyr of the fifth century, Vardan, was of this charismatic clan. The Bagratunis, hereditary vassals of the Arsacids, claimed descent first from Tork' Angel (a divinity of dark and vast powers derived from Tarhundas, the Anatolian weather-god, whom Armenians syncretized with Nergal, the Mesopotamian lord of the underworld), and then, after conversion to Christianity, from the house of David: their name comes from Iranian *baga-dāta-*, 'God-given'. After the final eclipse of the Mamikoneans in the uprising against Muslim Arab occupation that culminated in the battle of Bagrewand in 775, it was the Bagratunis who forged new Armenian kingdoms in the north-central part of the country and built the great metropolis of Ani. The patriarchs of the Armenian Church, from St. Gregory the Illuminator in the early fourth century down to St. Nersēs Šnorhali ('the Graceful') in the twelfth, traced their lineal descent back to the Parthian noble clans of the Surēns and Pahlawunis.

Aspects of Armenian material and spiritual culture can be traced to Urartu. The Armenian word *cov*, 'sea, lake', is most plausibly from Urartean *tsue*, 'idem'. The words for mulberry, plum, and apple (*t'ut'*, *salor*, *xnjor*) derive from Urartean. Down to recent times, Armenian farmers used an Urartean irrigation canal at Artamet (Turkish Edremit, near Van) whose construction they attributed to queen Šamiram. The craft of the Armenian mason, characterized by finely joined, smoothly dressed stone façades, is probably an inheritance from Urartean work. The Armenians, long famed for their metalwork, learnt this skill, too, from the Urarteans: metallurgy on the Armenian plateau can be traced back to the Kura/Araxes and Trialeti cultures. The Urarteans, like other ancient Near Eastern peoples, often employed in their art the symbol of the Tree of Life: the latter figures

prominently in mediaeval Armenian songs and folk nuptial rites, of course with an overlay of Christian symbolism. There are Urartean metal figurines of harpies; and these creatures, often with additional Iranian features, are ubiquitous in Armenian sculpture and manuscript painting. The early inhabitants of the Armenian plateau carved cigar-shaped stones with sinuous figures of serpents and other creatures, apparently in connection with cultic observances connected with rivers. The Armenians call these stones *višap* – a Middle Iranian word for a poisonous aquatic monster – and tell stories about abductions of maidens by river-dragons. And their ancestors, carving the Holy Sign upon the stones, rechristened them as *xač'k'ars*, the 'Cross-stones' that dot the Armenian landscape, to which blood sacrifices are still offered. Steles inscribed with Urartean cuneiform were pressed into service as *xač'k'ars*, as well.

In the Van area there are a number of blind portals carved into the living rock, which the Urartians called Gates of God, believing that the god dwelt in the rock behind. In Armenian epic and folk-lore it is still believed that Mher, i.e., the Zoroastrian god Mithra, guided by a raven, zodiacal circle in hand, waits till the end of time behind one of these, the *Mheri durn* ('Gate of Mithra', Turkish *Meher kapişi*) at Van. On Ascension Eve, when Heaven is believed to open, so does the god's portal; and then he can be seen on horseback, covered with hair from head to toe like the Promethean wild-man of Caucasian lore. The Mher of folk epic is banished, and called Cain; but behind the Christian deprecation of the ancient divinity, who assumes the features of Antichrist (a feature the anti-clerical Bolsheviks eagerly adopted: in early Communist propaganda, it was proclaimed that Mher was loose at last and ravaging for joy), one can easily discern the main features of the Mithraic cult that was diffused across the Black Sea and over Anatolia to the Roman Empire. Mithra is an apocalyptic being in Iran; and the Roman Mithras is born of rock, a tell-tale Anatolian feature. In Armenian epic recitations, Mher's great-grandfather is rock-born.

The Iranian Medes destroyed Nineveh, capital of Assyria, in 612 BC. They overran Urartu – and thus Armenia – in 585. Memory of the conquest in Armenia is filtered through the Persian legends of the rebellion of Cyrus against the Mede Astyages. The name of the latter means 'spear-caster' (*Rštivaiga); but to the Persians, for whom he was a tyrant, it sounded like that of a mythical monster of the Avesta, half-man, half-dragon, Aži Dahāka; and the Armenians remembered Astyages by the Middle Iranian form of the monster's name, Aždahak. Media (*Māda-) becomes in Armenian *Mar-k'*, by a change of intervocalic -d- to -r-, but Armenian fabulists heard in this term Persian *mār*, which means 'snake', so the Medes become the *višapazunk'*, 'progeny of the Dragon', and the Armenian hero Tigran (the name is Middle Iranian) in a surviving fragment of oral epic easily assumes the standard Indo-European and Iranian role of the hero fighting the dragon to release a captive maiden (in this case his own sister Tigranuhi). Xenophon in his *Cyropaideia*, 'The Education of

Cyrus', mentions one Armenian, Tigranēs in Greek (from Old Persian **Tiγrāna-*, presumably), as a childhood companion of the Achaemenian, so it is possible that by Xenophon's time, at least, there were Armenian noblemen who bore Iranian names and attended at the Achaemenian royal court.

Alexander the Great bypassed the Armenian mountains in his haste to conquer the retreating armies of Darius III; and the Orontid (Armenian Eruandakan) satrapal house became vassals of the Seleucids. At Armawir in the plain of Ararat there were large inscribed stones with excerpts from Greek drama and the *Works and Days* of Hesiod, and mention is made of Pharnaces and Mithras, both common Irano-Greek dynastic names of Pontus. But there is little other evidence of Greek influence. After the Romans crippled Seleucid power in Anatolia at the battle of Magnesia (190 BC), two Orontid *stratēgoi*, Artaxias (Artašēs) and Zariadris (Zareh), shook off Seleucid suzerainty and founded independent kingdoms in Greater Armenia and Sophene. Xorenac'i refers to boundary-markers of estates (a common feature of Hellenistic society) of Artašēs, and some have been found, with his name in Aramaic inscriptions. He founded the city of Artaxata (Artašat, literally 'Joy of Artašēs') on the gentle hills of the valley of the Araxes at the foot of Mt. Ararat, which, classical authors report, the fleeing Hannibal helped him to design; and a medal has been found with a Greek legend, *dēmos Artaxisatōn*: 'municipality of the people of Artaxata'. Artašēs also brought Greek statues of the gods for the temples: for each Zoroastrian *yazata*, Xorenac'i lists one or more Greek equivalents. These have not been found, but other evidence from the area would seem to corroborate the veracity of Xorenac'i's report.

In the first century BC the Orontid king Antiochus of Commagene, a cousin of the Armenian royal house, erected two open-air shrines with altars and statues of the gods on Nemrut Dagħ, where there was also his sacred tomb (*hierothēsis*). Each statue is identified in a Greek inscription: Artagnes, i.e., the Iranian Vərəθraγna, Armenian Vahagn, corresponds to Herakles, just as in Xorenac'i's text; and a Greek bronze of Herakles found in Parthian Mesene has a later Parthian inscription on its thigh identifying the figure as the same Iranian divinity. The chief divinity of the pre-Christian Armenian religion was Aramazd, i.e., Ahura Mazdā, the Lord Wisdom of Zoroastrianism. His evil opponent, Angra Mainyu, the Frightful Spirit, is attested in Armenian as Haramani or, in a later form, Arhmn. There are various references, mostly indirect, to the seven Aməša Spəntas, the Holy Immortals; and the lesser divinities Vərəθraγna, Mithra, Anāhitā, and Tiri are attested in Middle Iranian forms: Vahagn, Mihr, Anahit, and Tir. The Syrian god Baʿl Šamīn, Lord of Heaven, was worshipped alongside Aramazd as Baršamin. Vahagn, who bears the epithet *višapak'al*, 'dragon-reaper', appears to have combined features of the Indo-Iranian divinity attested in India as Indra *vritrahan*, 'killer of the (dragon) Vritra (i.e., Opposition)' and the local Urartean divinity Teišeba (Hurrian Tešub). The

various temples were supported by estates; and those of Anahit were so extensive that the Greeks knew the province of Acilisene also as *Anaitikē khōrā*, 'the place of the Anahit (temple)'. The words for religious establishments were mainly Middle Iranian, as one might expect: that for a shrine was *mehean*, lit. 'place of Mithra' (cf. the modern Zoroastrian usage *dar-e Mihr*, 'gate/place of Mithra'); *bagin*, lit. 'of the god', probably was a shrine with a cult-image; and *atrušan* was a fire-temple, where the living icon of the Mazdeans blazed. Priests were called *k'urm*, though, an Aramaic term. An Aramaic inscription at Arebsun, near Nevşehir, describes the marriage of the Semitic god Bel to the Iranian *daēnā mazdayasnī*, the personified Good Religion of Mazdā-worship. Such syncretism was very much the usual pattern in Anatolia.

Reference has been made to the oral epic in which Artasēs marries Sat'enik. The same epic, as reported by Xorenac'i, refers also to the cursing by the king of his son Artawazd, who is subsequently captured by supernatural giants, the *k'ajk'*, while he is hunting on Mt. Ararat: they imprison him in the cleft of the mountain till the end of time. Dogs gnaw at his chains, and it was a custom for Armenian blacksmiths to strike their anvils thrice on the first day of the week, to strengthen the chains of Artawazd. Professor Nina Garsoian has suggested that a historical Artawazd who was taken captive by Mark Antony to Egypt, where he died in 35 BC, might have become in epic lore the occulted king. The legend finds an echo in the cursing of Little Mher by his father, David, in the Armenian Epic of Sasun, where Mher is confined till the end of time behind the Urartean Gate of God at Van. Epic theme has combined here with apocalyptic beliefs about the Zoroastrian *yazata*. One can reconstruct an entire, separate epic cycle about the Zariadrids to the west. Parts of it seem to have survived in Armenian balladry, and in the mediaeval Byzantine epic *Digenēs Akritēs*, whose locus is the Malatya region.

The most famous of the Artaxiad kings, though, was undoubtedly Tigran II the Great (95–56 BC), whose short-lived empire included Antioch; the Tykhē, or goddess of the fortune of that city, adorns the obverse of his tetradrachms, on which he styles himself *basileus basileōn*, 'king of kings'. Both written and oral epics about Tigran existed in early Christian Armenia, of which only fragments remain: it has not even been possible to identify with certainty the capital he founded near Amida (Turkish Diyarbakir), Tigranocerta (Tigranakert). Tigran forced thousands of Jews to migrate to Armenian cities: most of their descendants were exiled yet again, to Iran, by early Sasanian invaders in the fourth century AD, but some of the Jews of Armenia might have become the nucleus of the early Christian community there, as was the case elsewhere in Asia Minor. There is no indigenous Armenian Jewish community, however: Armenian and Christian identity quickly became inseparable, and the small Jewish communities of eastern Anatolia, most of whom lived close to the

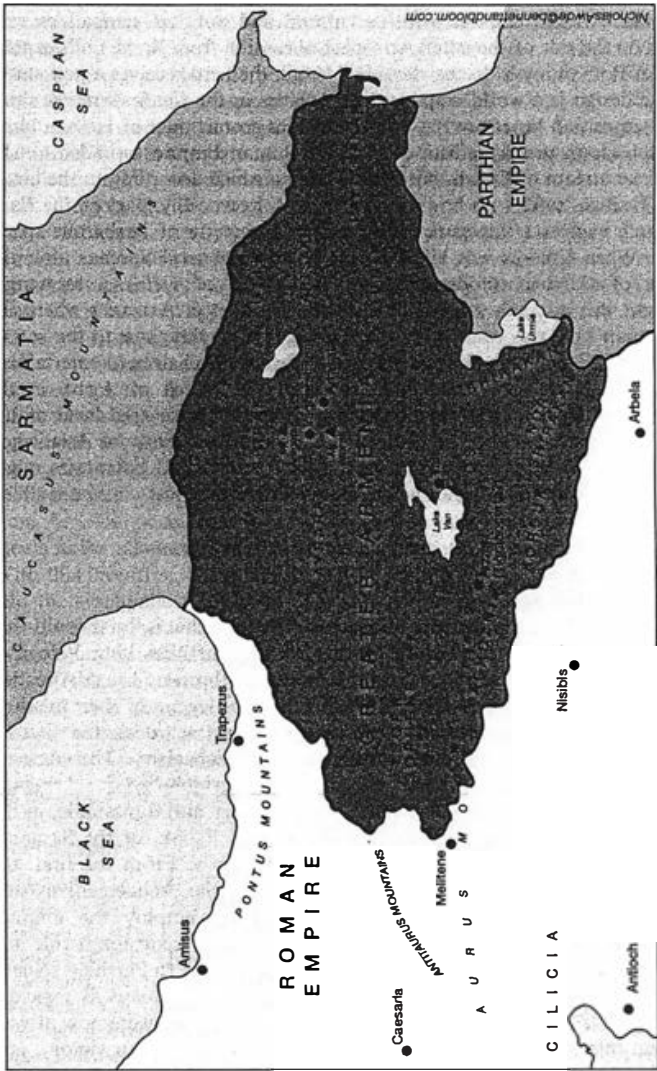


Figure 2.3 Armenia circa first century BC

older, established centres in Syria and northern Iraq were Arabic- or Kurdish-speaking.

In the first century BC Armenia was a battleground for the Roman and Parthian Arsacid empires, with its cultural and political sympathies very much on the side of the latter. Armenia's alienation from Rome finds expression in Roman myth. In the *Aeneid* of Virgil, the hero receives a new shield whose design is a world map (as does Achilles in the *Iliad*); Aeneas's shiny new acquisition bears not the living, poignant cosmic map of Homer, but a self-conscious, propagandistic map of the Roman Empire, bounded not by the great stream of Ocean, but by the Araxes, which according to the historian Tacitus, 'suffers no bridges': Armenia is, irrevocably, part of the East. Plutarch expresses this same conviction in a vignette of barbarous splendour. When Crassus was killed by the Parthian general Surenas after the battle of Carrhae (modern Harran, just south of Urfa), a messenger brought the Roman's severed head to the banquet at Artaxata where the Armenian king was celebrating the marriage of his daughter to the son of the ruler of Parthia. A Greek actor named Jason, who had been entertaining the guests, seized the head and declaimed the speech of Agave in the *Bacchae* of Euripides as she holds up in triumph the severed head of her own son, Pentheus, who had denied the worship of the sensuous Asiatic god Dionysus. The import of the story is clear: the Oriental potentates might enjoy Greek culture, but they will never be part of the West – they are effeminate, cruel, luxurious.

The coming of Christianity to Armenia

Within a hundred years of the banquet at Artaxata, that is, by the mid-first century AD, Tiridates (Trdat), brother of the Parthian king Vologases (Valaxš, Armenian Vafarš), was on the Armenian throne. Christ's Apostles, tradition holds, had arrived shortly before, and the legend of their mission, deeply coloured by Artaxiad epic, was itself to serve as the literary template for the Apostolic legendry of Manichaeism. The Arsacid (Armenian Aršakuni) dynasty became firmly established in Armenia, despite constant Roman interference, both military and diplomatic, in the country's affairs; but in AD 226 Ardešīr, son of Pāpak, of the Sasanian house of Persia, overthrew the Arsacid Ardawān V. From the first, the Sasanians, who styled themselves successors to the Achaemenians and bearers of Iranian national renewal, sought to employ the militant Zoroastrian priestly hierarchy to impose a system of centralized rule and uniformity of cult. Such policies had been largely alien to Parthian society, and the Armenians, who in any case regarded the Sasanians as regicides and upstarts and felt bound to avenge Ardawān's blood, were now at war. Roman interests in the region prevented a decisive Sasanian victory; and the Persians were in any case as ready to woo as to fight the Armenians, knowing the way of life of the latter to be fundamentally similar to their

own. The reasons for the conversion of Tiridates the Great of Armenia to Christianity in the early decades of the fourth century are not clear. Iran strongly opposed the move, and was on repeated occasions to attempt to force the Armenians to return to the Mazdean fold, most notably in 449–83, in the war chronicled by Etišē *vardapet*, when Vardan Mamikonean was slain. If political considerations played a role, Rome at least would have had to approve, which would suggest a date of c. 325 or a little earlier during the reign of Constantine the Great, but Armenians traditionally hold the date of the Conversion to be 301, when they would have been entirely, rebelliously, splendidly, on their own.

St. Gregory the Illuminator baptized Tiridates: the father of the former was a nobleman, Anak Surēn Pahlaw, scion of one of the great Parthian families; and tradition thereby throws the weight of Arsacid prestige behind the act, which is itself safely enclosed in standard patterns of epic. At first, such Christian writings as there were in Armenia were in the Aramaic dialect of Edessa, Syriac, or, somewhat less frequently, in Greek; but at the end of the fourth century a restless, charismatic visionary named Maštoc' invented, for the first time, an alphabet for the Armenian language. The script was written, like Greek or Latin, in separate characters, from left to right, with the vertical strokes thick and the horizontal ones thin, and in all these respects the opposite of the majority of Eastern alphabets. The system of vowels derives, clearly, from Greek also, but many of the letters come from Aramaic prototypes, perhaps inspired in part by Manichaean experiments in the adaptation of the Aramaic alphabet to non-Semitic languages. With this invention, the establishment of schools for the training of priests, and the systematic translation of a vast corpus of Christian and classical literature into Armenian, the Christianization of Armenia, and its political orientation towards Christendom, became irrevocable. But the difficult position of the country, its relative remoteness from the West, and the proud sense of itself garnered over millennia of civilized development and the play of diverse cultural influences also ensured that, though Armenians might sometimes look to their co-religionists with hope, they were ultimately destined to stand alone.

Bibliography

- Diakonoff, I.M., *The Pre-history of the Armenian People* (Delmar, New York: Caravan Books, 1983).
- Garsoian, N., 'The Emergence of Armenia' and 'The Arsakuni Dynasty', chapters 3 and 4 of R.G. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian People*, vol. 1 (New York: St. Martin's, 1997).
- Piotrovskii, K.B., *Urartu: The Kingdom of Van and Its Art*, translated by P.S. Gelling (London: Evelyn Adams and Mackay, 1967).
- Russell, J.R., *Zoroastrianism in Armenia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Iranian Series 5, 1987).

- 'On the Armeno-Iranian Roots of Mithraism', in J.R. Hinnells, ed., *Studies in Mithraism* (Rome: 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider, 1994).
- 'The Formation of the Armenian Nation', chapter 2 of R.G. Hovannisian, ed., *The Armenian People*, vol. 1 (New York: St. Martin's, 1997).
- 'Armenian and Iranian Studies', *Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies*, 9, Cambridge, MA, 2004.

Magic Mountains, Milky Seas, Dragon Slayers, and Other Zoroastrian Archetypes

JAMES R. RUSSELL

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

It is commonplace in the poetry of the Vedas, so closely akin in so many ways to the Avesta, to find “the reproduction in a hymn of the syllables of the sacred name which is the object of the hymn.”¹ Related to this phenomenon is de Saussure’s hypogram, which is “concerned with emphasizing a name, a word, making a point of repeating its syllables, and in this way giving it a second, contrived being, added, as it were, to the original of the word.”² And one links to the hypogram the *locus princeps*, “a tightly drawn sequence of words which one can designate as especially consecrated to that name.” This concept of a marked word, associated with one or more key phrases, that can be divided and deployed across a text, allows one to propose “an emanatist conception of poetic production,” in which the hypogram generates, as it were, the poem of which it is the crucial element.³ This technique might have arisen out of a more general desire for order and symmetry; and the “why” of the whole process could have been “superstitious belief”⁴—that is, religion. But it is also an aspect of the intellectual complexity of oral poetry and the culture that engenders it.

A similar method can be employed in the study of certain highly formal kinds of literature where conservatism is preferred, complexity is appreciated, and the use of *mythologemata*—defined mythological types and episodes, with their marking motifs—is expected by an audience. The heroic epic, with its high social importance, close association with sacral tradition, and roots in the arts of oral poetry, is an ideal genre for the use of these methods. So one pro-

poses thus to consider several examples from the corpus of Armenian heroic epic and its remoter poetic descendants in hagiographical legend and folk magic, within the context of the Zoroastrian mythology and pre-Islamic Iranian epic in which Armenian culture is steeped. One hopes thus to present new appreciations of these works as literary art that delights the intellect, and to demonstrate the long and powerful endurance in literature of the images and values of the Good Religion of Ahura Mazdā, the Zoroastrian faith, in Armenia, the only Christian society and culture for which that faith is the ancient substratum.

Vahagn’s Birth

Scholarly opinion seems irreconcilably divided as to the period in which Movsēs Xorenac’i (= MX), called by subsequent writers the *patmahayr*, “Father of Histories,” lived: proposed dates range from the *oskedar*, or “golden age” of the fifth century A.D. to the eighth or ninth. But the value and antiquity of the oral texts of epic that he heard and recorded from the *gusans*, the minstrels, is indisputable. One ancient poem he claims to have heard recited to the accompaniment of the *p’andiṛn*, a stringed instrument like a lute, describes the birth of Vahagn, that is, the Zoroastrian *yazata* of victory and strength Varəθrayna- (Sgd. Wašayn, Hellenized Commagenian Artagn(ēs), Mlr. Varatrān, Varahrān, Bahrām) (MX 1.31).⁵ It belongs to a larger epic cycle on the hero-king Tigran.

*Erknēr erkin, erknēr erkir,
Erknēr ew covn cirani.
Erkn i covun unēr
Ew zkarmrikn eḡegnik:
Ānd eḡegan p'ōḡ cux elanēr,
Ānd eḡegan p'ōḡ boc' elanēr,
Ew i boc'oy'n vazēr
Xarteaš patanekik.
Na hur her unēr,
Boc' unēr mawrus,
Ew ač'kunk'n ēin aregakunk'.*

"Heaven was in labor, earth was in labor,
Labored too the purple sea.
The labor in the sea held
Also the little red reed.
Along the reed's shaft smoke ascended;
Along the reed's shaft flame ascended—
And from the flame darted
A golden-tressed little youth.
He had hair of fire,
Fiery he had a beard,
And his little eyes were sun-orbs."

The text goes on to relate the exploits of Vahagn, whom the historian likens to Herakles, in slaying dragons: he plunges into the sea (for Armenians, this is the deep and vast Lake Van, in the heart of their country) and kills only those who have grown large enough to swallow the earth. So for this reason perhaps he is acclaimed, not by the precise equivalent of *vṛtra-hān-/vərəθra-ja-*, as though he were a smiter of adversaries in general, but rather more selectively as *višapak'ač'*, "dragon-reaper"—though this still seems a calque upon his Iranian name itself, perhaps from an Armenian *zand*, or local vernacular translation and commentary of Avesta. The temple of Vahagn at (Y)Aštišat in the hills above Muš, some fifty miles west of Lake Van, was the most important shrine of pre-Christian Armenia: its name, meaning (though the etymology is disputed) "rich in yašts," evokes the wealth and vitality of the place. After the baptism of the nation, the monastery of St. John the Forerunner, Arm. *Surb Yovhannēs Karapet*, built on the site, was the principal object of pilgrimage after Jerusalem and remained so down to its destruction by Kurdish irregulars and Ottoman army troops before and during the Armenian Genocide of 1915. The hymn of the god's birth does not correspond to an existing text in the Zoroastrian canon, but aspects of it are closely akin to the Vedic traditions of Indra and the Puranic ones of Karttikeya,⁶ and it may thus

reflect a tradition of "peripheral" Iran now lost to the Parsi and Irani communities. Though it deals with the birth of a Zoroastrian *yazata*, it utilizes densely the distinctive, native poetic resources of Armenian, where both heaven (*erkin*) and earth (*erkir*) contain the element *erk*- "two," extended here in phonetic and semantic play to parturition—the verb *erkn-em*. When the third element, the sea (*cov*), is introduced, the discordant new sound *ts-* is underscored by the epithet *cirani*, /tsirani/, "purple," yet the dominant pattern is recapitulated in the strophe by encoding: *Erkn i covun unēr* > *erknēr*, "labored."⁷ In this hymn of birth, *erkn* "labor," is the formative hypogram. Of importance also are the colors, purple and red (*karmir*) and blond (*xarteaš*), all expressive of fiery energy; and the image of fire burning in the element that is its contrary, water, is a supernatural feature that is striking to the listener. Air, earth, fire, and water all labor together for the young, fully formed god (he has a beard) to spurt forth from his submerged shaft ready to smite dragons and to personify victory.

Though Xorenac'i assures us that the remarkable little poem is about the birth of Vahagn, the name does not appear there plainly. But the method of analysis one proposed to employ reveals that the Armenian name of the *yazata*, Vahagn, as it was pronounced in Xorenac'i's time, or, more likely, as it would have been known to Armenian Zoroastrians of the Parthian era, **Varhagn*, may indeed be encoded into the alternate lines (first, third, and fifth) of the final five lines of the hymn—the latter half of its eleven lines—in which he is described. These are also the lines that stress his fiery nature: *VĀzēR—HuR—AreGakuNk'*. (The intervening second and fourth lines, by contrast, emphasize his anthropomorphic qualities: *patani*, "boy," *mawruk*, "whiskers"). Note that the final part of his name in encoded form is doubly paronomastic, since the line, *Ew ač'kunk'n ēin aregakunk'*, contains the plural of *akn* "eye" (*ač'k*, with its diminutive) and that of *akn* "source" (in the marked compound term consisting of *aregi*, gen. of the unmarked *arew*, "sun," with "source," yielding *aregagn*, here in its plural). Arm. *akn* as "source" usually means a spring of water, as in the pleonastic *akn-aḡbiwr*, "source-spring"; so the coding not only recapitulates the play on duality of *erkin/erkir—erknem*, but also, through the allusion to water, refers one to the third image, that of the sea. Arm. *akn* has a third meaning, too,

in addition to “eye” and “spring”—“jewel.” The pearl, a hard, precious, shining jewel born mysteriously of the sea, is an enduring and complex symbol in several Near Eastern traditions, including religions of pre-Islamic Iran and Armenia. It might have additionally echoed in the imagination of the hearers of the hymn, for whom the sun was both spring of light and the jewel-like orb of heaven, born every dawn from the sea.⁸ We may now observe how an Armenian epic fragment, formed entirely upon the template of Iranian epic and steeped in the terminology and values of Zoroastrianism, uses hypogramatically the hymn of Vahagn to associate its royal hero, Tigran, with the divine dragon slayer. Subsequently, an Armenian warrior, Vasak Mamikonean, drawing upon the imagery of the epic of Tigran in turn, will encode his own name into a riddle-boast.

The Parents of the God

The hymn does not say who the mother and father of the god actually were. In Zoroastrian belief, the father of all mankind is *Ahura Mazdā*, the Lord Wisdom; and our mother is the *Aməša Spənta*, “Holy Immortal” *yazata* of the earth, *Spəntā Ārmaiti*, Holy Devotion: in Armenian, *Aramazd* and *S(p)andaramet*. But the patroness of childbirth is the *yazata* called *Arədvī Sūrā Anāhitā*, the Watery, Powerful, Unblemished one, who sits on the axial mountain *Harā Bərəzaiti*, high Harā—her cult epithet in one Anatolian inscription is thus, in Greek letters, BAR-ZOXAPA, Barzokhara, from **bərəzō.harā-*, “she of high Harā.” From the summit of the axial peak where this mighty, beautiful, gigantic woman is enthroned, the waters roll down to *Vourukaša-*, the sea “of broad shores,” called the “sea of milk,” *kṣīrasamudra-* in the Sanskrit translation of the Avesta. The pre-Christian Armenians hailed Anahit as *mayr amenayn zgastut'eanc'*, “mother of all modesties.” She, her mountain, and her sea, will also figure in the dream visions of the epic motifs to be studied.

The Armenian Epic Cycles

Movsēs, who recorded the hymn of Vahagn, is also our principal source for the epic cycle of the Artaxiad dynasty of the second and first centuries B.C., though there are a few passages preserved by

other writers.⁹ It begins with the heroic deeds of the founder, Artaxias I (Artašēs), and his kidnapping on the banks of the river Kura of the Alan princess Sat'enik (i.e., Satana, mother of the Nart heroes of Ossetic lore).¹⁰ It continues with the wars of Tigran against the Mede Aždahak, and ends with the occultation of Artawazd till the end of days in Azat Masik'—Greater Ararat. The material of the Artaxiad cycle, reshaped and crystallized around the epochal resistance of the Armenians to the Arab Caliphate in the ninth century A.D., re-emerges as the Epic of Sasun. The lady Covinar bathes in Lake Van, drinks of a milky fountain spurring from a rock that rises out of its waters,¹¹ and duly gives birth to the first heroes, the unequal twins Sanasar and Baḏasar: her impregnation is in most respects the same as the Alan Satana's; and the milk of the sea is simply semen. The battle of David of Sasun (Sasunc'i Dawit') with the Arab tyrant Msramelik' is parallel again, to Tigran's war with the Medes and their ruler Aždahak; and the confinement till the end of time of P'ok'r Mher—Mithra the Younger—in Ravens' Rock (*agtawuc' k'ar*) at Van recapitulates the apocalyptic conclusion of the Artaxiad narrative. Armenia was largely Zoroastrian till the early fourth century: the aspects of the two characters bearing the name Mithra in the Epic of Sasun, taken together, provide a verbal *tableau vivant* of the episodes and values that evolved into the Mithraic cult. Ahura Mazdā, Miθra, and Anāhitā—Ohrmazd, Mihr, and Anāhid—form the triad of gods frequently invoked by the kings of Zoroastrian Iran, though *Vərəθraγna*—Bahrām—remains extremely important. In Armenia one word for a pre-Christian temple is *mehean*, literally “the place of Mithra,” corresponding to the recent Persian usage *dar-e Mehr*, the place where rite of the *yasna* is performed; but the Armenian triad consists of Aramazd, Anahit, and Vahagn, not Mihr.

There are two famous kings named Tigran in Armenian history, and the oral bards apparently conflated them and their epic deeds. The first was the friend of Cyrus known to Xenophon; the second, Tigran II the Great, who reigned in 95–56 B.C.: his short-lived empire included much of Syria and Atropatēnē—ancient Media. The name of the Median king, Astyages in Greek, whom Cyrus the Great defeated, was probably **Rištivaiga-*, “Spear-caster,” in his native tongue. But the ideology of the epic of dynastic ascent and legitimization requires that the old ruler defeated be a

paradigm of evil or misrule. The investiture relief of Ardešīr I at Naqš-e Rostam shows the hoof of the king's mount trampling the head of the defeated Arsacid Ardawān V. The new monarch receives the ring of divine favor from the hand of a mounted, anthropomorphic Ohrmazd facing him, whose horse crushes the serpent-wreathed head of the prostrate arch-demon Ahreman. The language of symbols could scarcely be more lucid; and the Armenian compound *smbaka-kox*, "hoof-trodden," is the easiest *ekphrasis*.¹² Now the name of the king Astyages, whom Cyrus overthrew, sounds like Av. Aži Dahāka, MPers. Aždahāg, Arm. Aždahak, the serpent-man personifying tyranny and misrule whom Thraētaona (MPers. Farēdōn, Arm. Hrudēn, and Armenian-in-Greek Rhodanēs, in the *Babyloniaka* of Iamblikhos) defeated and imprisoned in mount Damāvand. In Armenian the word for a Mede is *mar*, which results from the shift of intervocalic *-d-* to *-r-*, but sounds serendipitously like Persian *mār*, "snake." Xorenac'i calls the Medes also *višapazunk'*, progeny of the dragon (*višap*). Thus Tigran takes the place of Cyrus and in his epic he becomes, as the conqueror of Aždahak, a champion against a dragon, like the "dragon-reaper" and paragon of victory Vahagn *višapak'až*. Let us consider very briefly two Iranian epics of investiture relevant to the narrative about Tigran: the story of Cyrus in the *Histories* of Herodotus and the *Res gestae* of the first Sasanian king, Ardešīr. Then we may observe how the Armenian oral epic, while formed by the Iranian model, encodes key images from the hymn of the birth of the *yazata* into the *Geste* of Tigran.

Cyrus and Astyages

Astyages the Mede (Herodotus 1.107f.) dreams first that his daughter Mandanē floods Asia. Alarmed by the explanation offered by his dream-interpreters, he marries her off to a Persian named Cambyses and after a year dreams again that vines growing from her private parts overwhelm the continent. No mountain here, but the woman is evidently a giantess. When the dream-interpreters inform him that her offspring will overthrow him, the king entrusts the little Cyrus to a trusted servant, Harpagus, to kill. The latter hands the baby over to a cowherd (*boukolos*) Mithradates and his wife Spacō (an Iranian name that, Herodotus informs us, means "bitch") in the land

of the Saspeiroi, that is, the province of Sper in Armenia—and they save him. Several playmates choose the one called the cowherd's son (*touton dē to tou boukolou epiklēsin paida*) as their leader. When he flogs one of them, the son of the noble Mede Artembares, for insubordination, the youth complains of the *boukolou pais* to his father, who exclaims to Astyages, about having been thus outraged (literally, been made hubris of, *periubrismetha*) by "your servant the cowherd's son" *tou sou doulou boukolou de paidos*. The designation "cowherd's son" is, thus, used thrice: this is a powerful way of marking the lowly status of Cyrus. But the latter returns home, grows up, raises an army, and overthrows Astyages. To the Iranian audience of the epic from which Herodotus drew and embellished his narrative, the Avestan myth of the defeat of the dragon-man and his imprisonment in the mountain would probably have been understood as the implicit substratum, the old story on which the new one was patterned, whose details would then be subconsciously imposed on the imagined scene. As we shall see, the motifs of dream, mountain and fecund woman, flight, demotion, and dragon-fight are to be variously encoded into successive epic iterations of the theme.

Ardešīr and Ardawān

The second Iranian epic to be considered here, the chronicle of the overthrow by the Persian Sasanians of the Arsacid Parthian dynasty in the third decade of the third century A.D., *Kārnāmag ī Ardešīr ī Pāpakān*, "The Book of the Deeds of Ardešīr, son of Pāpak,"¹³ is patterned largely upon the *Sage* of Cyrus. It seems to have reached completion in its present form, perhaps two centuries after the highly mythologized events it describes. The signs of the birth of Ardešīr in the text are much the same as those found in the seventh book of the Pahlavi *Dēnkard* that herald the nativity of Zarathustra: *Pāpak šab-ē pad xwamn did čiyōn ka xwaršēd az sar ī Sāsān be tābēd ud hamāg gehān rōšnīh kunēd. Any šab ēdōn did čiyōn ka Sāsān pad pīl-ē ī āraštag ī spēd nišast estād ud harw kē andar kešwar pērāmōn ī Sāsān estēnd ud namāz qwiš barēnd ud stāyišn ud āfrīn hamāg kunēnd. Any sidigar šab hamgōnag ēdōn did čiyōn ka Ādur Farnbag, Gušnasp, Burzēn Mihr pad xānag ī Sāsān hamāg waxšēnd ud rōšnīh*

ō hamāg gehān dahēnd. "One night Papak saw in a dream how the sun was shining from the head of Sasan and making the whole world shine. The next night he saw how Sasan was seated on a caparisoned white elephant and everyone who was in the clime stood around him, bearing worship to him and offering continuous praise and blessing. On the next, third night he saw in the same fashion how the sacred fires Farnbag, Gushnasp, and Burzen Mihr all were blazing in the house of Sasan and giving light to the whole world." The wise men (*dānagān*) and dream-interpreters (*xwamn-wizārān*) of Papak explain to him that the Sun and elephant represent courage, strength, and victory (*čērih*, *tuwānagih*, *pērōzih*). These are attributes of Vərəθraγna/Vahagn/Bahrām: in Armenia he is insistently associated with the sun; and, as we shall see presently, the ninth-century author of a Pahlavi poem of the apocalypse is to envision Bahrām ī Warzāwand, "the Miraculous," coming on a white elephant to liberate Iran. The *yazata* is not directly mentioned in the passage, then; but his presence may perhaps be felt. And later on in the text, Ardešir is to slay a mysterious, dragon-like adversary, as well.

The three sacred fires (of Persis, Atropatene, and Parthia), the interpreters of dreams continue, signify the three castes of Iranian society, all of which legitimize the house of Sasan together. Now Papak is governor of Persis; but Sasan, a mere shepherd in his service, is a descendant of the Achaemenian king Darius (*Dāra ī Dārāyān*)—during the troubled times of Alexander's misrule, we are informed, the royal family, much reduced in circumstances had fled to live among the Kurdish shepherds (*Kurdiḡān šōbānān*) to the north-west. This detail recapitulates the *topos* of the sojourn of Cyrus among the Saspeiroi—that is, also in Armenia. Since Armenia was traditionally the appanage of the Iranian crown prince, the detail signifies also immanent ascent to the throne.

Papak summons Sasan after the dream and gives him his daughter in marriage, and they have a son. By fifteen, the archetypal age of youth in its full bloom in Iranian culture, Ardešir shows great proficiency in learning (*frahangih*) and riding (*asabārih*). He is accordingly summoned to attend as a page at the court of the Arsacid Parthian king, Ardawān; and, predictably, usurps the prerogative of the king's son by closing in on the kill first during a hunt. For this act of *lese majesté* Ardawān Ardešir *rā ō axwarr ī stōrān*

frestēd "sends Ardešir to the stable of the beasts of burden." Following this potently coded and immediately recognizable act of humiliation—one recalls the threefold emphasis of Herodotus on Cyrus as the "cowherd's boy"—Ardešir takes his revenge by escaping with the king's favorite concubine (*kanizag*) on two fast horses. By nightfall they meet two women: these are seers who appear in epic to offer important advice—who tell them to ride till they reach the sea (*daryā*). Then they will be safe. Over the next three days a ram, the incarnation of divine fortune (Av. *xvarənah-*, MPers. *xwarr*, Arm. l-w *p'atk'*, from a Mlr. reflex of Olr. **arnah-*), gradually overtakes and joins them. At this point, Ardawān's Magi tell him, there is no use in the pursuers tiring out (*ranjēnidan*) their horses: the doom of the Arsacid house is sealed.

Although the phrasing of the text, with its frequent repetitions, preserves the memory of an oral source—there is an earlier, terse version of the *Kārnāmag* at the beginning of the history of the conversion of the Armenians attributed to Agathangelos—it is plain that the author has elaborated a work of Sasanian propaganda as well: the ranking of the three fires and the demotion of the third, Parthian one to the low estate of the herdsmen (*vastryōšān*), is a tendentious treatment of the symbolic triads ubiquitous in epic composition. That is to be expected in a work intended to have political importance, where symbols will represent countries: in the epic of Tigran, there will be three mounted warriors conquering realms to the north and west, as well as Iran in the south. And in another iteration of the tale the twin peaks of Ararat, as we shall see, will be pressed into service as representations of Greece and Persia. But what is the significance of Ardešir's headlong flight to the sea? It has neither political, nor thematic, nor apparent symbolic meaning. If one recalls the collaboration of heaven, earth, and sea in bringing forth fiery Vahagn, though, perhaps here the sea (*daryā*) that will seal the fortune of the once and future king is intended to complete the triad whose first two elements are the divine radiance (*xwarr*) from heaven that alights on him and the earth upon which he superbly and swiftly rides. The regnal fire of the Sasanians at Staxr was Ādur Anāhid; so if the image of the sea recalls Vourukaša, then the image of the goddess so important to the dynasty, and to the *topos* of birth, may be encoded into the text as well.

Tigran's Triumph

Now let us consider the epic narrative of the Armenian king Tigran the Great. The first suggestion in the Armenian text of the presence of Vahagn is in Xorenac'i's description of the king (MX 1.24) as *xarteašs ays ew aṭebek cayriw herac' eruandean Tigran*, "this Orontid Tigran, golden-tressed, with grey breaking at the tips of his locks": Vahagn is blond, *xarteaš*, as well, the term encoding also the color and blaze (Arm. *xar*-, "burn," *xaroyk*, "fire") of fire that pervades the poem, whilst *cayr* "edge" and *bek*- "break" evoke perhaps the gray foam on the breaking waves of the *covn cirani*, the purple sea, in which the Zoroastrian god is born, and in which he fights and defeats dragons as well. Arm. *aṭi*-, "salt, gray" in this period will not have been phonemically distinct from *ali-k*-, "wave," too. The passage may also acrophonically encode the name *Varhagn—again with the pronunciation of the name of the *yazata* that Armenian Zoroastrians would have employed in the Arsacid period.¹⁴ The references to the sea here and later, since it does not figure in the war, are to be oblique and elusive. But they are still necessary, I think, because the three parts of the visible cosmos, sky, earth, and sea, must come together for the cosmic legitimization of a king.

These glancing allusions to the sea continue. Aždahak—the epic villain whose Middle Iranian name in Armenian is a fusion of that of Astyages and that of the Iranian serpent-man monster-tyrant, making him a kind of ideological as well as physical *Mischwesen*—has a fearful monitory dream. Though it is not the same dream as the one in the *Histories* of Herodotus, a work with which the Armenian writer was most likely not familiar, it is still similar to the Greek material. This argues for both filiation and authenticity: the Armenian epic draws from the Iranian traditions cited by Herodotus and did not arise independently, and the dream is neither the Armenian writer's invention nor a learned calque upon an unrelated Biblical or Classical episode. It is what he says it is. One is struck by the degree to which the Armenian oral epic tradition to which the narrative properly belongs has imposed upon the basic material of the dream both a native locus (the hero is Tigran, not Cyrus) and a linguistic patterning based upon the hypograms of the song of the birth of Vahagn. The latter is cited, indeed, by Xorenac'i as part of a larger epic

cycle about Tigran; so the encoded material likening the hero-king to the hero-god in their essential aspects is part of the rhetorical argument of the Armenian epic. Vahagn slays dragons; and Tigran slays a man-dragon. And the authenticity of the passage argues additionally for the integrity of the narrative cited by the Armenian historian as a whole—the poem about Vahagn cannot have been a mere interpolation, despite its taut poetic structure so different from the style of the contextual material; nor did Xorenac'i cobble together the narrative by himself.

Xorenac'i's introduction to the dream sequence, then, sounds several marked terms: *i sastkut'enē cp'anac' xorhrdoc'n linēr nma i teslean erazoc'n erewut'anal i k'un*, "from the severity (< *sastik*-) of the billows (*cup*) of [secret] thoughts (*xorhurd*) it happened to him in a vision of dreams (*eraz*) to become manifest in sleep" (MX 1.26). So he summons his advisors and speaks to them *yerkir hayelov i xoroc' srtin*, "staring at the earth, from the depths of his heart."¹⁵ Arm. *sast-em*, an Iranian loan, means to issue a stricture, a severe command; so the strength of the waves perhaps implies in anticipation the severity of the decree of destiny against the dreamer. The waves of this sea are deep, as is the counsel to be derived from them: as we shall see presently, Arm. *xorh-urd*, "thought, mystery," is often treated in Armenian tradition in a folk-etymological fashion as though it contained also the Iranian loan *xor*, "deep," also used in the passage; and Arm. *eraz*, "dream," derives from Mlr. *rāz*, "secret," a term associated with hidden depth. The word *cup* /*tsup*/, "billowing," the action of waves, encodes the intrusive sound *ts* of /*tsov*/ and /*tsirani*/. Although the historian probably composed these introductory lines, he might still have borrowed its imagery from the preliminary praise-song of his oral source, and the images alert the good listener to the encoded images to follow in the description of the dream.

The Median king in his dream finds himself "in an unknown land (*yerkri*) near a mountain long from the earth (*erkar yerkrē*) in height, whose summit seemed encased in the severity (*sastkut'eamb*) of ice; and they said, you would think, this is in the land of the progeny of the Armenians (*haykazanc*). And as I looked longer (*erkaragoyns*) at the mountain, a woman clothed in purple (*ciranazgest*), having a veil of heavenly color (*erknagoyn*) about her, appeared seated on the edge (*i cayri*) of such a height, lovely, tall in

stature, and red-cheeked (*karmrayt*), gripped by the pains of giving birth (*erkanc'*). And I looked longer still (*yerkaragoyns*) at this apparition and was in wonder, suddenly the woman gave birth (*cnaw*) to three fully-grown men (*eris katareals*) of the stature and nature of the progeny of the gods (*diwc'azanc'*). The first, gripping the flanks of a lion upon which he was mounted, sped west; the second, on a leopard, headed north; but the third, reining a monstrous dragon (*zvišap anari*), advancing upon our realm, attacked."

The one on the dragon comes on, as though on eagle's pinions, he and Aždahak fight, first with spear-tipped lances (*i tēg nizacak'*) and then with other weapons, and the Mede, he whose name really was Spear-caster, is killed. The sound-symbols of the hymn of the birth of Vahagn inform fully the poetics of this dream vision, with *erkn*, "labor," as the generative hypogram: most prominent is the phonetic and thematic play of the duality of heaven and earth, *erkin* and *erkir* with their common element *erk*- "two," encoded into the process of parturition (*erk-anc'*) as in the hymn. Here the play is extended to include the word *erkar*, "long," used in the normal sense of duration twice, but also of height. And after several iterations of it, the word is acrophonically encoded into the phrase *eris katareals*, the three fully grown, literally, perfected, men. Moreover, the latter Arm. word *katar*, "perfect" can mean also the summit of a mountain, further enforcing and extending and echoing the image. And one recalls that Vahagn was born perfectly formed, too. (This is not a trivial coincidence since it does not have to happen that way, with gods: Hindu mythology has both the mature Kṛṣṇa and his boyhood persona, Bālakṛṣṇa.)¹⁶ The colors *cirani* "purple" and *karmir* "red" of the hymn are here applied to the woman giving birth. There is no sea; but in its place is the breaking of water in birth pangs, as well as the water issuing from the flanks of Mandane in the dream of Astyages related by Herodotus. The sons of the Armenians (*hayk-azn*) are equated rhetorically with those of the gods (*diwc'azn*); and one of them, Tigran, is indeed like Vahagn the dragon-slayer, though he is riding a *višap* instead of killing it. The dragon is described as *anari*, "monstrous," an epithet that can be analyzed to mean either "non-Iranian" (with *ari*), or "un-manly" (with *ayr*). The Armenians of the pre-Christian era probably were considered to belong to Erān, though after the overthrow of the Parthian Arsacids in Iran proper and the Conver-

sion in Armenia they were Anērān—non-Iranian. But the hybrid dragon-man Aži Dahāka is to the propagandists of his victorious enemies both non-Iranian and sub-human, hence the appropriateness of the usage here, perhaps, of the mounted dragon-with-man (and Armenians call a horseman *ayr-u-ji*, lit. "man-and-horse"). Aždahak is seeing himself not just conquered, then, but mounted and ridden, much as Ahreman is in Avestan lore by Taxma Urupi! Tigran is also marked as the third hero, corresponding thus to the Avestan conqueror (but not slayer!) of Aži Dahāka, Θraētaona son of Āθwya—in M. L. West's felicitous rendering, Mr. Third McWaters.¹⁷ So Tigran here is encoded as Farēdōn here, as well as, of course, Vahagn, by visual placement and theme rather than by name.

The "long" mountain that is also high is presumably Ararat, with its twin, snow-bound summits, one for each titanic foot of the giant woman all red and purple and sky-blue, its flanks stretching across the plain. The woman is multiply marked by the signal sound of *cov*, "sea" and the *locus princeps* of its epithet, *cirani*, "purple": she sits on the mountain's edge (*cayr*) and gives birth (*cnanim*). The choice of "edge" to anticipate "summit" (*katar*), a word artfully employed above, may perhaps allude to the sea of wide shores or edges, Vourukaša, over which the goddess of fertility, Anāhitā, presides on her high mountain.

Vasak's Boast

Long after the end of the Artaxiad dynasty, the memory of Tigran endured and his name attained proverbial status: the fifth-century Armenian translator of the *Grammar* of Dionysius Thrax was to employ it in rendering "Hector" in the Greek. In the third century A.D. the Iranian Arsacids fell; the line was to endure in Armenia through the Christianization of the country, but it, too, was not to withstand the Sasanians' power. A fifth-century writer named P'awstos set down a history of the wars in the preceding century of the last great Armenian Arsacids and of the commanders-in-chief of their armies, from the *naxarar* clan of the Mamikonians (for every Agamemnon must have his Achilles) against the Sasanian Shapur II (Arm. Šapuh, MPers. Šābuhr). The title, *Buzandaran*, is something of a mystery and can mean either "a repository of narratives belonging to the Byzantine," if that is where our

Armenian Faustus hailed from (some of his narrative was indeed known to later Byzantine Greek historiography), or perhaps “epic histories,” from a form putatively reconstructed as deriving from an OIr. compound **bavaṭ-zanta-*. It is at any rate indisputable that the *History* is at many points pure heroic epic. And it draws from precisely the hypogrammatic patterns we have seen elaborated in the episodes of the epic of Tigran and Vahagn cited by Xorenac’i.

In 4.54, Shapur, entertaining the brave, captive Armenian king Aršak II, is advised by the Magi secretly to sprinkle Armenian earth over half the ground of the banqueting pavilion. Shapur leads his guest around, and sure enough on his native soil the Arsacid, who has meekly sued for peace, declares his true intention to wrest the Iranian throne from its Persian usurper. Later on, Shapur seats Arshak at the foot of the table, instead of at the head, as protocol would require. Arshak, again on the Armenian soil strewn earlier upon the floor, rises to his feet and demands Shapur surrender his own seat. The latter has Arshak chained by the neck and cast into the prison near modern Dizful known as the Fortress of Oblivion (Pers. *Andimišk*; Arm. *Andmōšn/Anuš berd*). The dominant mythological image of the several scenes of this episode is native soil giving strength to a man: we know it best from the story of the Greek giant Antaeus. It both parallels and foregrounds, if you will, the second half of the chapter, in which Vasak Mamikonean, the captured commander of the Armenian army, is brought before the Persian king. The noble dynastic house, or *naxarar-dom*, of the Mamikoneans, held the hereditary office of commander-in-chief (Arm. *sparapet-ut’iwn*, from Mlr. **spāda-pat*, cf. Pers. *sepāhbod*, etc.); and the epic of the Mamikoneans forms a parallel strand to that of their Arsacid lords in the *Buzandaran*, much as the *Šāh-nāme* will celebrate the hero Rostam. There is in the text even a praise song in which the three aspects of Vasak’s Mamikonid valor seem to be modeled upon the Zoroastrian ethical triad of good thoughts, words, and deeds.¹⁸

On the morn, then, Shapur “began to punish¹⁹ him [Vasak]. Since Vasak was small in person, the king of the Persians, Shapur, said to him, ‘Fox (*aṭuēs*), you were the troublemaker who vexed us so much. You are the one who killed Iranians (*ari-k’*) for so many years. But what will you do

now? I will kill you like a fox.’ But Vasak replied, saying, ‘Now, when you see me small in person, you have not taken the measure of my greatness, for till now I was a lion to you, and now a fox. But when I was Vasak, I was a giant (*skay*).’²⁰ My one foot stood on one mountain, and my other foot stood on [another] mountain. When I leaned on my right foot, I brought the mountain on the right down to the ground. When I leaned on my left foot, I brought the mountain on the left down to the ground.’” Shapur asks what the two mountains are, and Vasak explains one was the king of the Persians; the other, the king of the Greeks. He adds that when the Armenian Christian patriarch Nersēs was alive, “his counsel abided with us and we knew how to give counsel to you” (*xrat nora ekac’ ar mez, gitac’ak’ tal k’ez xrat*); but now the Armenians “have fallen with eyes wide open, of our own accord, into a pit” (*mezēn ač’awk’ bac’awk’ ankak’ i xorxorat*). After this rueful admission, the commander is flayed alive; and his hide, stuffed with straw, is taken to the Fortress of Oblivion.

Vasak’s intricate retort forces his interlocutor to ask that the riddle be explained; and it works on several other, interlocking levels of thematic and poetic intricacy to which the skilled hearer of oral epic will have been attuned. Riddles, like those posed by the sorcerer Axti to the youngest of the Parthian Friya clan, *jōišt i Friyān*, in the short Pahlavi text named after the latter, are in Zoroastrian tradition not just a game but a deadly duel, resulting at the end of the narrative in the death and damnation of the wicked magician. Puzzles—a kind of visual riddling—are the stuff of high-level diplomatic confrontation, too, as in the Pahlavi *Wizārišn i čatrang*, “The Explanation of Chess”: the Indian king sends the game to the Sasanian Xusrō I *Anōšag-ruwān*, demanding tribute if the Persian cannot figure it out. Fortunately the court sage Wuzurg-Mihr does so, and goes on to baffle and humble the Hindu monarch by sending him—a backgammon set. So this paradigm from the wisdom literature of the Ancient Near East generally and Iran in particular of the riddle informs confrontation between the Persian king and the Armenian general and presupposes the participation of a holy man or wise counselor: in this case it is St. Nersēs, distinguished by his absence.²¹

Shapur’s mockery opens with the word *aṭuēs*, “fox”: this chief image provides the phonetic

code, the hypogram, to be recapitulated, divided, and elaborated in Vasak's reply. It is justified by the Armenian prisoner's short stature—but this is itself an epic *topos*. Josephus, writing in the first century A.D., relates in his *Jewish Antiquities* (*Ioudaikē arkhaiologia*, 18.314) a tale steeped in Iranian epic tradition: Asinaios and Anilaioi, two brothers from Nehardea, Parthian Babylonia, are sons of a widow. Apprenticed to a weaver and punished with a whipping, they react to the indignity (Gk. *hubris*) by obtaining weapons and gathering youths of the lower classes to fight with them. Calling themselves generals, they establish a fortress and defeat a Parthian force. The Arsacid king Ardawān, duly impressed, invites them to court, but only Anilaioi, the braver of the two, comes. When the courtiers mock the youth for his diminutive stature, Ardawān reproves them, saying the Jewish fighter has a soul greater than his body (*hōs meizona en tēi parathesei parekhato tēn psychēn tou somatos*).²² The rhyming names of the two recall Sanasar and Baldasar in the Armenian Epic of Sasun, as well as other unequal twins elsewhere; and of course the hero can be killed only by treachery. So in the *Buzandaran* the key word is reinforced by a stock image and setting.

Vasak in his boastful reply to Shapur's humiliating taunt divides his own name in two, suggesting Shapur understands only half of it, and of him. *Vas-* echoes the final syllable of the word for "fox," Armenian *ahuēs*; while *skay*, "giant" (literally, "Scythian"), corresponds to the second half, *-sak*, of his name. This verbal word play introduces a second, visual level of duality: the man of little stature, now a giant bestrides twin peaks, rather like the titanic woman in the dream-vision of Aždahak in the epic of Tigran whose progeny were to bring doom to Armenia's foes. For the Armenian listener these must evoke Great and Little Ararat; and as for giants, the ones called *k'ajk'* who imprisoned king Artawazd II, the son of Tigran the Great, were believed, well into early modern times, to dwell within the chasm of Azat Masik', the greater of the two mountains, into which the doomed king fell. So Vasak's explanation, that these are two kings whom he could defeat when he stood still on his native ground, is an answer calculated to shame the Persian but to surprise and please the listener—not by shaming his ignorance but by adding a new meaning to the twin peaks, that of Armenia's double adversaries, Persia and Rome, while recalling how in the epic

of Tigran the two other riders had sped northwards against the barbarians of the Caucasus, and west again, against Rome.

There ends Vasak's boast, but not his speech. In epic the hero, whether a noble warrior or the king he serves, and often enough, both of them, will display a flaw of character such as impetuosity or hubris, and must have the benefit of the advice of a wise man or counselor. Homer supplies the long-winded Nestor, remote ancestor perhaps of Hamlet's Polonius;²³ in the *Memorial of Zarēr* it is Jāmāsp who soothes the violent anger of the Kayanian king, Vištāsp; and Median Astyages and Parthian Ardawān have in their employ a staff of astrologers and Magi. In Armenia, only recently baptized, the Patriarch Nersēs in the *Buzandaran* bears not only the name of a *yazata* (Av. Nairyō.sangha-, Phl. Narseh) but the title of a Sasanian *mōbedān mōbed*: he is *ḵatagov zrkeloc'*, cf. MPers. *driyōšān jādag-gōw*, "advocate of the poor," i.e., the poor in spirit, the community of the faithful—Prof. Nina Garsoian established the derivation of the Armenian title from the Iranian one known in Sasanian sacerdotal usage. So it is he who dispenses *xrat*, "counsel," the Armenian word, as is well known, itself a loan from MĪr.; and Vasak uses the word twice in order to contrast it, and the metaphoric heights of the mountain from which he has fallen himself, to *xorxorat*, literally "a deep, deep pit"—as though, following the standard pattern of reduplicative formation in Armenian, the word had been something like **xeraxerat* to start with. The fact that Arm. *xor*, "deep," from MĪr. *xwar*, is etymologically unrelated to Av. *xratu-*, Gk. *kratos*, etc., has never stopped Armenians from considering things deeply meaningful (*xor-imast*) or going on to powerful alliterating play in religious poetry, as in *Xorhurd xorin*, "Profound mystery," the Hymn of vesting in the Church.

There is a poignantly vainglorious aspect, too, to Vasak's boast; and if he had listened to the counsel of Nersēs he might have heard his pride compared to a mountain; and humility, not to a pit but to a valley, as in the sixth book of the Zoroastrian *Dēnkard*, which deals with counsel of wisdom: *Mardomān xwēštan ne čagād be gabr be kunišn, čē gabr harw āb ī wārēd pad-eš be estēd* "Men are to make of themselves not a mountain peak, but a valley, since all the water that rains into a valley stays there," for a valley represents nobility of mind (*ēr-menišnīh*), whilst a mountain

peak (*čagād*, cf. Arm. l-w *čakat*, “brow”) is arrogance and animosity towards the good (*abar-menišnih ud weh-dušmanih*).²⁴ So the images of Vasak’s boast become an occasion for a remorseful reflection on wisdom—again, nothing strange in epic, when one recalls how in the *Histories* of Herodotus, Croesus, about to be killed by Cyrus, remembered the wisdom of Solon. Pride as a high mountain and humility as a deep valley are commonplaces: what is interesting here is the specific employment of themes and images that are deeply resonant in shared Armenian and Iranian Zoroastrian epic.

The collocation of *xrad*, “wisdom,” with profundity, though intuitive to many traditions, can be traced in the particular case of the Zoroastrian sources to the very beginning—to the *Gāthās*, where in Yasna 48.3 the Prophet Zarathustra declares, *aṭ vaēdāmnāi vahištā sāsnaṇqm/ yqm huddā sāsti ašā ahurō/ spāntō vidvā yaēciṭ gūzrā sēnghānghō/ θwāvqs mazdā vanghəuš xraθwā manānghō*: “Now for the one who knows are the best of the commandments/ That the wise Lord decrees in Truth—/ Holy, knowing—which are the deep teachings:/ He becomes your like, Mazdā, through the counsel of the Good Mind.” The verse rhetorically associates the pious man of insight with God Himself, even before declaring him Mazdā’s own likeness: the man is *vaēdāmnā*, “knowing,” and Ahura is *vidvāh*, “knower”; while the superlative “best” (*vahištā*) of the divine strictures that belong to the knowing man, in the first strophe, is linked to the “good” (*vanghəuš*) of the name of Vohu Manah, by whose agency counsel, *xratu-*, comes. Now these two characterizations of wisdom at the beginning and end of the verse are semantically related, and poetically linked, to the third one in the middle, “deep teachings” (*gūzrā sēnghānghō*): “teachings” and “strictures” are connected by sound and meaning, by the underlying verbal base *sah-*, “declare”; the nominative plural ending in *-ānghō* of “teachings” anticipates and resonates with the genitive singular ending of *Manah-*; and that leaves the structural parallelism, equal syllable count, and rhyme of *gūzrā* “deep” and *xraθwā* “by counsel.” Profundity endures, not surprisingly, as an image in the tradition: the Zoroastrian book of Creation, the *Bundahišn*, compiled in the ninth century A.D. but probably echoing Avestan usage, advertises itself as conveying *saxwanihā ī zōfr ud abd*, “utterances that are deep and miraculous.”²⁵

The episode in the *Buzandaran* is a confrontation; and may be resolved accordingly into a series of oppositional dualities. Aršak and Vasak are both in conflict with their powerful captor, Šapur. Both are strong on their native soil, but weak away from it. Vasak is divided within himself, within his own name: the present half is a fox, *aṭuēs*, short in stature; the former half was a giant, *skay*, that bestrode two mountains and could bring both down to the ground. The reflection on the lost patriarch Nersēs becomes an occasion twice to employ the word *xrat*, “wisdom,” to shape the pseudo-etymological but semantically potent figure, *xorxorat*, “deep, deep pit,” that again underscores the duality of height and depth but does so in a manner that undermines Vasak’s previous boast. The *Buzandaran* deals with the end of a dynasty, so it is apposite to introduce a tone of pathos and poignancy, as well as, perhaps, the spiritual and apocalyptic hope wisdom literature offers.²⁶ However it is also likely that there is a kind of ideological conflict within the text itself: the clash of old Arsacid heroic values with the new Christian ones represented by successive hermits and clerics. It is noteworthy that Aršak’s father, Tiran, killed the holy man Daniel and was stigmatized as a sinner for the foul deed: he was later blinded for attempting to trick Šapuh-Varaz, the Sasanian *marzpan* of Atropatēnē, into accepting another hero than the one the Persian had admired (3.20–21). The *marzpan* would not have known the difference, had Tiran’s own chamberlain, P’isak, not betrayed him. As noted above, Haig Berberian discerned in the latter episode the *topos* of the later bandit-epic of Köroğlu, “Son of the Blind Man,” a narrative that was to crystallize over a millennium later around the historical events of the Jalālī uprisings against the Ottomans during the century-long series of wars between the Turks and the Safavids.²⁷ The *topos* has sufficient weight to carry the tragic message of Arsacid decline; but the *post hoc, ergo propter hoc* logic of the narrative makes Tiran’s betrayal and humiliation condign retribution for his sin, as well. So we may deal with the intrusion of an authorial voice that is itself riven by conflicting values, by the ambivalence of a man bestriding, as it were, the peaks of two kinds of culture.

One might reasonably ask about the expectations and abilities of the audiences of these narratives. P’awstos belonged partly to an oral culture still, and Xorenac’i, probably writing later, drew

his sources in part from one to whose enduring vitality he bears witness. The listener in such a culture has a sharp ear for punning and rhyme and kenning far more sophisticated than the simple remnants that persist—and, it is to be noted, are overwhelmingly oral!—as humor and riddle. They could pick out sound patterns the lazy reader is deaf to. They lay in wait for word tricks and caught them. They had strings of images, myths, *topoi* in their prodigious memories and expected them to be rehearsed, elaborated in the virtuoso manner of a good oud player launching into a *taksim*. So for example the story of Aršak: we have left the poor Armenian king to his fate, but what happens to him? He is taken to Andimišk, the Fortress of Oblivion (I do not know whether Orwell was aware that the Sasanians had anticipated modern totalitarianism in making their enemies “unpersons”), where his faithful eunuch Drastamat (the Middle Persian word means “welcome” and one wonders whether it was a trade epithet) begs the Armenian’s captors to allow him a last feast with dancing girls. They relent, Aršak sits on his couch, lives a few final hours according to the manner of kings, and then stabs himself to death with a fruit knife. A pointless detail, one might think; yet in the Babylonian Talmud the Exilarch and the Sasanian king consume an *ethrog* (nowadays, the name given to the citron employed on the feast of Succoth) together. It is an odd detail, two grown men, one powerful, the other venerable, with a small citrus fruit between them. But it is not a bizarre incident, it is dessert: they have just feasted together and it was after lunch, after taking some wine, that the pleasantly sated Iranian king was expected to consider petitions with favor. They are friends, then, enjoying a good moment, and at peace—the only weapon around (for you checked your weapons at the door, except perhaps for an Arm. *nran*, which I derive from Ir. **ni-rāna*- “on the leg,” a basic, pocket-knife-sized dagger kept in a scabbard strapped to your thigh, or perhaps—as with New York City horse cops—shoved in the top of your riding boot) is the little fruit knife, bringing the leisurely pleasure of the meal to its conclusion. So the few words tossed off to describe the setting were enough to summon a full stage set of meaning for the Jew in Iranian Mesopotamia.²⁸ And how tragically inverted the image is in P’awstos, how brutal the pathos: the dessert is Aršak’s last; the little blade, the instrument of his suicide. I was a giant once;

now I am a fox. . . . The audience connected the contrasts in wording to the ironic contrasts of the setting. It is the consummate blending of the verbal and visual.

The Hypograms and Dragon-battles of a Saint by the Sea

The great mystic poet of the Christian Armenian tradition, St. Gregory of Narek (Grigor Narekac’i, ca. 951–1003), lived opposite the island of Ałt’amar on the southern shore of lake Van, where, we recall, Vahagn dives for dragons. His compilation of 95 prayers, the *Matean oġbergut’ean* (“Book of Lamentation”), combines complex theological meditations with intricate poetic structures, litanies, and other structures designed to overwhelm and purify the sense and mind of the faithful. The book employs themes and images from both Scripture and native Armenian tradition, often on several levels of text and subtext. The poet employs sophisticated strategies: hypogram, alliterative patterns, and, on one occasion, the placement of evocative and symbolic terms at points in the text so as to form a visual image to be perceived upon the written page. It is the most important and frequently studied native work of Armenian religious literature within the medieval corpus; the saint has attained folkloric status in ballads, supernatural properties are ascribed to the *Matean*, and individual chapters are employed as amulets, or copied in magical texts.²⁹

In the eleventh chapter of the *Matean*, Gregory declares himself the least of those who confess in faith, but believes Christ can miraculously save even him (11.1): *K’anzi ziard oġ’ ardeawk’ ċ’k’nał-k’an zban: ew i mt’ut’enē erkewanut’ean xawari zteal: ew Astucov awžandakeal ew awgneal sirt meławori, or and marmnapēs cicatēln at nmin hecē hogepēs. Or t’ēpēt i hambarjmanē barjrut’ean geraġunic’n storasuzeal canrut’eamb yandndayin vhin xorxorat gboyn korcanman, noragiwt meławk’n anjreleawk’, uni ew nšxar nšulic’, p’rkut’eanc’ kenac’ hpawor ibr kayracakn lusoy pahec’eal i mits ew yogi orpēs žurn nšanawor ew zarmanawor t’anjramac, hrašiwk’ makardeal vehin hramani i yataks nerk’ins nirheal jrhoroc’n.* “For what can be finer than this word, purified of the dark and murk of doubt, and the heart of the sinner that, helped and assisted by God, laughs in body but cries in its soul.

For although he is plunged down heavily from the elevation of height into the profound abyssal chasm of the pit of perdition by new contrivances of sin no water can wash away, still he grasps the reliquary of the rays of radiance, tangible to the salvation of his life, like a lightning bolt of light, preserved in mind and soul, like the fire, signal and miraculous, congealed to thickness, coagulant by the commands of the One above, sleeping on the innermost floor of the depths of the waters."

The pericope deals with multiple oppositions: damnation and salvation, light and dark, height and depth, fire and water, solid and liquid. The etymon *erk-* "two" of Arm. *erkewanut'iwn* "doubt" at the beginning signals these; and the qualifying *zt-em*, "separate, purify" suggests spiritual birth. We are in familiar mythological territory now, though in a Christian universe. So the multiply marked watery abysses, called *xorxorat* here as in P'awstos, mean not profound wisdom but the fallen state of a sinner. The height above is marked twice by Arm. *barj-*, "high," cf. the Harā *bərəzaiti/Barzokhara* of Anāhitā/Anahit; and there is an additional paronomastic play on *Veh*, "the lofty or good One," God, and *vih*, "chasm." Arm. *nšxar* can be either a remnant or relic, or a piece of communion bread, the latter to figure in a legend of the saint's *Drachenkampf* to be considered presently; its first part is alliteratively tied to *nšoyl*, "beam" and *nšan*, "sign" (very often used as the Holy Sign, the Cross) in the next verse. Now the light the sinner grasps in the watery depths is twice qualified as *t'anjramac*, "thick-congealed" and *makard-eal*, "coagulated." Both these terms in Arm. refer specifically to milk: *makart-em* means to make *mac-un*, "yogurt"—so an allusion to birth, perhaps, in the milky sea nourished by the Lady upon her mountain above its wide shores? And as to fire burning in water, one remembers the labor in the sea gripping the reed, along whose shaft fire rose up, and Vahagn darted forth. All this, as we have seen, was encoded into premonitory dream visions; and Gregory chooses to conclude the passage with the soul presently to wake and be saved—not overthrown, this is an inversion of the old heroic *topos*—lying fast asleep (*nirh-eal*).³⁰

The divine figure who may be said to be the hypogram of the *Narek* is not Vahagn, of course, despite the apparent allusions in the above passage to the connected themes and images of the hymn of his nativity; but God, Arm. *Astuac*. The word

is of uncertain etymology, though the traditional one, from *(h)ast-em*, "make" with a parallel *has-tuac*, may be right. (Another *Volksetymologie*, from *ast ēac*, "he led here," is certainly *falsch*.) So in 3.1, after a series of both positive and apophatic litanies describing God, the author declares Him *vkayēal anun*,/ *čšak k'ak'rut'ean*,/ *bažak berkrut'ean*,/ *hastič' hogwoc' hac'* "witnessed name,/ taste of sweetness,/ cup of happiness,/ creator of the souls' bread." The first phrase intimates that God's name is to be mentioned; the next two allude to the body and blood of Christ; and the third encodes the word *(H)Ast-u (=o+w)-ac*, *Astuac*, "God" as anticipated, evenly across three terms metonymically representing the Holy Trinity. First is the Creator, *hast-* + suffix of agent *-ič'* for God the Father, then the gen. pl. of *hogi*, "spirit," for the Holy Spirit, and finally *hac'*, "bread," for the incarnate Son, Jesus Christ.

Armenian folklore is rich in legends about Gregory of Narek. According to one, the saint, having proved his piety to a band of inquisitors, sends them home with the gift of fire burning in a jar of water—a miracle adumbrated by the wondrous image in his own iteration of the hymn of Vahagn that we have seen. The source of another is very recent: a MS of A.D. 1837 written at Astrakhan', on the northern shore of the Caspian: A childless couple from the isle of Alt'amar, a few miles off the coast of Lake Van, visit Narek and pray at the grave of the saint for a child. When a son is born to them, they name him Gregory after the saint; and in his seventh year they take him on pilgrimage to the monastery. But their boat is blown many miles off course and young Gregory falls overboard near Arčēš—a city mostly submerged by the rising waters of Van, a sort of Armenian Dunwich—and a sea monster attacks him. Gregory holds off the creature with his staff, takes the child to the sea bottom, and makes a tent of his cope and crozier. He makes the sign of the Cross (*nšan*) and the refuge is flooded with light. Once a week, St. Gregory gives his namesake a piece of *nšxar*, communion bread, to eat. Meanwhile the boy's parents cry so much they lose their sight; and friends persuade them to visit Narek again to pray for healing. When they arrive, not only is their blindness cured, but they see their boy sitting on the saint's tomb, hale and hearty though dripping wet. Here is a story cultivated from the epic-steeped vision of chapter 11, with the missing heroic *Drachenkampf* added to the undersea plunge. That, too, finds support in the text of the

Matean: in the 82nd chapter, Narekac'i writes that hermits "heroically" (*ariabar*) help the soul to escape the *laynacawal* *cp'anac' ašxarhis covu*, "the broad-swelling breakers of the sea of this world", even as God saves them *i žaneac' kerč'ac' gazanac' ew kam yatamanc' višapac'* "from the fangs of devouring beasts and from the teeth of dragons", desiring that we be raised (*veracil*), not sink (*ənkəmīl*), emerging *i xoroc' andndoc' i loys berkrut'ean* "from the deep abysses into the light of happiness."³¹ The symbolism of the religious hymn that infuses the heroic epic cycles of Zoroastrian Armenia has thus made the transition, not only into Christian mystical poetry, but from formal writing back to the source from which that writing had emerged—into the living folklore of the country.

Magic Mountain and Milky Sea

Magic spells take full advantage, of course, of every possibility the sound-pattern of a strophe provides, since the overt intent is to overwhelm the senses and mesmerize the hearer, the client, or the target of sorcery. And, as is well known, magic by its very antinomian nature will draw upon local, pagan, folkloric, mythological resources that canonical texts generally (though by no means always, as we have seen with the Narek) recoil fastidiously from. A variant of an Armenian spell against the evil eye attested in several closely similar versions reads as follows:³²

Očun k'ez Mariam, mer Mariam, / Ela i saṛn Alalia [or Galilea], / Mta i dasn Amasia, / Amasia cov mə kar, / Catana vra bun mə kar, / Bnin mējə ōj mə kar, / Ōskun t'asə kt'ec'i, / Arcat'ē t'asə makrt'ec'i, / Pačik mə paṇir zarki: / Ašk' ənoḥin keruc'i, / Č'ar ašk'ə čat'i, Č'ar sirtə patti: / P'ušə, tatašə mtne č'ar ašk'ə: / T'u t'u t'u t'u t'u.

"Greeting to thee, Mary, mother Mary. / I went up on the mountain Alalia [or Galilea], / I entered the valley Amasia. // In Amasia there was a sea, / Upon the tree there was a nest: / In the nest there was a snake. // I milked and filled the golden bowl, / I made curd of it in the silver bowl / And put a piece of cheese within. // I gave it to the evil eye caster to eat. / May the evil eye split, / May the evil heart burst, // And thorns and tares stab the evil eye. // *Tu tu tu tu tu!*" Here Mary sits in the place of Anahit on Tabor instead of Ararat, above a valley in Armenia where there is a sea whose milk may

be obtained and coagulated (*makart-em*) to make a potion against evil.

And against a loss of appetite, the magicians of Valaršapat, in the shadow of mount Ararat, chant:³³

Gnac'i covə: / covn ēr cirani, / Covi mišin cat kar: / Catn ēr cirani. / Catī vra čuḥk' kar: / Čuḥk'n ēr cirani. / Čḥk'an vra bun kar: / Bunn ēr cirani. / Bni mišin čut kar: / Čutn ēr cirani. // Anotk'ni ela, / Andanak mort'ec'i, / Anžxa kul tvec'i, / Petrosi matažazə ktrec'i.

"I went to the sea (*cov*):/ the sea was purple (*cirani*)./ In the sea there was a tree:/ The tree was purple./ On the tree there was a branch:/ The branch was purple./ On the branch there was a nest:/ The nest was purple./ In the nest there was a bird:/ The bird was purple.// I climbed without feet,/ I skinned it without a knife,/ I ate it without disgust,/ And stopped Peter's gagging." The alliterative poetics of the color of Vahagn's sea seems to have mesmerized the conjuror.

Ancient Dreaming

During the peaceful protests that followed the Iranian general elections in the summer of 2009, a woman painter identified by the false name Negin by her friend, a journalist writing anonymously, was attacked and severely beaten by the *basisis*—the paramilitary young thugs employed by the régime. She described a dream she had while recuperating: "I was sitting in the mountains and looking at two peaks in front of me. It was a placid scene. Suddenly, the peaks began to tremble, and rocks and snow fell off and landed nearby. The trembling grew more intense and then the mountains split in two and collapsed, and there was a great cloud of dust in the sky. When the dust settled, I could see beyond the ruins of the mountains. There, on the plain, very small and far away, I saw different types of military equipment: jeeps and tanks and rocket launchers on wheels being driven around." The article continues, "Negin had asked several friends what they thought her dream meant. They had all said that the collapse of the mountains represented the collapse of the Islamic Republic's claims to divine legitimacy. The plain full of tanks and guns represented the militarization of society, the victory of the Revolutionary Guard and the *Basij*."³⁴ We

have pursued over the centuries and across the kindred traditions of Zoroastrian Armenia and Iran a recurrent and fairly consistent archetypal pattern within the social context of its literary performance, its association with the sacred, and its interpretation by the wise. It involves a dream vision, often a divinized and titanic woman representing fertility, a magic mountain, the triad of heaven, earth, and sea, images and scenes of war, and the subsequent explanation of the dream as signifying the withdrawal of divine fortune from a tyrant. In Armenian tradition, from the Artaxiad epic cycle of the second century B.C. to modern legendry about a Christian mystic and saint, the narrative pattern is seen actively to encode both the phonetic and lexical marked signals of the hymn of the birth of the Zoroastrian *yazata* Vərəθraγna/Vahagn and to recapitulate the act that defines his victorious heroism: the slaying of the dragon that personifies misrule: the *višap* or *aždahak*. The dream vision of a modern Tehrani woman, imbued with both her collective cultural inheritance and her particular artistic sensibility, is a remarkable example of the persistence of poetic memory, articulating new forms of political resistance in an ancient land.

Her vision does not allude to the ancient god of victory whose presence intricately pervades the Armenian dossier; but he, too, figures in the Iranian texts. Prof. Sir Harold Bailey published at the end of the volume of his Ratanbai Katrak lectures, *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books*, a Pahlavi poem composed after the Muslim conquest whose author longs for the advent of the messianic Bahrām (i.e., Vərəθraγna/Vahagn) the worker of wonders (*warzāwand*), who is to appear on a white elephant, rather like the house of Sāsān in the vision of the *Kārnāmag*. This Bahrām, even if his model was at first, as Czeglédý suggested, the late Sasanian rebel of Arsacid lineage, Bahrām Čōbīn, has become the central figure of modern Parsi Zoroastrian apocalypticism. Professor Bailey, with whom I was acquainted, emphasized throughout his work as few Iranists do the importance of Armenian studies to the discipline; and Prof. Mary Boyce, the giant scholar of ancient and modern Zoroastrianism, invited me after her first Ratanbai Katrak lecture at Oxford to write on Zoroastrianism in Armenia, under her supervision. Legend now inherits her: the powerful goddess of fertile scholarship bestriding the snow-capped summits of

knowledge—as Highgate hill seemed in winter as I trudged towards our tutorial—and I watched her shred my essays as a Mede or Parthian might contemplate the imminent loss of his throne. But afterwards there was tea, and her fruit cake, and the warmth of her conversation, and her steadfast, stubborn love for everything Zoroastrian. For her, and for her pupils, that heritage is not only a religion, but a whole civilization. My adviser in Armenian at Oxford, and several fellow students at my alma mater, Columbia, had insisted discouragingly that the material for the research I had begun, on Zoroastrianism in Armenia, was too sparse to prove a thing, maybe even nonexistent. They were wrong, she was right, as she was right about so many things, right in her impassioned assertion of the integrity and continuity of the Zoroastrian tradition, right in her impeccable standards of scholarship and probity, right in her unassailable dignity and personal courtesy and kindness. I am deeply grateful for the honor to have presented to you, on English soil once again, this *opusculum* to her immortal soul.

Appendix

A number of the Armenian texts preserved from antiquity down to modern times in which we find the name of the god Vahagn as hypogram and the cluster of images associated with him as locus princeps include narrations of dreams. I would like to propose that the methods employed in studying the texts may be applied also to the question of dreams and their interpretation itself. Ancient cultures, including Iran, attributed great practical importance to the dream. It was often believed that a dream was a message sent by a god; though Penelope in her remarkable speech in the *Odyssey* about the gates of ivory and horn reminds us that dreams (like the gods themselves) can lie to man as well as tell him secret truths. Perhaps it was such a feeling of ambiguity about dreaming that led to the demonization by the Zoroastrians of the female supernatural being Bušyastā: it is possible she began her career as a goddess of sleep and became the demoness of sloth, though in Judaeo-Persian *bušāsf*, demonized but also demoted to common noun, means “sleep” once more.

The dream-interpreter seems to have been expected to be clairvoyant: the Mīr. *rāz* “secret”

of the Arm. l-w *eraz*, "dream," was not just the symbolism but the vision itself—the sage often had to tell the dreamer what it was the latter had dreamed. But even without such feats, dreams possessed great power and were central to religion and politics. In the *Gāthās*, the twin spirits of good and evil become manifest to Zarathuštra *xvafanā*, "by means of a dream." This vision of a dualistic cosmogony may be echoed in the beginning of the Hermetic *Poimandres*; and, probably through the transmission of Iranian lore by Armenians to Balkan sectarians, we find a similar picture of the antagonistic spirits at the beginning of time in the dream of Prince Vladimir in the old Russian spiritual poem, the *Rime of the Book of the Dove* and in a still more recent dream of the same kind recorded by a leader of the dissident Molokan sect.³⁵ In the former case, the attribution of the dream to the very monarch who presided over the baptism of Rus' and the nation's entry into the communion of the Orthodox Church is tendentious, since little could be more overtly heretical than a dualistic cosmology. In the latter case, having a dream of a dualistic cosmology at once endows that vision with supernatural sanction, for dream is a kind of prophecy and also absolves the dreamer of any guilt that might be incurred by the accusation of heresy. Heresy is *kat' exokhēn* a choice; but the dream is an unconscious, unwilling act.³⁶

The cosmological revelatory dream is of obvious significance, since everything, literally, flows from the beginnings of the world and knowledge of such beginnings is power. Among the topics and texts considered dangerous and forbidden to Jews of the early Rabbinic period was *ma'aseh berešith*, "matters of Creation." A heterodox cosmogony, like that of the Molokans, undermines everything else.

Monitory dreams come in various kinds: the ones we have discussed are portents of doom vouchsafed to kings. In the *Agathangelos*, the principal source for the conversion of the Armenians, a woman repeatedly sees an *arhawirk'* in which she is commanded to feed the imprisoned St. Gregory. The word now means "terror" but seems to have had the specialized sense of identical dreams in which one is commanded in an increasingly terrifying manner to do something or else suffer dire consequences. A common aspect of such a dream across cultures in the Near East is its repetition; and we have seen one such.

But dreams foretelling good news can be equally potent: Assyrian armies marching to battle were emboldened (or so official records claim) by their king's dream, duly propagandized, of victory.

These dreams are of wide social impact, but what of the more private variety? Armenians, like other Near Eastern peoples, buy and use dream books (*erazahan*). These are for the most part simple glossaries of images and events (apples, cypress trees, lions, weddings, that sort of thing) with fixed meanings. They derive ultimately from the *Oneirocritica* of Artemidorus with many Byzantine and Islamic intermediaries. A recently printed *Erazahan* from Beirut advertises itself as "new" because it includes images like "elevator" (Arm. *verelak*, a calque on the French) that did not exist in olden times. It also displays some nuance in its approach, urging the dreamer to consider the conditions (*paymanner*) of the time of his dream (sleeping it off, sleeping on a hard bed, etc.) and to remember that dreams concerning recent everyday events have no deep symbolic significance. The implication is that a dream that reflects some immediate circumstance, or regurgitates a commonplace experience, does not go deep enough to warrant close attention—whether or not it induces anxiety, provides catharsis, or causes some other reaction. In literary terms, it lacks high significance.

So even a traditional, rather pedestrian manual of dream interpretation acknowledges that the dreamer does have a role in his dream. He is not merely the passive recipient vessel of a fully formed vision from outside. Artemidorus, too, recognized that the soul shaped the dream it received—it was, to use the later Freudian term, the dream censor. And the Armenian *Erazahan* also emphasizes that some dream images are more symbolically, meaningfully potent than others—and that these are more widely shared than the immediate, private stock of personal iconography available to the dreamer. Such a view, which, one must assume, goes back to traditional conceptions, is a recognition in its way of the same phenomena and processes that C. G. Jung was to call the archetypal imagery of the collective unconscious. We shall return to these matters presently.

Allied to the belief that a dream came from a god was the practice of sleeping in a temple (incubation, *enkoimesis*) in the hope that the resident divinity might provide an effective dream—most often, having to do with recovery from a disease.

Healing through the help of some supernatural agency was a fundamental concern before the advances of modern medicine; and Zoroastrians, for instance, still employ *nīrang*s and the Ardi-behešt Yašt (spells enclosing an Avestan mantra, and the hymn to the Bounteous Immortal Aša Vahišta, Best Righteousness). Matters of love and marriage were a close second in order of importance. Certainly the existing corpus of *defixiones* from the Mediterranean world suggests this. In the case of Iran, Athenaeus in the *Deipnosophistai* mentions that Zariadris and Odatis fell in love by dreaming of each other and the Persians paint the story in their temples. Quite aside from the reliability of the report—how did Athenaeus know what the Persians were doing in their temples?—and the paucity of evidence (the frescoes at Kuh-i Khwaja don't tell the story; and the Sogdian frescoes are in homes, not temples), the Greek writer does not explain why the Persians did this. Avestan Zairivairi and Middle Iranian Zarēr (and Armenian Zareh(r), a royal name of the second century B.C.) are two different forms, but it would seem that at some stage they came to be used of the same scriptural and epic hero.³⁷ In the archaizing Pahlavi text *The Memorial of Zarēr*, the pagan Chionites tell the Iranians under threat of war to give up the newly-adopted Good Religion of Mazdā worship. The sage Jāmāsp informs Zarathuštra's royal patron, Wištāsp, that the latter's brother, Zarēr, will die if the king accepts the challenge. Though distressed and angry, the king accepts the sacrifice a just war requires. The episode, a pivotal one in Iranian *Heilsgeschichte*, thus has much in common with the theme of the Indian *Bhagavad Gītā*;³⁸ so there would have been good reasons to paint scenes from the life of the noble Zarēr in a shrine. Thus, portraying an important Avestan figure in a temple with his queen might not have had anything to do with incubation, and there is no testimony that Iranian Zoroastrians slept in fire temples. Armenians might have done so, though: the temple of the Zoroastrian *yazata* Tir bore the epithet *erazam-oy*n, which probably means either "connected to dreaming" or "dream-interpreting."³⁹ And in the seventh century the Armenian scholar Anania of Širak, to whose authorship is attributed the magical text *Vec' hazareak* ("The Book of the Six Thousand") fell asleep in a chapel at Trebizond and asked a shining youth—the incarnate Sun—whether there are people in the Antipodes. It is a cosmological question; and Anania's account of

his dream introduces an *angelus interpres*, who cites the book of Job and replies to the dreamer's query that no, there are not.⁴⁰

For centuries, seekers of a visionary dream with its interpreting angel have chanted an Aramaic spell that apparently includes a corrupted form of the Aramaic *tamaggēš*, "you will magianize," which could mean something either quite generally magical or something more specifically Zoroastrian, given the proximity of speakers of the language in late antiquity to Sasanian Zoroastrians. The latter possibility is not wholly unreasonable, considering that the word is found in the Manichaean *Hymn of the Pearl*, with its strong cultural and lexical Parthian influences—the prince-hero is to vanquish the dragon who keeps the sought after pearl of great price, by "magianizing" him.⁴¹ The spell comes towards the beginning of the *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*, a vast Arabic magical compendium known to the mediaeval West as the *Picatrix*, which enumerates the spirits of the decans, planets, and zodiacal signs, the angels of the days of the week, and so on, with prescriptions about what times are propitious for what activities, how invocations ought to be made, to whom, with what compounds of incense, and so on. The idea is that a magic act, including, it would seem, the request for a particular dream, has to involve manipulation of harmonies and correspondences on a cosmic scale. This corresponds well to the instructions given in the pseudo-Maimonidean *Megillat setarim*, "Scroll of secrets" studied by Prof. Moshe Idel for *še'elat ḥalōm*, "asking for a dream." The text forms a continuum starting with the letters and words of the *Sefer yetsirā*, the "Book of Creation": these are linked to the roles of angels, the positions of planets, the practice of fasting, etc. So the dream, itself intended to convey secret wisdom, is itself linked to a vast interlocking system of secretive and powerful cosmological affinities.⁴² One can easily see why Jewish texts prohibited access to the *ma'aseh berēšit*, the matters of the beginning-time of the world, to the insufficiently prepared or improperly motivated.

To return, however, to the motif of love and the shared dream: the latter seems to be a common *topos* of romance. We have seen a Perso-Greek example; and the Indian *Kathāsaritsāgara* has King Vikramaditya and the maiden Malayavati fall in love by each seeing the other in a dream. This theme, suggested Roger Caillois, points beyond the mere structure of literary artifice to a more

important issue. The fiction of a shared dream is a manner of compensating for the intrinsic loneliness of the act of dreaming, the impossibility of even reviewing and verifying and accurately recording what one has dreamed.⁴³ "If you dream alone, it's just a dream. / If you dream together, it's reality," says a Brazilian folk song.⁴⁴ In Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Pnin*, the lonely Russian émigré professor and his son Victor break through their shells of alienation by dreaming, unbeknownst to each other, the same dreams. Real life does not provide such experiences of transcendence, when unconscious meets unconscious and the awful and essential loneliness of every soul with respect to every other, is overcome. But dreaming for all its isolation is still social, since whatever another learns of it, comes by way of language and narrative technique, and these are by their nature not isolated, but part of the culture.

So when we examine a dream we are always and inevitably studying a text, hearing a narrative. By its very nature as an expression of the unconscious, the dream is not something even the dreamer himself can ever consciously experience, unlike, say, a walk in the country. Even to him the dream is a recollection framed in words. And the dream itself, shaped as it is by a human mind, may itself develop around words rather as Saussure suggested certain texts do. In his *Interpretation of Dreams* Sigmund Freud suggests as much: "There is no need to be astonished at the part played by words in dream-formation. Words, since they are the nodal points of numerous ideas, may be regarded as predestined to ambiguity; and the neuroses (e.g., in framing obsessions and phobias), no less than dreams, make unashamed use of the advantages thus offered by words for purposes of condensation and disguise."⁴⁵ By using words as nodes, or as starting points of marked strings (e.g., *erku* > *erkin* > *erkir* > *erkn* and *erknēr* > *erkar*; *cirani*, *cov* > *ciranazgest*, etc.)—which amounts to the same thing since speech is linear—the dreamer or narrator of a culturally significant dream is doing consciously in his narrative of recollection what his unconscious, if Freud is right, has probably done already. So the dream narrative has a special significance in that it is a real meeting point between those two poles of the mind, the conscious and the unconscious.

Freud's insight about the propensity of words to condense and disguise—to conceal—in dreams may be extended to the activity of the dream-interpreter, the Sasanian *xwamnwisār*, whose

skill is precisely to reveal that which is inherently a veiled secret (one recalls that the Armenian word *eraz*, "dream," comes from Middle Iranian *rāz*, "secret," in the first place). The dreams of Astyages are nightmares, crises—and it is just at times of crisis in a society that the esoteric is violated and unveiled, that apocalypses are advertised and proclaimed. The otherworldly and symbolic becomes actual. The dreams we have examined belong to cycles of epic; and the events of epic lie inherently in a closed and completed past heroic age. In Psalm 126, the children of Israel sing, *Be-šūvā Adonai et šivat Tsiyyōn hayyīnū ke-ḥōlemim / Āz yemālē šēḥōq pinū ū-lešōnēnū rīnā*, "When the Lord returned the captivity of Zion we were as dreamers: / Then our mouths were filled with laughter; and our tongues, with song." But in the post-heroic era of a long, dark exile Yehuda Halevi, determined as he was to return home, could no longer connect the unconscious archetype of the imaginal world to the realia of poetic speech: *Be-šūv ševūt Tsiyyōn hāyā ke-ḥōlēm / Ū-be-hēqītsō ēn pōtēr ḥālōmō*, "At the return of Zion he was as a dreamer: / And at his waking there is no interpreter of his dream." Dream is a lesser form of prophecy; and the gates of prophecy are closed. There may be no remedy for the loneliness of the soul. The heroic age may be sealed in an infinitely receding past, since nobody alive ever saw it. The gates of prophecy are closed: we may speak decorously to God in a temple, but if we aver that God also speaks to us, we will soon be speaking to doctors. Yet art, as Friedrich Nietzsche declared, saves us from the truth. So hopes of revelation, of union, of return, are delivered through dream in the artifice of written fiction. One way or another, suffering humanity finds its opiate; and the creative artist, the delight of invention and the glory of poetic speech.⁴⁶

Notes

1. J. Starobinski, *Words upon Words: The Anagrams of Ferdinand de Saussure*, trans. O. Emmer (New Haven, 1979), p. 22. The revolutionary discoveries by Professor Martin Schwartz of the University of California, Berkeley, in the application and development of this method, are transforming our understanding of the *Gāthās*.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 18.

3. *Ibid.*, pp. 33, 43.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 95.

5. Movsēs Xorenac'i, *Patmut'iwn Hayoc'*, ed. M. Abelean and S. Yarut'iwnean (Tiflis, 1913), pp. 85–86. The standard translation and commentary is that of R. W. Thomson, Moses Khorenats'i, *History of the Armenians* (Cambridge, Mass., 1978).

6. See J. R. Russell, "Carmina Vahagni," *Acta Antiqua* 32.3–4 (1989), pp. 317–30, repr. *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies (Cambridge, Mass., 2004) (hereafter *AIS*), pp. 357–70. On the *yazata* in Armenia generally, see J. R. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, Harvard Iranian Series 5 (Cambridge, Mass., 1987).

7. For a study of these patterns see J. R. Russell, "Sound as Symbol: The Case in Pagan and Armenian Christian Poetics," *Le Muséon* 109.1–2 (1996), pp. 113–26, repr. *AIS*, pp. 713–26.

8. See J. R. Russell, "The Epic of the Pearl," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 28 (2001–2002), pp. 29–100, repr. *AIS*, pp. 1261–1332.

9. One of these is the elegy of the dying Artaxias, preserved by Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni, himself a distant scion of the Arsacids: see J. R. Russell, "Some Iranian Images of Kingship in the Armenian Artaxiad Epic," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 20 (1986–1987), pp. 253–70, repr. *AIS*, pp. 157–74. It contains several of the word-images of the hymn of the birth of Vahagn: *cux*, "smoke"; *vazel* "run"; and *p'oʔ*, here a fluted pipe as "trumpet" rather than "stalk." These may be fortuitous, but at the least it may be suggested that they are small signals of the stock vocabulary of a single large epic cycle.

10. On the relationship of the Armenian epic cycles to the *Nartæ*, with a specific case of borrowing from Armenian, see most recently J. R. Russell, "Argawan: The Indo-European Memory of the Caucasus," *Journal of Armenian Studies* 8.2 (Fall, 2007 [2006]), pp. 110–47.

11. The name of the mythical "sea of wide shores" Vourukaša is rendered into the Sanskrit translation of the Avesta as *kṣīrasamudra*-, "milky sea," as Prof. Martin Schwartz has noted; and the mythical seas of shamans of the Hindu Kush are milky, too. This would suggest either that Iranian tradition acquired this additional mythological and folkloric dimension, reflected in medieval Zoroastrian learning, or that the Sanskrit term is a window into a very ancient *topos* either shared by Iranians and their neighbors or, more likely, diffused into Iran and eastwards from ancient Anatolia. The singular abundance of Armenian and Kurdish references to magical milky springs makes the latter suggestion attractive. It is, however, just as possible that various cultures look back to a paradisiacal primordial age when the seas were as sweet and nourishing as mother's milk, rather than cold, salty, stormy, and dark—and human imagination in divers times and places acted similarly in shaping the archetype of this facet of mythical geography.

12. In much the same way Arm. *jerba-kal*, "arrest," lit. "have by the hand," possibly a calque upon Middle Iranian *dast-graw*-, describes how captors lead their prisoners on Iranian bas-reliefs.

13. See, most recently, O. M. Chunakova, transcription, translation, introduction, commentary, and glossary, *Kniga deianii Ardashira syna Papaka (Kārnāmag ī Ardešīr ī Pāpakān)*, *Pamiatniki pis'mennosti vostoka* 78 (Moscow, 1987). I have transcribed and translated the text here myself, from the edition of Edalji Kersāspji Āntiā, *Kārnāmak-i Artakhsīr Pāpakān* (Bombay, 1900).

14. See J. R. Russell, "The Lost Epic of Tigran: A Reconstruction Based upon the Fragments," *AIS*, pp. 1031–50.

15. Movsēs Xorenac'i, *Patmut'iwn Hayoc'*, ed. M. Abelean and S. Yarut'iwnean (Tiflis, 1913), pp. 74–77.

16. On his parallel in Armenia, see J. R. Russell, "The Armenian Shrines of the Black Youth (t'ukh manuk)," *Le Muséon* 111.3–4 (1998), pp. 319–43, repr. *AIS*, pp. 925–49.

17. See M. L. West, *Indo-European Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, 2007), p. 260 and n. 71.

18. P'awstos, 4.2, *barenšans barehambawk' bar-egorck* "with good signs, good renown, good deeds" in battle: see J. R. Russell, "Problematic Snake Children of Armenia," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 25 (1994), pp. 77–96, esp. p. 81, repr. *AIS*, pp. 621–40.

19. Arm. *patuhas-em*, from Mlr. *pātīfrās*-, will have had at this time the sense of severe interrogation, appropriate to their dread interview. The translations are mine; but one may consult the monumental translation and study by N. G. Garsoian, *The Epic Histories (Buzandaran Patmut'iwnk')*, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 8 (Cambridge, Mass., 1989). The suggestion that Arm. **buzand* means "epic history" rests upon the inherently unstable foundation of a *hypothetical compound* word in Iranian proposed by Prof. Anahit Perikhanian. Though her suggestion may be right, one cannot dismiss on present evidence the simpler and traditional derivation from "Byzantine"—and Faustus is certainly not an Armenian name!

20. The Armenians, according to Xorenac'i, traced their legendary descent to, among others, Paroyr *Skayordi*, i.e., "Partatua ("Able in battle") the Scythian's Son." This would argue for a secure etymology of *skay* or *hskay*, "giant," from "Scythian." Were a derivation from Ir. *kavi*-, as Prof. Martin Schwartz has suggested in correspondence, to be sought, one might expect the earlier, and northwestern, Mlr. *kaw* to be the form entering Armenian. We may indeed encounter it in the ancient toponym Kavakert (*kav* seems to be the common noun "clay" in other place names with the element, e.g., Kavablur "Clay Hill," that are attested only in recent times), see T'. X. Hakobyan et al., *Hayastani ev harakic' šrjanneri tehanunneri bataran* [Dictionary

of the toponyms of Armenia and contiguous regions], vol. 2 (Erevan, 1988), p. 965 s.v.

21. On the two books, see M. Boyce, "Middle Persian Literature," *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 1.4.2.1 (Leiden, 1968), pp. 54, 63.

22. Students of epic generally follow Aristotle and note the hubris of the tragic hero; but less attention is paid to those who *hubrizontai*, are "hubrissed," as it were. Yet the flogging of the hero to be, his toiling down in the stables rather than riding up on the back of a war horse, are elements that we meet again and again, from Josephus and Sasanian epic and Talmudic tale down to the frame narrative of the 17th-century Anatolian Robin Hood—Köroğlu, "Son of the Blind Man." The latter, celebrated in epic tales and balladry in Turkic, in Iranian dialects, and in Armenian, even in Modern Greek, is an epic that, as Haig Berberian long ago discerned, sprang from the soil and legend of Arsacid Armenia. The hero of such an epic of the dispossessed and the downtrodden will have a beginning as formulaic in its evocation of the images of oppression and humiliation as the praise songs of the upper classes.

23. Would smiting the sledded Polacks on the ice be an echo of irony?

24. See S. Shaked, ed. and trans., *The Wisdom of the Sasanian Sages* (*Dēnkarđ VI*), Persian Heritage Series 34 (Boulder, Colo. 1979), E 35 b on pp. 204–5 (and cf. no. 208 on pp. 80–81).

25. See J. R. Russell, "The Rime of the Book of the Dove (*Stikh o Golubinoi knige*): From Zoroastrian Cosmology and Armenian Heresiography to the Russian Novel," in *From Daena to Din: Religion, Kultur und Sprache in der iranischen Welt* (*Festschrift Prof. Dr. Philip Kreyenbroek*), ed. C. Allison et al. (Wiesbaden, 2009), pp. 141–208, pp. 142, 187: the Russian text might originally have been called *glubinnaia*, "deep"; *golubinaia*, "of the dove," would be a *lectio facilius* supported by association with the image of the Holy Spirit. It is a mysterious book, too; and in Armenian a famous cryptogram is called *aławmagir*, "the writing of the dove," an additional association attractive for the presumed change of title: see J. R. Russell, "The Script of the Dove: An Armenian Hetaerogram," *Journal of Armenian Studies* (in publication).

26. For a discussion of the relationship of the *Buzandaran* to other epics about the end of an era in Indo-Iranian cultures, see J. R. Russell, "A Parthian *Bhagavad Gita* and Its Echoes," in *From Byzantium to Iran: In Honour of Prof. Nina Garsoian*, ed. J.-P. Mahé and R. W. Thomson (Atlanta, 1996), pp. 17–35, repr. *AIS*, pp. 693–711.

27. See J. R. Russell, "From Parthia to Robin Hood: The Armenian Versions of the Epic of the Son of the Blinded Man (*Köroğlu*)," forthcoming in the *Journal of Armenian Studies*.

28. During a recent visit to Jerusalem I noted this Armeno-Talmudic parallel to my former pupil, Prof.

Geoffrey Herman, who, I was happy to learn, had seen it too: his work on Irano-Talmudica is rich in precisely these illuminating details. The Hebrew word *ethrog* is not likely to be native, and is probably a loan from an Iranian term ending in *-anj* and originally denoting a sweet lime or the like. A raw citron would be a rather unpleasant fruit to consume, and certainly not fit for the likes of the Rēš Galūtā and Particeps Siderum.

29. There are excellent translations of the *Matean* into Russian (Ulubabyan), French (J.-P. Mahé), Mod. W. Arm. (Patriarch T'orgom Gušakean), and English (Thomas Samuelian). On the saint and his life and work generally, see J. R. Russell, intro., G. Narekats'i, *The Book of Lamentations*, Classical Armenian Text Reprint Series (Delmar, N.Y., 1981) and "The Sources and Contemporaries of St. Gregory of Narek," *Armenian Review* (1988). On individual sections of the book and liturgical hymns by the saint, see J. R. Russell, "The Song of Christ's Ascension (*Taš ham-barjman*) of St. Gregory of Narek," *St. Nerses Theological Review* 2.2 (July 1997), pp. 113–30; "A Mystic's Christmas in Armenia," *Armenian Review* 40.2 (Summer 1987), pp. 1–13; "Ch. 25 of Narek's Book of Lamentations," *Raft*, 1988; "Two Notes on Biblical Tradition and Native Epic in the Book of Lamentation of St. Grigor Narekac'i," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 22 (1990–1991), pp. 135–45; "A Poem of St. Grigor Narekac'i," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 19 (1985), pp. 435–39; and "The Four Elements and the Cross in Armenian Spirituality, with an Excursus on the Descent in Merkavah Mysticism," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 44.4 (Tübingen, 1997), pp. 357–79; on the creation of text-visual images, see J. R. Russell, "Bedros Tourian's Cruciform Poem and Its Antecedents," *Journal of Armenian Studies* 6.2 (Winter–Spring 2000–2001), pp. 27–45. All the foregoing are repr. in *AIS*. See also J. R. Russell, "The Memory Palace of St. Gregory of Narek," *Hask hayagitakan taregirk'* (*Hask Armenological Yearbook*), n.s., Year 10 (2002–2006), Antelias, Lebanon: Armenian Catholicossate of the Great House of Cilicia (2006), pp. 59–81.

30. On the Iranian origin of Arm. *nirh* see J. R. Russell, "'Sleep' and 'Dreaming' in Armenian," in *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Armenian Linguistics*, ed. J. A. C. Greppin (Delmar, N.Y., 1992), pp. 147–69, repr. *AIS*, pp. 477–99.

31. See J. R. Russell, "The Shrine Beneath the Waves," *RES* 51 (Spring 2007), pp. 136–56; Russian trans. in *Rossiia 21* (Moscow, 2007), pp. 10–43.

32. S. Harut'yunyan, ed., *Hay hmayakan ev žotovrdakan abot'k'ner* (English title: *Armenian Incantations and Folk Prayers*) (Erevan, 2006), p. 91 no. 38c.

33. Harut'yunyan, p. 110, no. 116a.

34. Anon., "Letter from Tehran: Veiled Threat. What do the Iranian Protests Mean for the Country's Women?" *The New Yorker* (5 October 2009), pp. 38–43, esp. p. 43.

35. See J. R. Russell, "The Rime of the Book of the Dove (*Stikh o Golubinoi knige*): From Zoroastrian Cosmology and Armenian Heresiography to the Russian Novel," cited above. Among the various Russian sectarians—the Dukhobors, who preserve a long version of the *Rime of the Book of the Dove*, are among these—are the Molokan (lit. "Milk-drinker") *Pryguny*, or Jumpers, practitioners of an ecstatic and esoteric type of Christianity who reject icons and crosses, condemn the eating of pork and baptism in water, regard military service as anathema, and celebrate the Sabbath on Saturday. They endured vicious persecutions at the hands of the Tsars, the police, and the Orthodox Church; but were allowed by Nicholas I in 1839 to settle in the Russian Transcaucasus and Armenia, building little villages like Nadezhdino and Alexandrovka, Konstantinovka and Sukhoi Fontan, in the districts of Erevan and Alexandropol, of Kars and Dilijan. They revered the snowy summit of Mt. Ararat as "mother of all the world"; and some of the surviving Armenian sectarians—Paulicians, Tondrakites—joined their number. I have met one of these, a woman whose family left Russia for Los Angeles at the turn of the 20th century. She now lives in Mevasseret Tsiyyon, a town near Jerusalem, Israel; and in December 2009 she showed me the English-language Molokan lectionary and source book printed in California in 1983, a translation from the Russian *Dukh i zhizn': kniga solntsa* ("Spirit and Life: Book of the Sun"), 1928: *Divine Discourses of the Preceptors and Martyrs for the Word of God, the Faith of Jesus, and the Holy Spirit of the Religion of the Spiritual Christian Molokan-Jumpers*, on pp. 172–73 of which is the testimony of one of the leaders of the sect, Maxim Gavrilovich Rudomëtkin (ca. 1818–1877, b. Morshansk, Tambov region, Russia): "This [revelation] I myself clearly saw in the rapture of my true Spirit, and heard concerning it discourses from the God of gods, on an occasion during some unknown time when I was unexpectedly transported to a vast and immeasurable airy field, or in other words, to a foggy sea, not yet inhabited by anyone. 2. And upon it I stood alone. And there I suddenly saw close to me two Gods walking, both appearing in the image of man, Who now came straight to me and greeted me in Their dignity. 3. And hereupon they began first to tell me of Themselves—Who They both were and what Their developments had been since the beginning: 4. Who of Them was the primary Omnipotent, and Who namely was derived gradually from Whom—as was needful. 5. I ask the reader to see this more clearly further on in this very book of mine, which from the first word will reveal to you all that is needed in full. 6. And this is the reason I have delivered this book to the public, so that each reader and listener could obtain the power of the knowledge of the mystery concerning the God of gods and the God of all men, and God the Spirit Which emanates from Them both. 7. And wherein this

mutual spirit of theirs is ever dividing itself into two classes, amongst both Angels and men under the name: clean and unclean spirit. 8. And thus these two spirits everywhere without interruption wage war and battle between themselves under the leadership of their chief authorities, who are Alfeyil [Jesus Christ, n.] and Lebeyil [the devil, n.], or, in short, light and darkness. 9. Therein the God of gods, their Father God Himself, allowed them both to fight it out from the beginning and until the end of the age, manifestly using angels and men. 10. He who desires and does good obeys the Spirit of truth; he who desires and does evil obeys the spirit of deceit. 11. This is why it is here necessary to note that since before the ages, using these two leaders and their spirits, the God of gods Himself governs and judges each according to his works. 12. He Himself committed all to both these leaders and their spirits to eternally judge and lead all men, the good and the evil alike, each according to his worth, during this age and the one hereafter. Amen." The vision of a dualistic cosmogony corresponds, thus, to the old oral ballad about the Book of the Dove that Molokans also recited. So Rudomëtkin's narrative either is a dream inspired by the ballad, a visionary dream independent from it, or a literary recasting of the ballad presented in the form of a dream retold. In his book on glossolalia, *Tongues of Men and Angels* (New York, 1972), pp. 184–85 and n. 6), W. J. Samarin, a Los Angeles native, mentions that the Armenian Shakarian family came to America as "Pentecostals": they were presumably Molokans, who were accepted simply as "Russian Pentecostals" by American Pentecostal Christians.

36. Or is it? The American Jewish poet and prose writer from Washington Heights in Upper Manhattan, Delmore Schwartz (d. 1966), became famous with his short story (and poem with a similar title) "In Dreams Begin Responsibilities," in which the narrator dreams on the eve of his twenty-first birthday that he is watching a movie of his parents' courtship. He shouts at the figures on the screen to stop, and warns them their children will be monsters; but an usher in the theater admonishes him that he cannot always do what he wants to do. The story, written in the late 1930's employs artfully the images of what was still the relatively new medium of film and introduces into the mainstream of American letters Freudian concerns with the unconscious and neurosis and the overheated emotions of Jewish family life from which they had sprung. The idea that one is in fact responsible for one's dreams as their author, even though one is also a passive observer, even a victim, of their progress, is an unsettling paradox. It reminds one of the paradox of the individual as both maker and helpless sufferer of the sardonic twists of history that T. S. Eliot—who first discovered and promoted Schwartz—outlines in his poem "Gerontion," which Schwartz has his character read aloud in another story and movie theater, "Screeno." It seems a long way back

to Aždahak, but the latter has through his corruption and villainy set the stage for the destruction he foresees in his dream, so some of his terror must be sudden, tragic self-knowledge. The Christian idea of original sin makes such responsibility despite unconsciousness a matter of cosmic and universal guilt, which can be absolved only by the radical catharsis of magic involving the deep taboos of human sacrifice and cannibalism (the Crucifixion and Holy Communion).

37. See J. R. Russell, "An Epic for the Borderlands: Zariadris of Sophene, Aslan the Rebel, Digenes Akrites, and the Mythologem of Alcestis in Armenia," in *Armenian Tsopk/Kharpert*, ed. R. Hovannisian, UCLA Armenian History and Culture Series, Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces 3 (Costa Mesa, 2002), pp. 147–83.

38. See Russell, "A Parthian *Bhagavad Gita* and Its Echoes."

39. See Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, chap. 9 "Tir" (pp. 289–321).

40. See J. R. Russell, "The Dream Vision of Anania Širakā'i," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 21 (1988–1989), pp. 159–70. On the Book of Six Thousand, see J. R. Russell, "On An Armenian Magical Manuscript (Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, MS 10558)," (in publication, 2011, *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities*).

41. See Russell, "The Epic of the Pearl."

42. See M. Idel, "On *še'elat ḥalōm* in Ḥasidei Aškenaz: Sources and Influences," *Materia guidaica: Rivista dell'associazione italiana per lo studio del giudaismo* 10.1 (2005), pp. 99–109.

43. See R. Caillois, "Logical and Philosophical Problems of the Dream," in *The Dream and Human Societies*, ed. G. E. Von Grunebaum and R. Caillois (Berkeley, 1966).

44. "P. M.," *Bolo'bolo* (New York, 1985), p. 1. I thank Christian Greer for this reference.

45. Interpretation of Dreams, p. 456, cited by M. Halbertal, *Concealment and Revelation: Esotericism in Jewish Thought and its Philosophical Implications* (Princeton, 2007), p. 51.

46. The great American writer H. P. Lovecraft (d. 1937), a student of Near Eastern myth and of Poe, has a god imprisoned in a sealed cave in a city beneath the sea—like Mher in the Carved Rock, or God in the seventh chamber of the heavenly Hekhalōt—summon his faithful through dreams. "The Call of Cthulhu" and submarine R'lyeh seem terrifying, as all apocalypses are; but beyond the fear is liberation and ecstasy. So in "The Shadow over Innsmouth" a young man discovers he is one with the terrifying beings under the ocean, and at first recoils from the sickening realization. Yet in his dreams the watery city of Yha-n'thlei appears to him, his earlier fear turns to wonder, and he resolves to return to this antipode of Zion's mount—boldly to offer his dream of return a practical explanation and to dive beneath the waves to dwell in glory forever. Lovecraft's use of his own dreams in his work, and his deft manipulation of mythological *topoi* and archetypes, has so captivated readers in a culture, most of whose literary sophisticates are disdainful of modern epic, considering it retrograde and even puerile (cf. Edmund Wilson's contemptuous dismissal of Tolkien) that some believe his inventions to be realities rather as evangelicals may believe in the literal truth of Scripture. At this conclusion, I would like to record my thanks to Dr. Hrach K. Martirosyan of Leiden University for his careful reading of the draft of this paper, which saved one from several embarrassing errors. Such further errors that may remain are, of course, my own.

RATANBAI KATRAK LECTURES, OXFORD 2009: MARY BOYCE & THE STUDY OF ZOROASTRIANISM

Jenny Rose, "Introduction (with Editor's Note)"

Jenny Rose, "Bibliography of Mary Boyce (post-1984)"

Elizabeth Tucker and Theo van Lint, "Ratanbai Katrak Lectures at Oxford"

François de Blois, "Mary Boyce and the Quest for Zoroaster"

Albert de Jong, "Regional Variation in Zoroastrianism: The Case of the Parthians"

Frantz Grenet, "Mary Boyce's Legacy for the Archaeologists"

Philip Kreyenbroek, "On the Construction of Zoroastrianism in Western Iran"

James R. Russell, "Magic Mountains, Milky Seas, Dragon Slayers, and Other Zoroastrian Archetypes"

Alan Williams, "The Re-placement of Zoroastrian Iran: A New Reading of the Persian *Qeşse-ye Sanjān* of Bahman Key Qobad Sanjana (1599)"

Martin Schwartz, "On *Aiiehiia*, Afflictress of Childbirth, and *Pairikā*: Two Avestan Demonesses (with an Appendix on the Indo-Iranian Shipwrecked Seaman)"

Mihaela Timus, "Légendes et savoirs périnataux chez les Zoroastriens"

Yishai Kiel, "The Systematization of Penitence in Zoroastrianism in Light of Rabbinic and Islamic Literature"

Zsuzsanna Gulácsi, "The Life of Jesus According to the Diatessaron in Early Manichaean Art and Text"

Henri-Paul Francfort, "A Note on the Hasanlu Bowl as Structural Network: Mitanni-Arya and Hurrian?"

Ciro Lo Muzio, "Remarks on the Paintings from the Buddhist Monastery of Fayaz Tepe (Southern Uzbekistan)"

Amriddin E. Berdimuradov et al., "A New Discovery of Stamped Ossuaries Near Shahr-i Sabz (Uzbekistan)"

Nicholas Sims-Williams and Geoffrey Khan, "Zandanījī Misidentified"

Dieter Weber, "New Arguments for Dating the Documents from the 'Pahlavi Archive'"

David Frendo, "Religious Minorities and Religious Dissent in the Byzantine and Sasanian Empires (590–641): Sources for the Historical Background"

Michael Shenkar, "Aniconism in the Religious Art of Pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia"

Review

Kotwal and Kreyenbroek, eds. *The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān*. Vol. 4, *Nērangestān, Fragarad 3* (Skjærvø)

280+ pp.; clothbound

Order:

\$80 U.S. Individuals; \$95 Institutions

Contact: bai34@aol.com

50% discount on most back volumes

See for contents of the volumes: www.bulletinasiaiinstitute.org

James R. Russell
Harvard University

**ARMENIAN SECRET
AND INVENTED LANGUAGES AND ARGOTS**

*Светлой памяти Карена Никитича Юзбашяна
посвящается это исследование.*

Preface

Much of the research for this article was undertaken in Armenia and Russia in June and July 2011 and was funded by a generous O'Neill grant through the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard. For their eager assistance and boundless hospitality I am grateful to numerous friends and colleagues who made my visit pleasant and successful. For their generous assistance in Erevan and St. Petersburg I would like to express particular thanks to Dr. Erna Shirinian, Matenadaran Institute of Ancient Manuscripts, Erevan; Professor Muhammad Dandamayev, St. Petersburg State University and the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences; Dr. Valerii Nikanorov, Institute of Ethnography, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg; and Professor Nikolai N. Kazanskii, Director of the Institute of Linguistic Research, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg. For their help in searching for material on the invented Seh-lerai language I am grateful to many friends and colleagues, including Michael Grossman of the Middle East Division of the Widener Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA; Dr. Raffi Tingir, New York; to Dr. Arika Okrent, Philadelphia, PA; Dr. Olga Kerziouk of the Esperanto division of the British Library, London; Prof. Johann Strauss of the University of Strasbourg; to Dr. Raymond Kevorkian, Director of the AGBU Nubarian Library, Paris; Prof. Valentina Calzolari of the University of Geneva; the staff of the Planned Languages collection of the Austrian National Library, Vi-

enna; and Osman Köker, Birzamanlar Yayıncılık, Istanbul. And as so often, I have profited from the conversation and learning of my friend Marc Mamigonián, Academic Director of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Belmont, MA.

In September 1982, in the days of the Armenian *voskē ašun*, the “golden autumn”, the Institute of Linguistics of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic hosted an international conference on Armenian linguistics. That Armenia was able to do this in one of the frostier years of the Cold War was itself an aspect of the unique, even charmed, status of what the Russian poet Osip Mandelstam had called the “Sunday country”, the sunny sliver of the civilized Mediterranean world, the place of rest within the laboring Soviet Union. One session of the conference was held at the Matenadaran, that Parthian temple of ancient manuscripts that looks out from the brow of its hill down Erevan’s central avenue (then Lenin, now named Maštoc’, after the inventor of the Armenian alphabet) and out towards the snowy, inaccessible peak of Ararat. Prof. Karen Yuzbashian and I became acquainted then. Just as I purchased a stack of books, the news came through on the wireless that the export of books had been forbidden, by decree of the Supreme Soviet. *Ia etogo prosto ne poimu*, “I don’t understand it,” I murmured in exasperation to Karen Nikitch, who by way of reply made a sweeping gesture as if to embrace the entire USSR and asked, *A ostal’noe, Vy ponimaete?* “And the rest you *do* understand?” We passed quickly from *vous* to *tu*; and his ironic remark was the first *bon mot* of many I was to hear over the long years of our friendship, which ended, only on the earthly plane, with his passing in March 2009. His paper that day had dealt with an invented language, the *i uštuni lezu*, a word-list of which he had discovered in a Leningrad manuscript he was cataloguing. The list had been published by its previous owner nearly a century before. Karen modestly concluded that he had nothing of importance to add to some preliminary and tentative suggestions, and, though I returned to the subject in conversation over the years, he did not publish his paper. And there things stood. In 2011 I studied a cipher manuscript at Erevan, and from there, after an absence of four years, I returned to St. Petersburg, Mandelstam’s *gorod, znakomyi do slēz*, the city familiar to the point of tears, intending to study a manuscript containing three

unusual Armenian cipher alphabets. As I perused it I discovered with a sharp, tender shock that it was the very one where Karen had found his enigmatic *ĩ uštuni* language. I copied out the glossary and decided it deserved another go.

Whether I am right, the reader can decide. But I thought that the list deserved publication in English, in the context of a general consideration of Armenian and other planned languages and argots; and I was intrigued that *ĩuštuni* came with its own elegant cipher script (the third of the three in the MS; so after the Persian *khāĩ ĩ -e sevvom* I have named it the “Third Script”), one which its inventor employed mainly, though not, it would seem, exclusively, for the encoding of magical spells that are of considerable anthropological and botanical interest in their own right. A few days after I had begun perusing MS A 29, my friends Oksana Nikol’skaia and Khachatur Bely visited Karen’s grave in the Armenian cemetery on Vasil’evskii Island and placed flowers there. Then we went to Khachatur’s studio near Vosstanie Square and ate Armenian *lavash* bread and cheese, three gathered in His name.

Karen’s manuscript, A 29 at the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences on the Palace Embankment, lives in a library situated on the second floor of an 18th-century palace; and in the reading room, the *Zelēnyi zal* or Green Hall, if you listen very carefully you can sense Alexander Pushkin’s *blesk, i shum, i govor balov*—the sparkling light, and sound, and speech of balls. The windows, many times the height of a man, take in the refracted glitter of the waters of the broad Neva; and at noon the cannon fired at the Peter and Paul Fortress opposite shakes their panes. Shortly after I had parted with the ghosts of cavalry officers and princesses, *The New York Times* published a glib article by James Gleick asserting that for all the pleasure he once felt when handling an ancient manuscript, the digital experience has fairly replaced it. Let him keep on thinking it: I had the Green Hall to myself.

This study, then, addresses the topic of Armenian secret languages and argots in a historical, cross-cultural, linguistic, and social context, considering the invented language and cipher script of MS A 29, another curious case of Armenian invented language (Seh-lerai), and the secret argot of the felt-beaters of Moks.

1. Secret languages and argots

“When a people preserves its language, it preserves the marks of liberty,” intoned the 19th-century Filipino nationalist José Rizal. One might add that since the condition of unfreedom is more the norm than liberty, secret languages and ciphers have long been devised. Perhaps secret language is as old as human society itself. Its purposes and uses are quite varied; but there seem to be a few that are most frequent. Jargon has been defined as the specialized vocabulary of conventional groups in society — the brevity of accepted terms is convenient, it has to be learned, but there is nothing intrinsically secret about it. Argot, on the other hand, can be defined as a system of non-verbal symbols, vocabulary, and verbal expressions within a natural language that is used expressly for the purpose of concealment. The reason for secrecy in this case is criminal or deviant behavior (as fluctuatingly defined by the dominant culture of the time); and the argot serves the additional function of affirming membership in the in-group and of validating its antinomian character. It is a “boundary-maintaining mechanism” in which words for outsiders are pejorative; for insiders, euphemistic and even laudatory. In the prison argot of West Bengal, for instance, a notorious character is called Rustam¹. The latter is the mighty Saka warrior whose heroic exploits pervade the *Šāh-nāme* “Book of Kings” of Ferdōsī — the national epic of Iran popular throughout the East. To call a man Rustam is not merely to praise him, but to evoke, at least to an extent, the heroic code of an archaic culture. Argots can, thus, have a markedly ancient component, as we shall see also in the case of the felt-makers’ coded speech in Moks. This is worth keeping in mind, since at least in American English the idea of slang often carries with it, to the contrary, the aspect of novelty and of rapid change². But it can just as often be a magical window affording a glimpse into antiquity.

Some subgroups are either integrated into society or destroyed; and their argots either lapse into desuetude, are absorbed into mainstream speech, or endure in part in the argots of other subcultures. The Greek

¹ [Lerman 1967, Mehrotra 1977, 8, 9.]

² This is particularly the case with the African-American “gangsta” parlance of the inner city; and websites such as Urban Dictionary enable one to track the speed and flux of such linguistic change.

military régime of 1967–1975 repressed the scholar Elias Petropoulos for his work on the argot of Greek homosexuals, *Kaliarda*, with its enormous vocabulary³. Farrell in 1972, three years after the Stonewall uprising, could still title an article on the speech of American gays “The Argot of the Homosexual Subculture”. However the Greek junta collapsed, Gay liberation advanced, *Kaliarda* has gone into many editions and is a standard work of research, and gay people in most civilized nations need no longer conceal their way of life, nor do repressive laws force them to consort with criminals. So now expressions Farrell classified two generations ago as argot — “get real”, “get lost”, “tacky”, “bummer”, etc. — have found their way into the mainstream of American English. Other terms that reified the subcultural and deviant character of gay life have faded away as homosexuality itself has come out of the “closet” and its distinctive subcultural traits have mostly melted away⁴.

The Thugs, a criminal (by any definition) subculture of the Indian subcontinent were another, quite different, deviant group with a patois of their own: masquerading as guides or helpers, they would attach themselves to bands of travelers, exchange signs of recognition and instructions in their argot, and then strangle, rob, and bury their victims, dedicating the murders as offerings to the goddess Kali. Nothing remains of this group but its name; for the British were able in the 19th century to rid India of this ancient scourge⁵. But some lexical items of the Thugs entered the argot of other deviant groups who are only marginally criminal. The Pandas of Varanasi are a class of priestly practitioners and guides who fleece pilgrims to the holy city on the Ganges⁶. In addition to using pure neologisms such as *khotar* for “policeman”, they sardonically endow innocuous expressions with deviant meanings: *panditī*, lit. “estimable Sanskrit scholar” means “marijuana”; and *tirāth karnā* “make pilgrimage” is used to mean “to get drunk”. Pandas of

³ Petropoulos 1982.

⁴ Farrell 1972.

⁵ Sleeman 1836.

⁶ “Pandas of today earn their living by goondagiri,” as the newspaper *Aaj* (i. e., Hindi *āj*, “today”) of 8 June 1973 (cit. Mehrotra 1977, p. 24) puts it in endearingly quaint Indian English. A *gunda* is a hoodlum; *gundagiri*, well, thuggery!

Varanasi and Dalals — silk merchants — of Delhi have absorbed into their lexicon a number of words and code names for numbers from Thug argot.⁷ This use of symbolic nouns and proper names for numbers would be of particular value in concealing financial transactions; and Al Bīrūnī noted their use in India a millennium ago⁸.

Secret codes have also been employed by creative artists and dissidents in societies terrorized by state surveillance and repression, notably in the Soviet Union, though Russian sectarians of the Tsarist era and others had long and widely employed the transpositional cipher called *lioreia* or *tarabarskaia gramota*⁹. A case in point from the Soviet era is that of the great Armenian poet Ehišē Č'arenc' (generally rendered in English as Charents, b. Kars, Russian Armenia, 1897). He was ostracized from society, then arrested and murdered by the police in 1937. Shortly before his death he drafted the first stanzas of the unfinished epic *Poema anvernagir* "Poema without a title" whose epigraph contains the enigmatic line: *IT'+LA+A+ŽB+ŽA+IB+ČZ*, which can be deciphered by considering each number the ordinal place of a character in the Armenian alphabet, so: S+T+A+L+I+N=106. Č'arenc' seems to be seeking the mystico-numerical significance (in Jewish mysticism this is called *gematria*) of the sum of the letters of the name of the dictator whom the poet, who was no stranger to every kind of philosophical and ideological contradiction, both revered slavishly as a leader

⁷ Mehrotra 1977, pp. 32, 35–36, 39, 88.

⁸ Mehrotra 1977 offers several examples: for zero, *akāša* ("space"), *śunya* ("voidness"); one, *adi* ("beginning"), *rupa* ("form"); two, Yama (lord of the underworld, the primordial Twin), Aśvin (twin horsemen); three, *trikāla* ("three times", i.e., past, present, future), *loka* ("(3) worlds", i.e., heaven, hell, and this); etc. Here sacerdotal arcana, the philosophy of mathematics, and perhaps commercial secrecy intersect.

⁹ See Priēmysheva 2009, vol. 1, p. 77: the code transposes the consonants while leaving vowels in place, thus:

б в г д ж з к л м н
ц ш ч ц х ф т п р

Thus, P.I. Melnikov (A. Pecherskii) in his novel *V lesakh* ("In the Woods") has a St. Petersburg sectarian write a *tarabar*-encoded letter with such phrases as *onilasi i shel' pamots*, i.e., *opisali i ves' narod* "they described the whole people".

and execrated bitterly as a tormentor. At another point he calls Koba (the Georgian diminutive of Joseph, the tyrant's Christian name) *lgc'zt jzčbk'č'cp'žjbl ylbh bljvr*, i. e., through a substitution cipher arrived at by transposing the order of the letters, *ibrev helap'oxut'yan miak aspet* "as the sole paladin of the Revolution" — the incriminating implication being that the mustachioed bandit from the Caucasus had impudently usurped the nobility of Vladimir Il'ich Lenin¹⁰.

As early as AD 1250 one encounters in central Europe the German designation *Rotwelsch* for a *Sondersprache* intended for use in bypassing social norms of communication and expressing tabooed things. It was a speech of thieves and robbers more than a professional jargon, and contained numerous lexical items from the tongues of marginal or outcast communities — the Jews and the Roma. So for instance the word for a thieves' lair, *čor-bayis*, contains both the Indic, Romani word for a thief and the Ashkenazic pronunciation of the Hebrew term for a house, *bayit*. The word *krey*, "horse", employed in the same argot, is derived from Romani *graj*, "*idem*", itself a loan from Arm. *grast* "beast of burden, pack animal": many of the Roma of Europe had come through Armenia, and their speech in places as remote as Wales contains Armenian lexical items¹¹. The Roma of Armenia in turn employed their speech, *Lomavren* (i.e., a form of "Roma" + the archaically pronounced Classical Armenian suffix for custom or language

¹⁰ See discussion in Abgaryan 1991, pp. 157–160. A more interesting (but not Armenian) case is that of the Russian absurdist writer Daniil Kharms, who kept an enchanting diary of drawings, Kabbalistic notes, and chronicles of erotic desire in a simple substitution cipher whose letters he culled from sources as mutually remote as Samaritan and Japanese — a reflection of the catholicity of his interests: see [Russell 2010]. The Soviet graphic designer and architectural draftsman Yakov Chernikhov also invented elegantly typographical cryptograms in the 1930's. He also sketched fanciful landscapes with impossibly elaborate, exotic Indian-style buildings; and it would seem the two exercises of escapist imagination often go together. See [Chernikhov 2009], pp. 118–119, 203.

Matras 1998; perhaps the element *rot*, "red", in the designation *Rotwelsch*, with its Hebraisms and Jewish associations, can be associated with medieval superstitions about the detested and feared *rote Juden*, "Red Jews" of the Apocalypse, cf. [Gow 1995, Benite 2009, and Russell 2012].

—*awrēn* (now pronounced — *ōrēn*), Mod. Arm. *a/ērēn*, cf. *hayērēn*, “Armenian”), which contained numerous loans from Iranian languages, as a secret jargon¹². In the 10th century the *Ḥudūd al-‘ālam* (“Limits of the world”, an Islamic text on geography in Persian) mentions a secret language called *lutrā*, which Melikian explains as a loan from Hindi/Urdu *lutra*, “exiled, dumped” — perhaps a deprecatory designation of the itinerant Roma, and thus, presumably, of their speech also. But it would seem the origins of this speech lie in a very ancient argot of Iranian Jews whose encoded words were Aramaic¹³. The natural languages, then, of Roma and Jews, who were stigmatized as marginal or deviant subcultures, whether for their itinerant way of life (on which cf. the Armenian felt-beaters of Moks, *infra*, with observations on other “Mercurian” inventors of argots) or independent religious beliefs, were at times considered argots themselves, or at least contributed to the argots of criminals — so one still finds Hebrew words, *via* Yiddish, in Russian underworld slang. For instance, Hebrew *ketubbah* “marriage contract” in its Ashkenazic pronunciation becomes the common Russian slang word *ksiva*, “document”. And then there are the argots that survive their speakers. In Holland, whose Jewish community was almost entirely exterminated in World War II by the Germans, the slang name of Amsterdam is still *mókem*, from Hebrew *māqōm*, “place”. In Hungary, whose Jewish population was similarly decimated, the slang for a friend or pal endures as *haver* (pronounced *hóver*), from Hebrew-in-Yiddish again.

For the 17th-century Armenian traders of New Julfa, their native dialect and script served as a secret language on its own; and there were also argots and secret languages within Armenian itself. Armenians of

¹² [Voskanian 2002.]

¹³ In an important article summarized in the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, “Loterai and its long history”, Prof. Martin Schwartz (University of California, Berkeley) has studied a 14th-century Persian MS of the “Book of Grifters” (*Ketāb-e Sāsiyān*) containing a glossary of Loterā’ī, an argot defined as employing Judeo-Iranian grammar “with a special substitutive vocabulary which is used in the presence of gentiles to prevent them from understanding.” He demonstrates that these substituted or code words are Aramaic, in forms datable to the early Achaemenid period, that is, *ca.* the 6th–5th cent. BC.

the village of Banazur in the Hadrut region of Ārc'ax (Mountainous Karabagh) all knew an Armenian form of the secret language called by the Iranian name Zargarī, lit. "goldsmiths' (argot)", in which one simply adds a -z- to each syllable, e.g., Arm. *cnund*, "birth" > Zargarī *cəzənəzund*, etc. They employed also reversed speech (Arm. *t'arserēn*), turning *hac* "bread", for example, into *c'ah*. The ethnographer Sruanj-teanc' cites the same example but calls it sparrows' language (see *infra*)¹⁴. As we shall see presently, the Armenian felt-makers of Moks at times manipulated words in this way, in order further to complicate their own secret argot.

In his famous discussion, following the funeral oration of Pericles, of the corruption of Athenian society under the pressures of the Peloponnesian War, Thucydides describes how the meaning of words changed: the attributes of a simple and honest nature were derided as naïve, while words describing base and violent qualities came to be praises. But it is the twentieth century, perhaps uniquely, that has provided the case of the transformation of an entire national language into the argot, not of a subculture, but of a dominant, majority criminal culture. Victor Klemperer, who before World War II had been a professor of French literature at Dresden University, became an eyewitness to, and survivor of, the horrors of Nazi Germany, keeping clandestine notes on the transformation by the Germans of their own tongue, once the speech of a civilization, into a criminal argot. After the War he gathered his notes into a book, *Lingua Tertii Imperii*, in which he describes, for instance, how the epithet "fanatical", once a term of opprobrium, became an adjective of approbation. At one point he calls *LTI* a "prison language". It is important to stress that, unlike in the Soviet Union, where writers and others satirized Party jargon and the Russian language became a bulwark of poets against totalitarianism, the majority of Germans seem

¹⁴ [Melikian 2002]; [Adams 2009], p. 37, citing English *nosper* for "person" and *top o' reeb* for "pot of beer", calls this "back slang". My grandmother Bertha Russell (1900–1981), who came from the village of Wolka Turebska near Rozwadów to the Lower East Side of Manhattan in 1906, kept her Yiddish, forgot most of her Polish, and learned English perfectly, both the received type of school and the back slang of the street, whole sentences in which she sometimes recited to me with astonishing speed.

to have found a sense of togetherness in the shared knowledge of their implication in the crimes of their Third Reich. Their criminal argot, this Nazified German, it may be argued, both grew out of this collective degeneracy and served to reinforce and validate it¹⁵.

2. Philosophical and hypothetical languages

Some secret languages have been devised, not to conceal criminal activities, but to restrict esoteric teachings to an intellectual or spiritual elite. Their inventors feared misunderstanding by readers insufficiently prepared, as well as persecution by the orthodox establishment. The philosopher Leo Strauss, himself a refugee from fascism, wrote of such practices in medieval Europe in his famous essay, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*. Zoroastrian sectarians in India, followers of the Parsi priest and esoteric philosopher Dastūr Āzar Kaivān, who flourished in the reign of the emperor Akbar, invented an artificial language for the book of their traditions and teachings, the *Desātir*¹⁶. In a Perso-Turkish milieu of around the 15th or 16th century there was created a language for the use of mystics called *Bāl-a i-Balan*: it displays characteristics of the languages of its inventors, and was probably invented to conceal esoteric teachings from censorious orthodox divines¹⁷.

There are traces of such erudite mystification in Armenian MSS. Fr. Nersēs Akinean cites¹⁸ this autograph of Catholicos Grigoris Aḥt'amarci'i, a poet who delighted also in macaronic verse: *P'ar'k' k'ez kioni: k'ol arek'sagoyñ kisagndi ew Demetri ararič'. Awrñnut'iwn ew p'ar'k'*,

¹⁵ *LTI Notizbuch eines Philologen* was published two years after the war; for an English translation see [Klemperer 2000], esp. p. 76. For the argument that knowledge of Nazi barbarism actually united the Germans, see Kühne 2010. The Nazis also employed a code language of concealment and euphemism; so "resettlement" in both documents and official conversation on the program of the extermination of the Jews meant "liquidation". Yücel Güçlü, a functionary of the Turkish government tasked with promoting denial of the historicity of the Armenian Genocide, regularly uses the same mendacious terminology in his "researches".

¹⁶ [Russell 1993], p. 87.

¹⁷ [Bausani 1954] and 1970, p. 83 f.

¹⁸ [Akinean 1958], p. lxi.

gohut'iwn ew am(enayn) barexawsut'iwn handerj erkrpagut'eamb s(urb) errordut'ean... ("Glory to thee... ? and creator of the hemisphere and of Demeter. Blessing and glory, thanks and all intercession with worship of the holy trinity...") And he cites an earlier example of this enigmatic invocation, from the colophon to a hymnal (*Šarakan*) dated AD 1335, belonging to one Mkrtič' Avtalean of Tigranakert (Amida-Diyarbakir) published by the ethnographer Abp. Garegin Sruanjteanc': *P'ark' k'ez: hon aregsagon kisagndi ew demetri, ararič' yamenayn ar-aracoc' yimanaleac' ew i zgaleac'...* ("Glory to thee... ? creator of the hemisphere and of Demeter, from all creatures both intelligible and tangible...") The word *kion* may be Greek for "pillar"; the *hon arexagon*, perhaps corrupted Greek for "the hexagon", so the invocation might be, an erudite praise of God, the pillar that extends through the six sides of this *kisagund*, "hemisphere", down to the underworld of the earth mother Demeter, that is, Armenian Sandaramet — though in Greek myth it is Atlas, not Zeus, who is the pillar *ouranou te kai khthonos*, "of heaven and earth". If the mysterious *kion* is indeed Greek, then one might cite the conclusion of a magical spell discussed by Ōdabašyan¹⁹: *oč' erknic' siwn ew getinn geran, oč' covun xub, oč' ap'ac' mēf maz busani ew oč' ays banis xap'anumn lini* "neither heaven's pillar nor the ground plank, nor yet the seal of the sea — a hair will not sprout on the palm of the hands any more than there can be a warding off of this spell." The eleventh-century scholar Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni, famed for his erudite verbal obscurities, mentions both Demeter and *kisagund* ("hemisphere") in the same passage of a letter dismissing the magic of Nectanebos (the Egyptian priest-magician who fathered Alexander the Great on the credulous concubine Olympias, in the *Alexander Romance* of Ps.-Callisthenes)²⁰. This would be the earliest collocation of the two easily identifiable marked terms in the code phrase, and thus perhaps the latter's source. And one may cite a colophon, less mythologically enigmatic but still polyglottic, as a further example of learned sacerdotal obscurity cited by Fr. Lewond Ališan from an autograph of the

¹⁹ Ōdabašyan 2000, p. 47, citing his previous article in *Patma-banasirakan handes* 1986.3.

²⁰ Kostaneanc' 1910, letter 49, pp. 116–117.

historian Zak'aria of K'anakeṛ::²¹ *P'ark' k'ez apeniaz simakra ḫmert'ō ḫ Dēou t'antri, a(stua)c im K'(risto)s* "Glory to thee who art without need (Mlr. *abeniyāz*), *simakra* (?), O God (Geor. *ghmert'i*, voc.), O God (Gk. *theos*, gen. sg., and Latin *Deo*), O God (Tk. *tangri*)."

Then there is the language invented as a game or intellectual exercise by one person, sometimes taken up and used by other people to form an in-group, enjoy secrecy, or even create an artificial, amateur subculture not based upon a shared profession or social status or definition. Thus the Oxford Germanic philologist J.R.R. Tolkien as a private hobby invented a number of languages, some influenced by his studies of the *Nibelungenlied* and other Germanic epics, others strongly colored by Finnish, which he admired for its euphony; and this pastime, which he candidly confessed to as "a secret vice", became the basis of the *Lord of the Rings* cycle of epic romance and myth. The Rūštuni language seems to belong to this category — it was for its maker an intriguing and private pastime. But private fantasies, as we can see with Tolkien's vast legacy, spread into popular culture and imagination. A martial empire of alien beings, the Klingons, battle the heroes of the American television and cinematic science fiction series "Star Trek"; and one of the writers of the programs, a linguist, devised a cacophonous, complete — and complex — Klingon language that role-players have adopted and learned²². The particular activities, concerns, and values of a subculture spawn an argot; and it seems the reverse is true, as well, so that an invented language becomes a tool for the creation of an imaginary culture to surround it. Thus, mild-mannered American speakers of Klingon can escape with their hobby from the ubiquitous banalities

²¹ Ališan 1890, p. 178 and facsimile, fig. 69.

²² One might find this material unsuitable to a scholarly paper; but I found out long ago that a number of my Harvard colleagues, superb philologists, are unabashed Trekkies — fans of Star Trek. Others enjoy the *Dune* books, with their generous helpings of Arabic. And I offer a course on H.P. Lovecraft, the American writer of horror stories, who also invented languages and drew material from ancient ones, much as his precursor Edgar Allen Poe did in *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym*. An abridged version of the latter, translated most likely from the French of Baudelaire by one "H.E.V.Č" into Western Armenian, was published by the Vienna Mekhitarists in 1857: *Nandugedc'i Art'ur Korton Bimin pataharnera*.

of “Have a nice day,” “Thank you for caring,” and so on into a distant civilization that possesses very little in the way of phatic communication²³, its only form of greeting being the brusque “What do you want?” My favorite Klingon proverb is “Revenge is the best revenge.” Typical paradigmatic sentences in the Klingon primer include “They are searching for the enemy in order to kill him,” “I don’t care,” and “That helmet suits you.”²⁴ In a way, intergalactic Klingon brings one back, the long way, to the Caucasus; for its inventor, Marc Okrand — as I am informed by my learned Kartvelologist friend Michael Grossman of Widener Library — was inspired by Georgian phonology and idiom: the familiar salutation *Gamarjoba!* means, literally, “Victory!”, not Hello. Klingon proper names such as Kang, Kor, and Torg sound pleasingly brusque to Americans imagining themselves a bit more macho than they are; but such names would not sound outlandish to Armenian ears, attuned to Xorenac‘i’s Tork‘ the Ugly (*angel*). It will be seen that the supposed sounds of foreignness shaped *Ruštuni*, as well.

In contrast to the harsh tones of Klingon one may cite another invented language, J.R.R. Tolkien’s Sindarin, the speech of the delicate and poetic elves, which is as euphonious as Klingon is jarring, and as sweetly eirenic as Klingon is fractious. Typical expressions include “pools of golden water” (*loeg ningloron*) and “silver shining tree” (*galathilion*). Even the battle cry *Lacho calad! Drego morn!* (“Flame light! Flee night!”) has some of the bromide undertaste of such saws as “Better to light a candle than curse the darkness.”²⁵ Esperanto, to be examined presently, is a pleasant sounding tongue, a bit like Italian to the ear. That measured euphony may be one reason it won out over another planned language, the harsh Volapük, which had been its principal competitor in the 19th-century arena. The invented language we are presently to examine from an Armenian MS had a script invented for it and as a substitution cipher for magic spells in Armenian; and Tolkien used both Runic characters and an elegant cursive like old Irish book hand for his

²³ By “phatic” I mean, following Everett 2008, those aspects of language that convey no information but serve rather to maintain social channels.

²⁴ See [Okrand 1985 1992].

²⁵ [Salo 2004; 103, 183, 213].

invented Sindarin. He also loved magic: in what corner of the world is the wizard Gandalf's name not known?

Some invented languages in fiction are used to reflect the aspects of an imagined utopian or dystopian social order. George Orwell's totalitarian Newspeak in the novel *1984*, a parody of Soviet and Nazi perversions of Russian and German, has given us "unpersons", "thought crimes", and a number of other neologisms that are sadly still usable long after the chronological year 1984 has receded into the past; whilst the Pravic of Ursula Le Guin's anarchist planet in *The Dispossessed* reflects its Edenic surroundings by lacking any possessive pronouns. The Sapir-Whorf hypothesis holds that the thought of which a person is capable is circumscribed and determined to a degree by the native language he speaks. Though the theory has not gained general acceptance, and is most strongly opposed by the Chomskian school, Orwell seems to have toyed with it. In *1984* the secret police interrogator O'Brien remarks contentedly to his victim Winston Smith, the hapless protagonist, that in time Newspeak will so mold and limit human perception that thought crime, i.e., dissidence, will be impossible. Aklo, the name for a language of witchcraft in Arthur Machen's novella *The White People* (1899) was adopted by the American writer of horror fantasy, H.P. Lovecraft, as the dark speech of his evil cultists. And most recently Alan Moore in *The Courtyard* presents Aklo, in a sort of Whorfian riff, as a wholly unhuman language that alters fundamentally the perceptions and moral capabilities and judgments of those who learn it, destroying their humanity²⁶.

Yet another sort of invented language altogether is the kind intended to be the very opposite of secret — the planned international language. There are two kinds: the *a priori* type, with an entirely arbitrary and artificial vocabulary meant either to make the categorization of thought more rational or to put all learners on a level playing field, or the *a posteriori* kind — a language based on roots and endings culled from natural languages. Esperanto, invented by Ludwik Zamenhof (1859–1917), a Jewish oculist from Bialystok, is of the latter sort. Its inventor, a witness to the anti-Semitism and pogroms in the Pale of Settlement of the Russian Empire, hoped with his *internacia lingvo* to promote

²⁶ [Rogers 2011].

world peace through mutual understanding, generally, and to eradicate Jew-hatred in particular. In 1887 he published at Warsaw in Russian his booklet outlining the rules and lexicon of his new language²⁷. It is interesting to observe that Zamenhof's contemporary and countryman, Eliezer Ben Yehuda, championed another sort of invented language (in a sense) — Modern Hebrew — after reading in Russian translation George Eliot's novel, *Daniel Deronda*, on a Jew who resolves to revive his ancestral tongue in its homeland. Ben Yehuda emigrated to the Ottoman-ruled land of Israel in 1882, where his descendants still flourish and the language he revived is the native tongue of some seven and a half million citizens of a successful, democratic modern country. Zamenhof and his family, though sympathetic to Zionism, remained in Warsaw: his daughter Lidia (b. 1904) helped to lead the Esperanto movement after his death and embraced also the universalist Baha'i religion. Zamenhof himself had created a kind of universal ethical religion, Hillelismo (after the first-century Jewish sage Hillel), which he later renamed Homaranismo, which was to exist parallel to older and separate faiths as a way to remind people of their common humanity.

Hitler, who was anything but enamored of internationalism, humanism, and universalism, singled out Esperanto for attack in *Mein Kampf* as part of an imagined Jewish conspiracy²⁸; and his henchman Rein-

²⁷ Given the human character, it is a conundrum how a universal language could ameliorate matters. In a popular science fiction novel the mild-mannered English survivor of the destruction of planet Earth, adrift in outer space, is enabled to understand diatribes in the non-human Vogon language — and, worse, Vogon poetry — by sticking a Babel fish in his ear. Adams 2005, p. 60, comments: "the poor Babel fish, by effectively removing all barriers to communication between different races and cultures, has caused more and bloodier wars than anything else in the history of creation." So it might seem, in Adams' cosmos at least, a good job that God knocked the tower down.

²⁸ *Mein Kampf* is today a bestseller in Arabic and other translations throughout the Islamic world, along with the fictitious *Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. Esperanto is not popular there, although in the early 20th century the Iranian Baha'i leaders encouraged its study and use. There are about 500 Esperantists in Israel, according to a friend; and Jerusalem has a Zamenhof Street. Michael Chabon, an American writer, imagined the counterfactual history of a temporary, Yiddish-speaking Jewish state in Sitka, Alaska in his novel *The*

hard Heydrich made special efforts to ensure that the Nazi régime suppressed the language. He also compiled lists of Esperantists for arrest and execution. Zamenhof's study and library were destroyed during the German terror bombing of Warsaw in September 1939. Most members of the Zamenhof family were shot in Nazi prisons soon after, or gassed at Treblinka during the liquidation in 1942 of the Warsaw Ghetto. In considering the contrasting fortunes of the Ben Yehuda and Zamenhof clans, one thinks of the comparably parallel fates of two Jewish scholars from ostensibly civilized Germany: Gershom Scholem, an ardent Zionist, focused his studies on Judaica, emigrated to Israel after World War I, and embarked upon a career of many decades at the young Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Scholem's close friend Walter Benjamin, a universalist whose scholarship was of a correspondingly broader, socialist-humanist character, elected to remain in Europe and died in the Hitler era. One might conclude that the language called "One who hopes" is based upon a hope that is quixotically vain. Yet the language lives, and the number of speakers may be as large as some three million worldwide. Another estimate is but half a million, but even that figure is a thousand times the combined number of all other speakers of all other invented languages. There are still congresses of Esperantists in many countries around the globe, and one Esperantophone rock musician speaks it as a mother tongue alongside the natural language of his native country, Denmark²⁹. Esperanto has evolved the forms of a true living language: it has slang (e.g., *krokodili*, "to speak a national language in a setting when one should be speaking Esperanto"), obscenity and vulgarity (*pisi*, "to piss"; *fiki*, "to fuck"; *kaldu* "scram" from *kuru al la Diablo* "go to the devil"; and *fikumin*, "fuck off"), and new idiomatic constructions based upon its morphological peculiarities (-*end*- "which has to be" + pres. verbal ending > *endas* "is necessary"; *kafumi*, "to relax with friends over coffee", verbal inf. based on "coffee" with -*um*-infix)³⁰. One member of the founding family, Zamenhof's grandson Ludovic, survived World War II, and addressed an Esperantist congress

Yiddish Policemen's Union (2007). The action begins, appropriately, at the Zamenhof Hotel.

²⁹ See [Okrent 2010] for a general survey of Esperanto, Klingon, etc.

³⁰ [Schubert 1989, 134–146, 204.]

at Mainz in 1958. Delegates were nervous about what he might say, in Germany. But these were his words: "It has been a tradition in former Congresses, especially those before the war, when the Zamenhof family was in the literal sense numerous, that some member of the family should greet the Congress in the name of the family. I myself have had the honor of doing this several times... Today I should like to make a change, and instead of greeting you in the name of the Zamenhof family, I would like to greet you all, gathered together in this Congress, as the great family of Zamenhof in the literal sense of the word."³¹ It is hard not to respect an undertaking that engenders such perseverance and nobility of spirit, and one reflects that the Esperantists may well be among the redeemers of the honor of the human species, and not the losers.

It is worthy of note that Armenians figure most prominently in the history of Esperanto in the Transcaucasus. In Tiflis, Hayk Artem'evich Astvatsatriants (Astuacatreanc') from 15 March 1910 published and edited the journal *Kaŭkaza Esperantisto* ("The Caucasian Esperantist"), which featured articles in Esperanto, Russian, Armenian, and Georgian on art and music, *belles lettres*, and the theater, and provided also lessons in Esperanto and a review of the press. At Baku from 1911, Abel Ivanovich Ter-Bagdasarian (Tēr-Baḏdasarean) published, and Yakov Kalustovich Khodzhamir (Xoḡamir) edited, the commercial and humor paper *Nerkarar* (Arm., "The House Painter") in Esperanto, Russian, and Armenian³². The Esperanto movement suffered periods of censorship and repression in Tsarist Russia; and in the Stalinist period was wholly banned, with many of its members killed, in the Soviet Union. But in the late 1980s my friend Oksana Fyodorovna Nikol'skaya encountered an employee of the Tbilisi Botanical Garden who proudly told her he had translated into Esperanto the Georgian national romantic epic *The Man in the Panther's Skin* of Shota Rustaveli. And Esperantists are very active in Russia today.

There is the most interesting case of a little-known *a priori* universal language invented by an Armenian: Karapet T'ənkərean (Tenger, Tingir, *nom de plume* Tg(h)ransar, 1754–1808), son of Grigor *Hoca*,

³¹ See [Boulton 1960], 217; on Zamenhof's daughter, her Baha'i ties, and her fate, see [Heller 1985].

³² See [Vlasov 2011], pp. 57–58 and 58 n. 1.

a member of the aristocratic Armenian *amira* class of Constantinople, sired three boys and one girl. The eldest, Petros (Western Arm. Bedros), was born to his mother Mariam on 3 Sept. 1799 and at the age of twelve was enrolled as an acolyte of the Armenian Catholic seminary of the Mxit'arists (Ger. Mechitharisten) at Vienna. Ordained on 1 Nov. 1818, he returned to Constantinople but left for Bucharest in 1828 following the persecution of the Armenian Catholics of the capital by the Armenian Patriarchate. He then went to Vienna and Rome, gave up holy orders, and in 1844 settled in the wealthy suburb of Boudja (Tk. Buca) near Smyrna (Izmir). He had studied by then Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, Italian, English, French, and Sanskrit, besides Turkish, German, and, of course, the Classical dialect of his native Armenian. A few years later his well-to-do family built him a fine stone house on a hill at Aspra Khōmata ("White Lands"), where he labored to invent the vocabulary, script, and grammar of *Seh-lerai*, whose name means "universal language" (*hamašxarhayin lezu*; it is mentioned with various other spellings, including Sahleray and Sehlerai). He published an ABC of the language at Smyrna in 1864: the script he invented for it consists of a complex system of 19 consonantal characters to which various additional marks are added for the purpose of voicing or devoicing; a vertical bar signifies the place of a vowel, and smaller marks are added for the 12 vowels (these include Armenian and French diphthongs). (See Plates 8–11.) Bedros composed poems in his new language; and his disciples read these in French translation. In his alphabet he engraved on a plaque that he hung out over his house door the Seh-lerai word *Ayzeratand* (or *Ayzeradant* if the word is to be read in W. Arm.), that is, "Temple of Wisdom" (*tačar imastut'ean*) in his new language. Although the name of Bedros' Mozartian *Weisheitstempel* is polysyllabic and decidedly Irano-Armenian in feel, from the one existing sentence in Seh-lerai it would seem its inventor aimed at a monosyllabic system, comparable perhaps to the planned, *a priori* language of Gabriel de Foigny (*La Terre australe connue*, 1676)³³. The name Tg(h)ransar sounds rather like an Armenian compound of Tigran (the name of the great Artaxiad king, r. 95–56 BC) and *-sar*, "head, summit", but it apparently means *noēkē kinēsis*, "mental motion" in Seh-lerai.

³³ See [Eco 1998, 77–95].

Bedros was widely loved and respected for his kindness and learning. One day in 1881, feeling death approaching, he lay down on a couch prepared in his temple: his disciples found his body at peace on the morn. He had been in life a strict vegetarian, so one has the impression that the language accompanied a mystical or humanitarian and universalistic teaching, an invented culture like the one Zamenhof was to conceive later on. In the September and October 1921 issues of the Greek Esperantist journal *Bizantio*, Dr. Anakreōn Stamatiadēs (Eng. Stamatiadis, 1 Sept. 1868–24 Jul. 1964), a prominent physician and serious Esperantist (his Greek-Esperanto dictionary is standard and has been reprinted in recent years), published in Greek and Esperanto a summary of Bedros' little booklet on the script he had invented for his language. The grammar and dictionary of Seh-lerai, though prepared for publication, seem never to have been printed. That was the year of the demise of the postwar Turkish administration, that had, even half-heartedly, prosecuted the perpetrators of the Armenian Genocide; and in 1922 the invading army of Mustafa Kemal ("Atatürk") burned Smyrna to the ground and massacred or drove its Greek and Armenian Christian populations into the sea. The cosmopolitan culture and hopes of Bedros Tenger died in Turkey perhaps even more cruelly than did those of Zamenhof; for as we have seen, Esperanto rose from the ashes, whilst Seh-lerai was very nearly relegated to oblivion³⁴. The hill where

³⁴ [Ayvazean 1893; 91–95; Pōtosean 1951; 34–39; and Russell 2010]. Albani and Buonarroti 1994, p. 371 s.v. *Sehlerai*, report that the inventor of Seh-lerai published at Smyrna in 1864 under the pseudonym Tghransar (with *-gh-* in Latin letters and *gamma* in Greek) a description of his language, but misspell the name of the book. Its correct title is *Ans haïlanzar ou Alpha-Gnomonomic de Sehlerai*. They provide a sample sentence with translation: *Rum shai yran bes lerai vom, shaiz il le sam lerai iun sim, mim serai vam shaiz il le som* "Nel mondo sarà preferita una lingua scientifica unica à numerose lingue con una scienza unica." [Drezen 1967; 61], has this notice: *La libro de Tghransar portis la nomon "Alphabetarion Ansailanzar Sahlerai" kaj estis eldonita en Smyrna. La eldonjaro de la libro ne estas konata, sed lau la havataj informoj ĝi estis publikigita en ĉiu okazo ne pli malfrue ol ĉe la fino de la XVIII jarcento.* ("Tghransar's book bore the name *Alphabetarion Ansailanzar Sahlerai* and was published at Smyrna. The date of publication of the book is not known, but according to the information we possess it was published at any event no

Bedros' Temple of Wisdom once stood is called to this day *Tıngır tepe* ("hill"), and statues of the Persian Sufi poet, theologian, and saint Mevlana Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī stand at the summit. (See Plate 12.)

There is yet another category of invented language: the hypothetical one based on mathematical ideas that can overcome the normal boundaries of rational thought as expressed by means of natural languages. In his novella *Youth Without Youth* the Romanian scholar of Oriental languages and comparative religions Mircea Eliade imagines a character attempting to discover the source of all language. Despairing and alone, at seventy, he travels from his hometown to the capital, Bucharest, to end his life. It is Easter Sunday. He is struck by lightning and rejuvenated, endowed with the preternatural ability to learn a new language almost instantaneously. He begins to keep his diary, partly for his own cognitive purposes and partly for secrecy, in an invented language that

later than the end of the 18th century." [Tr. by J.R.R.]) But that would place the invention of the language at or before the date of Bedros' birth; and this erroneous notice seems to be the source of a similar assertion by the linguist Mario Pei in his *One Language for the World* (New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1968, p. 147) — that Sehlerai (as he calls it) was invented around 1800 but published in 1921. The latter date is erroneous as well and must refer to the date of Stamatiadis' Esperanto translation in *Bizantio* (Tgransar 1921). A copy of Tgransar's book, perhaps the only one in existence, was given in 1928 to Aram Andonian, the first librarian of the AGBU Nubarian Library at Paris (and author of *Mec oçirə* ["The Great Crime"], one of the first histories of the Armenian Genocide); the present director, Dr. Raymond Kevorkian, has very kindly provided to me a scan of it, which I plan to reprint with a study of its contents, which include comments on the phonology of Armenian, Hebrew, Russian, and Arabic (with characters in the original typefaces of these languages). I have forwarded the scan to the Esperanto divisions of the Austrian National Library at Vienna, the British Library at London, the Library of Congress at Washington, DC, and the Widener Library at Harvard; so this extremely rare and unusual work, which, it seems, has not been seen for some ninety years, can now be widely consulted. I am grateful to my colleague Professor Valentina Calzolari of the University of Geneva for her suggestion that I contact the Nubar Library. Vağarşag Seropyan (Vağarşak Serop'ean) published a biographical article with useful references, "Tıngıryan, Bedros", in the *Yaşamları ve yapıtlarıyla Osmanlılar ansiklopedisi* ["Encyclopedia of the lives and deeds of the Ottomans"], Istanbul, 1999, vol. 2, p. 624.

can transcend both spatial differentiation and temporal sequentiality. To do this it employs the *teoria ensamblurilor* (Romanian, “theory of aggregates”), a semantic refinement of set theory allowing for a set not located in a time-space sequence³⁵. So Eliade’s character can express logically in his language concepts that can be phrased within space-time only as paradoxes or not at all. One is reminded here of a reverse process in language — that of endowing a simple natural word with greatly expanded, trans-rational semantic content — that happened in actual history: the Russian Orthodox mystical practitioners of *imiaslavie* “Name-worship” declared that the name of God was, simply, God (i.e., any arbitrary name of God in any language was His ineffable one); and mathematicians inspired by them conceived of God as the temporally and spatially paradoxical but nonetheless conceivable set of all sets, i.e., a set including itself³⁶. Shortly after citing Eliade’s assertion in another work, *Myth and Reality*, that the purpose of mythic ritual is to overcome time, the American science-fiction writer Philip K. Dick in his novel *Valis* has his protagonist start thinking in a language of two thousand years ago — in a properly Eliadian moment of linguistic and cognitive transcendence he then “saw the ancient world appropriate to that language”³⁷. Eliade, a committed fascist, gave the hypothetical language of his lightning-struck, immortal superman an otherworldly, archetypal, even mythopoetic quality. James Joyce, a contemporary whose views could scarcely be more different than Eliade’s, wrote his hymn to a plain, mortal Irishman: *Finnegan’s Wake* is an alliterative, encyclopedic deluge of argots and languages and word games that critics of the 1930s called an “Esperanto of the unconscious”, “an inter-racial language... to express the collective inner vision of mankind.” Invented languages and argots crop up in the flood of the text: “Volapucky” (after Volapük), “florilingua”, “sheltafocal” (cf. the Irish argot called Shelta, which Joyce studied)³⁸.

³⁵ [Eliade 1988], p. 104; and Burge 1977.

³⁶ Graham and Kantor 2009. I wish to express my gratitude to my esteemed colleague and friend Prof. Loren Graham for the gift of his stimulating and illuminating book.

³⁷ [Dick 2011], p. 39.

³⁸ [Schotter 2010], pp. 91, 93.

3. The St. Petersburg Manuscript

And so we come to the Armenian MS with its invented language and three invented ciphers. (See Plates 1–6.) The complete description of St. Petersburg Or. Inst. MS A 29 by Prof. Yuzbashian is translated in the appendix. He mentions the three Armenian cryptograms therein: there are keys in the MS to all three; but only the third recorded, henceforth to be called the Third Script, is actually employed in the writing of texts. None of the ciphers is known to exist anywhere else; so they attracted the attention of A.G. Abrahamyan, who provides all three keys in a description of the MS in his work on Armenian cryptography, with a reference to the 1894 publication of Ałaneanc³⁹. Abrahamyan does not seem to have examined the MS, and relied upon copies of the cipher keys made by P(aruyr) Muradyan at Leningrad. The first cipher, on fol. 1a (not 37b, *pace* Abrahamyan), is based upon the third, on fol. 44a. The second, on fol. 37b, consists of letters imitative of the Devanagari script without the upper horizontal bar, but so complex and elaborate as to be quite impractical. The third, which is spare and elegant, was intended for use in writing an “alternative” (Arm. *aylakan*) language to which the copyist gives the name *ruštuni*. But except for three words immediately following the key, it is used in the MS only for encrypting Armenian — for the most part, magical spells and incantations. These are deciphered, transcribed, translated, and annotated in the appendix: they have not been published before.

All three are simple substitution ciphers, and the keys follow the order of the Armenian alphabet, with the additional ligature or digraph for *ew* (“and”) and the characters for the letters *ō* and *f* (in the Armenian alphabet these were added in the Middle Ages to the original 36 letters of Maštoc⁴). Abrahamyan writes of the MS, “About ten pages of text of magico-astrological [Arm. *axtarakan*] content are encrypted using the third key. Apparently it was employed for the purpose of writing spells [*p’it’i-ner*]. These are of no historical value so we consider it superfluous to provide numerous examples. It is not difficult to observe that the three cryptograms cited are secret scripts made of complex lines and could not be widely employed. So it was. Except for the Leningrad MS

³⁹ [Abrahamyan 1978], 158–159.

considered here, no other text encrypted with these ciphers has been discovered.”⁴⁰ It is manifestly untrue that the Third Script is complex or unusable. Quite to the contrary, close examination of the MS shows that the copyist wrote it swiftly, fluently, and with a delicate and confident calligraphic flare. Nor is it true, except in the most literal sense, that the use of the Third Script was confined to MS A 29: the cardboard of the inner cover at the beginning of the MS is made of discarded bits of text, mainly jottings it would seem, in Georgian, in standard Mesropian Armenian, and in the Third Script and Armenian language, all most likely in our anonymous author’s hand. One scrap reads: *meṛaw ibrew amac’ wat’snic’ [sic!] nasur k’alak’i or ew asi aristotel* “He who is called also Aristotle died around the age of sixty years in the city of *nasur.” Another scrap in mixed Third Script and Mesropian is in Armenian too narrow to yield any entire word excerpt *calr* (“laughter, ridicule”). It would seem that our writer, if indeed he was the inventor of his cipher, had used it for various purposes in various places over some, probably many, years. Though he did not create a universal language to be written with it, as Bedros Tenger did at Smyrna a few generations later, or a mythology to embody it, as Tolkien did a few generations after that, he was interested in magic and mythological lore (see the text on the *hamasp’iwr* flower) and he did create an *a priori* language with the intention of learned application (as well as obscenity!). His script is based largely upon the forms of the letters of the Armenian and Georgian alphabets, in the latter case particularly the *nuskhuri*, or minuscule hand, of the *khutsuri*, i.e., Classical Georgian script, which is itself in its origins a modification by St. Mesrop Maštoc’ of the Armenian *erkat’agir* (uncial, lit. “iron letter”) alphabet he had devised at the beginning of the fifth century⁴¹. Another, more famous countryman and contemporary of our scribe, hailed from Tiflis, the Georgian capital: the

⁴⁰ [Abrahamyan 1978], p. 159.

⁴¹ The *Vita* of the saint, *Vark’ Maštoc’i*, by his pupil Koriwn, mentions that Maštoc’ devised alphabets for Armenian, Georgian, and Caucasian Albanian (Aḡuan) — the first surviving MS in the latter, a palimpsest, was discovered and published nearly two decades ago by Alexidze and Mahé. On the Arm. alphabet, including the cipher called *Atuanic’ gir*, see [Russell 1994 and 1994(b)]. For tables of the Georgian scripts see [Fossey 1948, 180].

bard Sayat' Nova, who died in 1795 (three years after the stamp in our MS). The poet's *devt'er* or *tetrak* — the manuscript book of his own songs — is written in two alphabets, curvilinear Georgian *mxedruli* and the standard Armenian minuscule called *bolorgir*. But the latter is used for Sayat' Nova's compositions in Tatar (i.e., Azeri Turkic), while the songs in Armenian are written in Georgian script⁴². Page 103 of the *devt'er* mixes the Armenian and Georgian alphabets⁴³. Since the bard often employed Tatar, Armenian, Georgian, and Persian all together in a single song, it is not hard to imagine that the same sense of artistic play and interchange might have motivated his idiosyncratic manner of writing. So the mixture of Georgian and Armenian is, if anything, quite normal for the time and place.

The order of the letters of the Third Script is the same as that of standard Armenian. B is a combination of Arm. p and b; Z, an extended form of z; Ē resembles the ē of an earlier and then still extant and flourishing Armenian cryptogram called “Aḥuan” or “dove-script” whose extensive use I have discussed elsewhere; (see Plate 7)⁴⁴ Է may be com-

⁴² It is curious that although Sayat' Nova had scribal abilities in Armenian — towards the end of his life he copied a MS of the *Narek* prayer-book at the monastery of Sanahin — his Mesropian letters are rather choppy and awkward, whilst his *mxedruli* shows a fluid and serendipitous calligraphic ease. And it is that script he chose to write his native, Armenian tongue. It would seem that in the consciousness of the Armenians in Georgia, the Georgian alphabet *was not foreign*.

⁴³ [Č'ugaszyan 1963.]

⁴⁴ See Russell 2010. At Erevan I had the opportunity to study Matenadaran 6644, which is the oldest and richest MS for texts encoded in the “Aḥuan” cipher, which the author of the MS calls *gawazanay gir*, “the script of the scepter/crozier”. It is, as one might expect, eclectic and with a leaning towards the occult. There are texts on astrology, on other cryptograms (notably, on fol. 132v, the very old one consisting of vertical lines and dots that is found even on Cross stones and may be derived from the appearance of Urartean cuneiform inscriptions on steles Armenians saw and sometimes co-opted, indeed, as *xač'k'ars*), and (fols. 107v–108v.) on the numerological significance of the Mesropian script: *ew zn kat(a)r(ea)l t'iw ē, isk vec'ic' vec'n lz ē* “and z [the sixth letter] is a perfect number; and six times six is XXXVI” — the Armenian alphabet has 36 letters, and the magical text *Vec' hazareak* (“The Book of the Six Thousand”) plays on its Pythagorean symbolism. See [Russell 2013(b)].

pared to “Aḥuan” ə; T’ is a modification of t’; I is an upside-down, reversed *nusxuri* i; L is a modification of l; C may be a form of “Aḥuan” c; K is based on Georgian k; J is Arm. j with a bar added; Ł is a doubled ł; Ć is the preceding symbol upside-down; M is a flipped-over *nusxuri* m; Y is an “Aḥuan” y on its side; Š is a shortened form of the preceding character for n; O is based on *nusxuri* o; Č’ seems to be a lower-case č’ on its side; P is Arm. lower-case p without its long vertical bar; ĵ is based on *nusxuri* d; Ř and S are reversed forms of each other; V is an elaborated Arm. v; and F is based on *nusxuri* r. T is a lower-case Latin t or cruciform. K’ the 36th letter of Armenian, the last in the classical alphabet, is dignified by the Chi-Rho chrismon to signify Christ’s presence as Omega (last letter) as well as first, in the standard script. In the Third Script it is a circle, the ancient symbol of perfection⁴⁵.

As Prof. Yuzbashian noted in his description of the MS, there is a table of the letters of the Russian alphabet, with the Old Slavonic names of each letter (*Az, Buki*, etc.), towards the end of MS A 29. This reminds one that it belonged to the period in which Russia was becoming the dominant power in the Transcaucasus and immediately preceding the liberation in 1828 by Russia of the Khanates of Erevan and Nakhichevan and other areas — the ancient heart of eastern Armenia including the plain of Ararat, the sacred mountain itself, and the holy city Echmiadzin. Down to the mid-18th century the Armenian community at New Julfa of Isfahan, with its far-flung trading network, had been the center of the nation’s commercial and cultural life outside the domains of the Ottoman Sultan; and Julfa Armenians shifted some of the balance of trade to the Transcaucasus corridor. They also forged links with the Russian Empire: in the 17th century Armenians had become established at Astrakhan on the north shore of the Caspian. With commercial expansion came emancipatory political activism.

⁴⁵ It is noteworthy that the 36th and final letter of the Tengwar table of letters invented by Tolkien for Elvish and other languages of Middle Earth is likewise a circle — of anomalous shape when compared to the rest (Tolkien 1955, p. 1092). It is unlikely this is merely fortuitous and without symbolic purpose; for Tolkien was a meticulous calligrapher from early childhood, and employed a hand based on 10th- and 11th-century models for both his English and his invented Tengwar (see [Hammond and Scull 1995; 201–202]).

The dawn of the 18th century saw the mission of the Armenian Israyēl Ōri to the court of Peter I the Great (1682–1725) to plead for Russian liberation of the Christians of Armenia. Following his successful campaigns against the Swedes, the Tsar, urged on by the petitions of the Armenian *meliks* (hereditary landed nobility, heirs to the ancient *naxarar*-doms) of Arc‘ax (Karabagh), crossed the river Terek in the North Caucasus in 1722. The savage repression of non-Muslims by the Iranian Nāder Šāh in the 1740s signaled the end for the Armenians of the power of the New Julfa global network, and the need for political protection by a Christian power. Yet the Russian southward advance was very gradual until Catherine II the Great (1762–1796) pressed Russian claims and concluded an alliance with the Georgian king Erekle II (1762–1798). In 1795 the Persian Qajars sacked Tiflis, the Russians retreated, then advanced once more and annexed Georgia and abolished its native monarchy in 1801. Between 1809 and 1812 Russia continued to absorb territory to the south, including the important Armenian center of Akhalkalaki⁴⁶. Though the Armenian Church cautiously avoided political entanglements, whether in overtures to Russia or rebellion against the Muslim powers, the gifted Catholicos Simeon of Erevan (1763–1780) took steps to consolidate the authority of Echmiadzin as the Mother See of the Church, reducing the centrifugal authority of other jurisdictions and defending the integrity of Armenian landed and other properties on the plain of Ararat and in the immediate vicinity of the holy city, from Muslim encroachment. But he still ordered that the pathbreaking manifesto calling for Armenian national liberation be burned. This was the *Nor tetrak or koč‘i yordorak* (“The New Pamphlet called Exhortation”) of two New Julfa Armenians at Madras, Nersēs Baṛamean and Yakob Šahamirean⁴⁷. MS A 29 bears the seal of one Grigor from 1792. So despite the lack of a colophon one can be quite confident that it was written in the late 18th century, at a time when Armenians were using ciphers actively and often. The author lived in Georgia: there is Georgian writing in the cartonnage and the shapes of

⁴⁶ See [Bourmoutian 1998; 3–6].

⁴⁷ For a translation of the *Jambṛ* “Chamber” — a primary documentary source on the life and politics of the Ararat region in this period — see Bourmoutian 2009.

a number of the cipher characters are based on the Georgian *nusxuri* hand, as discussed earlier; and the table of the Cyrillic alphabet suggests the pounding hoofbeats of the Cossacks' mounts could be heard getting louder and louder.

Here is the discussion of the MS and its context, by Fr. Ałaneanc', in his chronicle of the history of the Armenian Church in the eighteenth century, in my translation and with my comments and elucidations in square brackets⁴⁸:

"Till now only one sort of cryptogram is known. It is well known that during the clamor about the conflict of David and Daniel at the beginning of this century the parties of the two opposing Catholical sees had no other means available to them save to destroy each other's capabilities and so obtain victory. Fr. Nersēs of Aštarak [a village near Erevan], who was later to become Catholicos [supreme patriarch] of All Armenians, belonged to Daniel's party. The people of this party, in order to keep their correspondence secret, employed a form of cryptographic script in the place of Armenian when writing to each other. As some of their letters are preserved in the library of Holy Echmiadzin [holy see of the Armenian Apostolic Church, near Erevan], the late Abp. Gabriel Ayvazeian succeeded in finding the key and reading them. Some of these were penned by the hand of Catholicos Daniel himself. Fr. Ayvazian's reading is mentioned in M. Msereanc', *Patmut 'iwn kat 'ulikosac Ėjmiacni* ["History of the Catholicos of Echmiadzin"] and in A. Eric'ean's *Niwt'er Nersēs V-i kensagrut'ean* ["Materials towards a Biography of Nersēs the Fifth"]. Thereafter an article authored by one 'Miaban' ["Monk"] appeared in the January 1888 issue of Ararat in which the author, on grounds unknown to me, called the cipher 'Nersēsian', rejected Fr. Ayvazeian's reading in its entirety, and claimed the honor of primary decipherment for himself. He supposed the cipher to have been devised by 'Nersēs V', though he advanced no proof of this. Scarcely two months had passed when in the April issue T'. Zak'arean, a student at Petersburg, who had studied at Echmiadzin during the tenure as principal of the late Abp. Ayvazeian, published an article with a rather convincing factual demonstration that Ayvazeian had read a number of the encoded letters for the first time long before, in 1868–1869; so the hon-

⁴⁸ Ałaneanc' 1894, cols. 842–846, tr. from Armenian mine.

or of priority belonged not to 'Monk' but to Abp. Gabriel. So much for our knowledge of Armenian cryptograms. But the present Memorial in our opinion sheds new light on the matter. One *mahtesi* [i. e., Arabic *muqaddasī*, an Armenian Christian who had made the pilgrimage to the "holy (city)" of Jerusalem] Yōnan, from Axalc'xa [an Armenian town in southern Georgia], and Simeon Catholicos in Holy Echmiadzin, corresponded in a similar cryptogram 'newly devised' as early as 23 July 1766 in order to conceal their dogged efforts in opposition to the spread of Catholicism. It is not known who invented this 'newly contrived writing', but it is not hard to surmise that Simeon Catholicos, who could resort to many techniques with his intelligence and skill at contrivance, could have invented without difficulty such a cipher to suit his purposes. It is a fact at any rate that the cryptogram was invented before *mahtesi* Yōnan left Axalc'xa, since Simeon was already acquainted with the manner of its writing and was employing the same in his encrypted messages to Yōnan. One must assume, even as the usage of the phrase 'newly invented' indicates, that the cryptogram was entirely new, since it was employed for the sole purpose of keeping letters secret. One must infer from this that its existence was unknown to anybody else and Simeon could thus have invented it and taught it to *mahtesi* Yōnan, whom he dispatched with some instructions to Axalc'xa. But this is only a likely supposition and we are not prepared at this point to assert it as fact, since we do not possess even one of those letters that might allow us to shape an idea about the cipher. We do not know it or what it was like. In the time of the Catholicosate of Simeon, Catholicos Daniel was already a fairly well known cleric. The man of letters Melk'ised in his *Čar govut'ean goveleac'* ["Oration of praise of the praiseworthy"] devotes an entire chapter of praise to him... Fr. Nersēs, who in his own words (*Amenayn Hayoc' kat'ulikosner XIX darum* ["Catholicos of All Armenians in the 19th Century"], by A. Eric'ean, Tiflis, 1892) was in 1816 already 46 years of age, studied in the days of the Catholicate of Simeon at Holy Echmiadzin in the school newly erected by Simeon himself. So the two of them, both Daniel and Nersēs especially — for the latter spent all his childhood and youth in the monastery of Echmiadzin — could have been acquainted with the 'Simonian cryptogram'. It would not be improper or entirely without foundation to consider that Nersēs might thus have used the cryptographic symbols of Simeon

Catholicos. In the expectation that the future will enlighten us about the situation by revealing the encrypted correspondence of Simeon Catholicos and *mahtesi* Yōhan, and to satisfy the interest of philologists, we present here some information of importance to Armenian cryptography. These days, by fortunate circumstance, we acquired a few manuscripts, one of which is of particular importance in this regard. It is a booklet [Arm. *grk'oyk*] of modern date, in our estimation a product of the end of the last century [i.e., the 18th century] or the beginning of this, written by a fairly unskilled writer in an ugly notary hand, on crude paper, half of the book yellowish and half of it blue. [This is A 29.] It contains various short writings but the most interesting of its contents are the Armenian cryptograms. The book is undated and has no colophon, and it is not known who the author was. In only one place, on fol. 45, in minuscule [Arm. *bolorgir*], are these words: *i melsamac jahānkal yakobē ew grigorē* ["by the sinful torchbearers Yakob and Grigor"]. Whether these names belong to the two poems adjacent to the line, which form an acrostic of both names, or to the whole book, is not known. The book contains three ciphers. 1. On the very first page of the book is a cipher ABC in the order of the Armenian alphabet, with the Armenian plaintext written above each character. At the head of the ABC, in the letters of another type of cipher [the Third Script, actually], is inscribed this heading: *ayl imm kerp tar'k'* ["letters of another type"]; and below, in the letters of both cipher types, [i.e., both this one and the Third Script], is written, *nōtr tar'k' en aysokik'* ["these are notary letters"]. The letters are employed to express one thoughts in Armenian words that are concealed. The first system is not used at all in the book. 2. On page 75 of the book is a second cryptographic alphabet in Armenian order, number, and equivalence. But these letters have their own special language. On the following page [fol. 37b] the names of the letters of the cipher are given: *ah, bof, gam, doh, eh, zēfa, ēs, əp', t'ov, žimla, in, lin, xōs, crva, kuk, hōvt'a, jul, tway, čič, mirvat', yi, narut', šō, obi, č'uk', p'raṽ, fōm, rēli, sov, vrxa, trōi, rōsi, c'un, wrē, p'ap', k'rōm, ewta* [for the diphthong/digraph *ew*], *ōri, f'rasi*. Immediately beneath these is written, *Aylakan lezu or ew asi ruštuni* ["An alternative language which is also called *ruštuni*": the word *aylakan*, which I translate "alternative" and Yuzbashian in his catalogue seems to have understood as *uslovnyi*, Rus. "provisional, conditional, hypothetical", is not stan-

dard Armenian and it is not clear whether by it the writer of the MS meant a hypothetical, invented language of his own or one he has learned in which other words are substituted for Armenian]. It is unknown why this language is called *ruštuni*. We do not know whether this was the inventor's name or whether he had some connection to Rštunik' [the region on the southern shore of Lake Van, directly north of Moks] — and the book affords no idea. Thereafter follows a fourteen-page glossary of the language, which we present here for those interested. This second type of cipher is not used in the book either, except for a few words, which were erased by a later hand and can be read only with difficulty. All the letters of the ABC were likewise erased, and we were barely able, with the assistance of learned analysts, to read them⁴⁹. 3. On the reverse side of the glossary, page 90 of the book, is inscribed the ABC of a third cipher, which has this title: *ays lezui tārḱ's ays ē kerp aybubēnk'* ["These are the letters of this language, the shape of the ABC's" by which one should, presumably, understand the *ruštuni* language immediately preceding]. And below in this cipher, with the Armenian letter equivalents beneath, is written, *t'agaworesc'ē Tēr yawitean* ["May the Lord reign eternal"], and *ayl ews bārḱ'* ["some more, other words", i.e., in *ruštuni*]: *milduvēwk' tramabanut'iwn/ sēlduvēwk' čartasanut'iwn/ jēmsavēwk' k'erakanut'iwn* ["*milduvēwk'* logic/ *sēlduvēwk'* rhetoric/ *jēmsavēwk'* grammar"]. This ABC is employed thereafter, right to the end of the book, in many places for various medical and magical purposes, and for potions. We print the three cryptograms here with their Armenian equivalents. There is no further information about Armenian cryptography. In the newspaper *Azgasēr* ["Patriot"], edited by M[esrop] T'ahādean, in the 105th number for the year 1847 (14th August, p. 261), appears this notice: 'In the list of MSS

⁴⁹ This second script looks a bit like an ersatz Devanagari shorn of the top bar most letters have; and the character for m in particular is identical to the m of present-day Gujarati, where the bar is lost. Sayat' Nova, the bard of Tiflis contemporary with our writer, may have traveled to India; travelers from northern India left graffiti at the "fire temple" of Baku; and in any case populous and well-to-do Armenian communities of merchants from New Julfa flourished in India in the late 18th century. So it is quite possible for the inventor of the cipher to have seen a sample of Sanskrit script at some point.

sent to us by the relatives of the Ēnfičians we read “The *arhest grč’ut’ean* [“scribal craft”] of Frs. Gēorg and Aristakēs”, in which are contained some three hundred symbols.’ We considered for a moment that those symbols might be cryptographic. But from subsequent investigation it became clear that this very MS volume had been acquired by the library of the Lazarev academy in Moscow and the symbols [Arm. *nšanagrēr*] of Gēorg and Aristakēs are the same that the late M[krtič’] Ēmin published in his translation of Movsēs Xorenac’i and that Is. Yarut’iwneanc’ printed in his *Hayoc’ gir* [“Armenian Writing”], and have no connection to cryptography.”

Ałaneanc’ alludes in the above discussion to two letters written in the “code of Nersēs of Aštarak” that were published in *Ararat* in 1888. It is appreciably different from the three ciphers of MS A 29 in the shape and style of the letters, though it is, again, a simple substitution cipher. Fr. Yovhannēs Karbec’i, who was to become Catholicos, wrote the first on 28 April 1801; Bp. Rōt’eos, a supporter of Nersēs against his rival, Dawit’, wrote the second. There is another letter in the cipher dated 26 January 1813 sent from Tiflis by Nahapet Aršakean to Fr. Nersēs: this one is of great historical interest as testimony to the epochal event of the previous year, 1812 — the capture of Moscow by Napoleon Bonaparte, the great fire, and the French retreat in winter from Russia:

“Here is the news. [Napoleon] Bonaparte [*Pōnapōrtñ*] with 200,000 men departed and went away to his country. It is certain, what I write here. If you say they write or say otherwise it is empty or [newspaper? — Rus. *gazeta*, here Arm. *k’azeti*] writing. And this is the place for performing prayer [*malepni*, i.e., Rus. *moleben’*], as you know. He took 200 wagons of gold and silver from Moscow with him, and it seems there is yet to be a great battle in the winter. The day of this writing, a letter came from Galterē[w?]ski. They have joined battle with the *šāhzādeh* [Pers., “prince”], have captured the latter’s entire camp and there has been great slaughter, so that only the *šāhzādeh* got away, and they seized all his guns. This filth [? — *altut’iwn*] was more than four times. I received a letter from Nakhichevan from the prelate Ōhan: they wrote of their displeasure and want to summon Fr. Grigor. And Galterewski broke his leg in the battle, so they will send a good doctor from here on the 27th of

the month, as well as reinforcements. They have taken Lank‘aran [i.e., Lenkoran], Tališ, and P‘arš.’⁵⁰

As we shall see presently, the itinerant felt-beaters of Moks, the region immediately south of Rš̄tunik‘, had a secret language. Since they traveled all over Armenian, perhaps the name of the ancient and fabled region north of their home mountains came to be associated with secret or invented speech generally. The invented Rš̄tuni language, known only from this one manuscript, is of the *a priori* type: the vocabulary is not derived from any known natural language (except, perhaps, the first word in the list, *mētray* “God”, which might have been, with deletion of first consonant, metathesis of an inner cluster, and change of ending, from Georgian *ghmertī*, about which, as we have seen above, one erudite Armenian author of a colophon knew enough to put it properly in the vocative!) and there seems to have been a conscious effort to make its phonology as different from that of Armenian as possible (there are over 130 occurrences, for instance, of the rare letter *ō*; *ē* is used word-internally with far greater frequency than in standard Armenian; and *f* is also used far more often than in any dialect, literary or rural, of the language). But the phonemic character of the language is still Armenian, with variant voiced and unvoiced stops: both *trōpēn* and *drōbēn* mean “man”; cf. “Eastern” *mard* and “Western” *mart*! The stops *c/j* and *ḡ/č* are likewise interchangeable. The word count is approx. 250; but the selection of terms with invented equivalents seems to have been arbitrary, with the author flitting from one category to another, and enjoying plenty of naughty obscenities in between — there is nothing approximating the Swadesh list or other register of frequently used terms in human speech. A tourist on the planet Rš̄tunistān would not find the glossary very useful for many of his needs. The morphology is inconsistent but still observably based on Armenian. There is a gen. sg. *-i*, *-in*, or *-vin*, cf. Arm. *-i(n)*; gen. pl. *-r*; abl. sg. *-ēm*, cf. Arm. *-ē(n)*; inst. sg. *-yē*; and loc. sg. *-inō*. As in Arm. there are possessive pronominal suffixes: 1 sg. *-ib*; 2 sg. *-n*. Abstract nouns are formed in *-vewk‘*

⁵⁰ [Abrahamyan 1978, 167, 170–171]. The person whose name is given as Galterewski (otherwise unknown) is most likely the Russian Colonel P.S. Kotliarevskii, one of the commanders who seized the fortress of Shah Bulagh in Karabagh in 1805 (See [Bournoutian 1998, 132 n. 5]).

(cf. Clas. Arm. pl. *-k'*) and *-ēt'ōn* (doubtless from Arm. *-ut'iwn*). Influence of the Armenian assonance of the pair *erkin* and *erkir*, heaven and earth, may be reflected in the formation of *rōšmēxe* “earth”, *rōlvē* “world”, and *rōčki* “heaven”. *Nim* “outdoors” may be related to *nimō* “sun” (and note *nimōfrē*, “he went out”). The relationship of *mēvōn* “water” to *mivat* “drink!”, or of *sēmat* “apple” to *sēmsay* “pear” seems less the result of a conscious plan than of proximity — the words fell into categories the creator of *Ruštuni* was thinking about as he made them up. (*Srōfit* “bring!” for instance, is next to the semantically unrelated factitive verbs for “drink” — see below — which sound much the same, and are unrelated to *mivat* above.) One notes that the latter translates the simple Arm. *arew*; but for Arm. *aregakn*, a poetically marked compound term for the solar orb, the inventor has created an entirely unrelated word, *ziwōtēp*. Verbs are formed on the Armenian pattern as well, though, again, the forms themselves are fanciful: pres. 1 pl. *-ōt'*; aor. 1 sg. *-t*, *-lēf*; aor. 2 sg. *-lēt*; aor. 3 sg. *-ta*; imp. 2 sg. *-ō*; imp. 2 pl. *-ōt'ē*; prohibitive imp. *t'u-* (e.g., *srōfētōn* “make sm. drink”, *t'usrēfēti* “do not make sm. drink”). There is a past participle in *-(a)wō*, cf. perhaps Clas. Arm. *-eal*. This language is then a private game and not a particularly inventive one, without morphological departure from Armenian. But this indulgence in the pleasant sounds its inventor associated with alienness does at least give us a useful sense of what a native speaker of Armenian in the 18th century thought his mother tongue did *not* sound like.

4. The Argot of the Felt-Beaters

The invented language in MS A 29 is called *Ruštuni*; so let us now examine an argot from a region contiguous to the Armenian canton of *Rštunik'* on the southern shore of Lake Van, that was studied by the teacher of the scholar who first brought the invented language to the attention of contemporary scholars. Karen Nikitich Yuzbashian was a pupil and biographer of the great Armenologist and Oriental scholar Iosif Abgarovich Orbeli, scion of the ancient *naxarardom* (the hereditary dynastic clans of ancient Armenia), who as director of the Hermitage piloted Russia's greatest museum and center of scholarship through the darkest days of the Stalin terror of the late 1930's and the terrible

blockade of Leningrad by the Nazi German invaders during the Great Patriotic War (Hitler's attack reminded many Russians then of the destructive but doomed campaign of the *zaznavshiisia* "upstart" Napoleon chronicled above). In the postwar era, many Leningrad scholars, including Prof. Yuzbashian and his family, were housed in comfortable flats in Orbeli Street — named after the great scholar — adjacent to the pleasant wooded neighborhoods of Kolomiagi and Udel'nyi Park.

In 1911–1912 Orbeli had led an ethnographical expedition to the mountainous region of Moks (Clas. Arm. Mokk', Tk. Müküs), which is separated from Lake Van by the district of Gevaş, ancient Rštunik'. One enters by crossing the pass dominated by the monastery of St. George called *P'ut'kavank'* (lit. "Monastery of the Guest House"), whose famous rooster would warn travelers of snowstorms⁵¹. The Armenians of Moks were bilingual in their native tongue and Kurdish; and there were also Gypsies (Roma, Arm. *Lom*), called by the locals *mətarb*, i.e., Arabic *mutrib*, "minstrel" (a word found in Middle Arm. also, as *mtrup*)⁵². Orbeli was impressed by the archaic character of the local culture: he notes, for instance, how the Kurdish *bek* would supply honored guests with pillows, one after the other, much as the Sasanian kings had done⁵³.

In the village of Vozim (Arm. Ozm(i)) of Moks, Orbeli recorded a glossary of the professional secret argot of the men who pounded wool to make felt (called *təpolkerēn*, "(felt-)beaters' language"), and found that a number of lexical items were to be found in lists compiled at another village, Arnanc', from which he drew the reasonable conclusion that the jargon was widespread. Wool manufacture and the beating of wool to make felt was a major seasonal business of the Armenians of

⁵¹ [Russell 2000, 121–132] n. 34; and Russell 2002.

⁵² [Russell 1987, 96]: the poet Yovhannēs of T'lkuran asks that at his death his shroud be a green leaf (the traditional honorarium of the dervish), and that *Mtrup beren inj k'ahanay* "they bring a minstrel as my priest."

⁵³ [Orbeli 1982, 34]. The Babylonian Talmud records a reversal of the process: as a Rabbi lost a disputation, his rival took one mat of honor after another away from beneath him. When the last one was removed, he died: see [Sperber 1982, 84–95]. Iranian social imagery pervades the narrative of the incident: dismissal of the unfortunate teacher, once praised as a lion, as a "fox" recalls Shapur's abuse of Vasak in P'awstos (Russell 2012(b)).

the whole region. But what is so special about felt (Arm. *t'al-ik*)? Before the invention of synthetic, waterproof material, felt was the choice of need. It was warm, resistant, durable, flexible, and relatively light. Felt was essential for tents, saddle cloths, and outer ware such as the cape and tall *başlık* hat that still keep Anatolian shepherds warm and dry. The crowns of the ancient Armenian kings, looking rather like cap-sized hulls of ships, with ear flaps added, were modeled upon the ancestor of the modern *başlık*.

Leonardo Olschki in his brief study of Dante, *The Myth of Felt*, notes that in the Middle Ages felt was considered “a plebeian product and a symbol of barbarism, poverty, and contempt, if of anything.”⁵⁴ In Germanic the derivative adjective *filzig* came to mean sordid, mean, and stingy; and Jews, always a marginal group, were sometimes required to wear a piece of felt on their outer clothing. The popular Old French history of the Mongols of the Cilician Armenian princely traveler Het'um, ca. 1307, describes the custom of investiture, whereby seven men raised up the new Khan on a black carpet made of felt, though they could afford much richer fabrics. In the Middle English version of the chronicle the Armenian observer exclaims, “for al the lordship or riches they have conquered, they wolde neuer chaunge theyr first gyse”⁵⁵. So in the late 13th century Armenians seem to have considered felt a lowly material. So it would appear that in Armenia, too, felt, for all its economic importance and usefulness was regarded as base and continued to be so. That would explain in part why felt-makers occupied a social niche similar

⁵⁴ [Olschki 1949, 5].

⁵⁵ Burger 1988, p. 27 (Book Three, line 7 et seq.). In ancient Iran and Central Asia it would seem, then, that felt was believed to be the stuff of the clouds, whatever its earthly status, thus providing an explanation for the Mongol belief and consequent ritual. T'ovma Arcruni reports in his history of the Armenian royal Arcrunid house of Vaspurakan, 10th century, that Šaxrik' who were *hamakdēn*, i.e., members of the priestly caste who knew in its entirety the *dēn* — the Zoroastrian scriptural revelation, law, and lore — had come to Armenia. They described their homeland as a place where *tuanjean amp t'anjraxor ibrew zt'al lmeal balajew spitakap'ayl yoyž* “in the daytime the cloud was thick and dense as pounded felt, in the shape of fog glowing brilliantly white” (text in [T'ovma Arcruni 1887: 28; Thomson 1985: 90–91]; and see discussion by [Russell 1987(a): 5–15]).

to that of gypsies or thieves. We considered above the argots of subcultures outside Armenia. Subcultures are generally fairly close to the normative, dominant majority culture (with exceptions, such as that of the Roma, who are for practical purposes entirely outside it); so there is a fair amount of transfer, the slang of the standard language often originating in the argots of the underworld⁵⁶. In the case of the Armenians, who as a Christian minority in the Ottoman or Persian dominions were already a subculture in a way (their Julfa dialect, for instance, became a medium for effectively secret correspondence in the New Julfa global trade network), the felt-beaters would have been a subculture within another one. There is a large stock of Armenian loan words in Turkish, both as standard vocabulary and as slang. But the non-Muslim ethnic groups, or *millets* — Armenians, Greeks, and Jews — all were outside the dominant culture though not considered sociopathic as the Roma might be; so another paradigm than that evolved by Maurer and other students of argots and slangs should be constructed to describe these linguistic phenomena in what have come in recent years to be termed “Islamicate” societies.

A prosperous felt-maker of Moks before setting out on faraway business (always on foot) would host an elaborate feast for the people of the village, slaughtering several animals for the food. The occasion and its expense affirmed the social bonds that might otherwise be strained by his absence and the other tensions of life such as the constant possibility of attack. Felt-makers worked mostly in Ottoman Turkey; but some traveled on business to such far-flung destinations as Tiflis, Baku, and Rostov-on-the-Don, in the Russian Empire. The fact that traveling was the basis of their livelihood seems to have been a significant contributing factor for the creation of their argot. As Priëmshcheva observes in her study of the secret languages of 19th-century Russia, “What a number of these groups who possessed invented languages had in common was that their representatives led a wanderer’s way of life. This fact most likely intensifies the socio-psychological necessity of self-identification as well as of elevation of the prestige of one’s own mode of activity.” She also cites the observation of N.I. Grech in 1840 concerning Russian argots that they were used “by people who amongst the ancient Greeks

⁵⁶ [Maurer 1981: 3–4].

worshipped Mercury,” i. e., by those who made their living by travel⁵⁷. Orbeli writes,

“During their peregrinations, the felt-makers worked out a rather interesting language of their own, more a thieves’ argot than professional jargon. Almost every inhabitant of Moks knew a few Felt-maker words; many were even grafted onto Armenian speech and employed by people who had never plied the felt-maker’s trade. But one encountered quite serious difficulties at one’s very first attempt to compile a more or less thorough list of felt-maker vocabulary. Of the non-felt-makers, nobody knew even an insignificant part of the lexicon; while it was hard to get anything out of the felt-makers themselves. Nearly all were afraid to betray this ‘professional secret’, while those who had no need to conceal the meanings of their words and therefore had no reason to cherish the mystery, generally did not know most of the vocabulary. At the transcription of felt-maker words, there was another difficulty even more unpleasant than the responses ‘I don’t know any more,’ ‘That’s what there is of the felt-maker language,’ and ‘That’s all, there’s nothing more.’ In order not to be seen to refuse one’s request to be taught felt-maker speech while not giving the secret away, some began to think up words. And one felt-maker, when I assured him that I would not betray the secret to their clients and patrons, answered, ‘Go and give it away if you like. It makes no difference, we’ll just think up a new language tomorrow’ — and straightaway supplied examples of new words. Felt-makers learned their felt-maker language from their fathers. In answer to the question as to what use this language served, and to what end it was invented, some felt-makers responded that it was so that the Kurds would not understand it. Yet others averred it was a children’s

⁵⁷ [Priëmysheva 2009, vol. 1: 31–32 and 104]. For the word I translate here as “invented” language, the author (like Yuzbashian in his catalogue entry for Petersburg MS A 29) uses Russian условный, literally “conditional, provisional”. Grech’s insight of nearly two centuries ago is of great interest, as the term “Mercurian” to classify such cosmopolitan, “globalized” peoples as the Jews, Armenians, Overseas Chinese and others as against other “Apollonian” ethnic groups notable for rootedness to land and military, aristocratic, hierarchical traditions (Germans, Russians, etc.) was (re-)invented by Yuri Slezkine (2004, ch. 1).

amusement; but the bolder ones declared, 'To make stealing easier!' It is perhaps for the latter reason that the craftiest felt-makers knew the argot best. The felt-makers were generally reckoned talented thieves, and many anecdotes recounted their artfulness — mainly it was wool they stole. It is of interest that in the 'Song at the Stone Mortar' mentioned earlier the people of Vozim are mentioned as minters of coins, that is, counterfeiters, which is an expression that generally means a skillful thief or master criminal. The 'thieves' language of the felt-makers was not something especially hard to understand, though when they were conversing among themselves rapidly it was quite impossible to comprehend it, particularly when they added the use of the 'sparrows' or 'birds' language, that is, transposing the syllables of every word. [See *infra*.] In its grammar the felt-maker language conformed, naturally, to the rules of Armenian and the great majority of lexical items were Armenian as well. The felt-maker resorted to his argot only for the most important subjects of conversation. Interestingly, in every settlement the felt-makers pronounced felt-maker words precisely according to the particularities of the local Armenian dialect. Thus felt-maker speech lived the same life as Armenian; and this depended, to a great extent, on the fact that most felt-maker words were Armenian ones allegorically employed."⁵⁸

The list of felt beaters' words Orbeli compiled was published in 2002, twenty years after the posthumous publication of his ethnographical survey of Moks containing the above description, as an appendix to his glossary of the Moks dialect. The glossary of the argot is appended to this study with translation, annotation, and commentary. Several interesting points are to be noted: the bulk of the "secret" vocabulary is Armenian employed allegorically, and the phonology and grammar are entirely Armenian as well. For the purpose of additional secrecy the felt-makers spoke rapidly and employed the transposition of syllables of "sparrow" language (Arm. *cti lezu*), rather like the "Pig Latin" American kids used in my childhood. It is interesting, *inter alia*, that the Armenian-based cryptogram (referred to above in connection with the shapes of the letters of the Third Script of MS A 29) employed widely by Armenian craft guilds and other professionals was called

⁵⁸ [Orbeli 1982: 8, 14, 29, 34, 39–42] (tr. from Russian mine).

either *Atuanic' gir*, “Caucasian Albanian writing” or, homonymically, *alawnagir*, “the writing of the dove”⁵⁹. The chirping of the birds was a secret language; even as their ability to fly is a kind of locomotion enabling them to escape and hide. Some speakers, most likely to discourage Orbeli from investigating further, indeed deprecated felt-maker language as a mere children’s game. The glossary was not, apparently, a closed canon: speakers could add to the argot new inventions of their own, if indeed this was not just a boast intended to unsettle the inquisitive Orbeli again.

Another Armenian secret language like that of the felt-makers of Moks was the jargon of a far lowlier guild — the traveling traders and crooks who originated in the village of Savra near Salmast in Persian Armenia, many of whom migrated to the Russian Empire in the 19th century. They were called, derisively *xač'agoł* “Cross-thief”, *pařaw nerkoł* “strangler of old women”, *ēš nerkoł* “donkey-painter”, or simply *savrgelc'i* “villager of Savra”, for they were reputed to masquerade as priests and then steal the church treasure, or befriend an old woman, then kill her, and abscond with her possessions, or just engage in shady horse-trading. The 19th-century Eastern Armenian novelist Raffi (Yakob Melik'-Yakobean), a native of Salmast and scholar and ethnographer of his native Persarmenia, wrote in his novel *Xač'agołi yišatakarana* (“The Cross-Thief’s Memorial”, based upon a notebook left by one Murad) that the Cross-thief “spoke with his companions in a special language that nobody can understand unless he belongs to the society of the Cross-thieves. It is a secretive, provisional (*paymanakan*) language; it is the argot of bandits.” Though in Russia they were called Armenian Gypsies (*hay c'igan*, using Rus. *tsigan*, “Roma”), theirs was not a distinct language like Romani but “a sort of artificial, archaic, provisional language” (*mi tesak šincu, hnac'ac, paymanakan lezu*); and at

⁵⁹ See [Russell 2010] on the *alawnagir*; and [Russell 2009] on the esoteric old Russian ballad *Golubinnaia kniga* (“Book of the Dove”) and its Armeno-Iranian associations. The Classical Persian poet Farīd al-Dīn ‘Aṭṭār chose the metaphor of birds for his allegorical Sufi work, *Mantiq al-ṭayr*, “The Conference of the Birds”. The varied twittering of the *hazaran bulbul* (“nightingale of thousands (of songs)”) seems to form a nexus between music and language; and the bird with her wings flies between men and angels.

night they could communicate employing bird and animal noises. Raffi compares the argot of the Cross-thieves to Armenian secret “bird” (*cut*) and “sparrow” (*čnčhuk*) language, mentioned above. This language is discussed also by the 19th-century ethnographer who first discovered and published the Epic of Sasun, Bp. Garegin Sruanjteanc‘, who writes in his study *Mananay* [“Manna”], “Among the Armenian people there is yet another thing of value: speaking in a language derived from that of crows and sparrows, by reversal of words, as for instance saying *c‘ah* instead of *hac* [“bread”] or *dram* instead of *mard* [“man”], and so with every noun and verb. A similar usage obtains even in writing, where we are informed of the use of the brother of each letter: b for a, g for b, d for g, and so on. So instead of writing *oski* [“gold”] one writes *zvel*, etc.”⁶⁰ (In Erevan Matenadaran MS 6731, fol. 154 v., the marginal explanation *gir mi ar(a)j bʻnē* “take one letter before” accompanies the encoded *č‘čč‘c‘yʻp*, i.e., *olormea* “(Lord) have mercy!”) In the Armenian town of Hajin code expressions were employed: to warn a newcomer of the presence in the company of an Armenian-speaking Turk, one said *mōyā dzōg ē* (standard Arm. *matə cak ē*), “The sieve has a hole!” To signify he understood the warning, the Armenian guest would reply *vospə k‘ayod ē* (standard Arm. *ospə k‘arot ē*), “The lentils have pebbles!” The people of Hajin said *ayūēsə pey* (standard Arm. *aluēsə ber*) “Bring the fox” for “Bring cheese”; *sev čuy pey* (standard Arm. *sew fur ber*) “Bring black water” for “Bring coffee”; and *viyivnoc ‘unink’* (standard Arm. *verewnoc ‘unink’*) “We’ve somebody upstairs” for an unwelcome guest. The code words *mendzə* (standard Arm. *mecə*) “the great one” and *bədig osgin* (standard Arm. *pztik oskin*) “the little gold (coin)” were England and France respectively; while the other Christian power involved in Ottoman affairs was the *mendz arč* (standard Arm. *mec arj*), “great bear”, Russia⁶¹.

Felt may be a poor man’s material, but in the argot of its beaters one can mine treasure. Walt Whitman, the 19th-century American bard who

⁶⁰ [Raffi 1962, 303–304, 309–312; Sruanjteanc‘ 1876, 311] f. Prof. Bert Vaux of Cambridge University notes that the Armenians of the Van area sometimes called their Armenian speech *čnčhuknerēn*, “sparrows’ language”, presumably because of its incomprehensibility to foreigners.

⁶¹ [Pōlosean 1942: 285 f].

dreamed of a democratic polity where subculture and dominant culture were one, whose poems recognized no boundary of class or occupation or prescribed form of speech, once wrote, “Slang... is the attempt of common humanity to escape from bald literalism, and express itself illimitably, which in the highest walks produces poets and poems, and doubtless in prehistoric times gave the start to, and perfected, the whole immense temple of the old mythologies...”⁶² There are aspects of the felt-makers’ argot of Moks that are, indeed, strikingly poetic. As we shall see, they shed some light on the old mythologies, too. Here are some examples from Orbeli’s register.

Cätkil, “to laugh”, is in standard Armenian “to flower”, formed clearly by extension or comparison with Armenian *cicalēl*, “laugh”, analyzing the word correctly as a reduplicative — *cal-r* alone is “laughter, scorn”, cf. the Greek cognate *gelos* — and adding a diminutive suffix to produce a metaphorical homonym. The word *cōv*, meaning “large, great” in the argot, is standard Armenian for “lake, sea”; and these two easily associated images, of the flower opening in beauty and scent and the mouth opening in love and happy sound, are used assonantly in poetry: in the famous Song of the Nativity (*tal cñn-dean*) of St. Grigor Narekac’i (951–1003), who lived on the northern side of the mountains of Moks, is this well-known strophe: *Ač’k’n cov i cov cicalaxit cawalanayr yařawawtun erku p’aylakajew aregakan nman*, “Her eyes, sea into sea dense with laughter dilated in the dawn, like two flashing-formed springs of the Sun.”⁶³ The Western Armenian poet Daniël Varuřan (1884–1915) was no less sensitive to such semantic and phonetic collocations, with their heady aroma of pagan antiquity. In the poem “Cleopatra” of his cycle *Het’anos erger* (“Heathen Songs”, published at Constantinople in 1912), which seems to evoke the procession of the bark of Isis, we read these lines: *Sahē, ov naw, sahē řut/ Calkacical ap’n i ver/ Nuř m’awasik karmrakut/ Aygiēn mēřd ē inker* “Glide, O boat, glide swift/ Along the **flower-laughing** shore;/ Here a red-kerneled pomegranate/ Has fallen in you from the orchard.”⁶⁴

⁶² [Adams 2009: 119].

⁶³ See [Russell 1985: 435–439].

⁶⁴ [Varuřan 1986: 258].

Kēcāk, used of any kind of fire (for which Armenian possesses numerous words: *hur*, *krak*, *xaroyk*, *hrdeh...*), is literally “lightning”; cf. the *t’ur kecaki*, the magic Saber of Lightning of the heroes of the Sasun epic. Here it would seem a term from the higher, poetic register, perhaps from the oral epic itself, has replaced the standard word.

Xänjārör in the argot means both “wool” and “felt”, but in standard Armenian the word *xanjarur*, “swaddling clothes”, would refer particularly to the scene of the Nativity and the infant Christ. Similarly dignifying the trade is *āspätäur*, “bast sandal”, literally “God’s gift”, standard Armenian *astuacatur* (also a common proper name as a calque on Theodōros), for the felt-makers traveled everywhere on foot. These are the kinds of self-validating terms any marginal group might (and does) cull from tradition for its argot.

Aruc in the argot refers to any horned cattle, but comes from standard Armenian *arīwc*, “lion”: for the semantic development cf. the term for fire, above. *Bäšō*, the word used by the felt-beaters for the Sun, is an Armenian dialect term for an animal with a white spot on its forehead (perhaps from Tk. *baş*, “head”)⁶⁵. This may reflect an archaic concept of heaven as a living face. One type of Armenian Cross-stone (*xačk’ar*) depicts the crucified body of Christ (most do not) and is called the All-Savior (*Amenap’rkič’*): a Cross-stone of this type of 1279 from Urc in the Ararat region, now at Echmiadzin, shows the Sun, with a human face, resting upon the back of a bird, above the Cross and to Christ’s right; the Moon, to His left, rests upon the back of a horned bull⁶⁶. According to Zoroastrian cosmological teachings, when the evil spirit Ah-remān slew the beneficent first-created bull (Avestan *Gav aēvō.dāta-*), its semen was taken to the Moon (which thus has the epithet *gao.čīθra-* “having the seed of the Bull”) and purified; and animals and plants were born from it⁶⁷. The horns of the crescent Moon were equated with those of a bull and from the Zoroastrian practice of setting horns on the dome of a fire-temple came the Muslim custom of placing a crescent on a mosque. Since medieval times Iranians have paired the lion and Sun as their national symbol: perhaps the felt-beaters imagined the brilliant

⁶⁵ See [*HLBB*, Vol. 1: 164].

⁶⁶ See [Azaryan 1978: 86].

⁶⁷ [Boyce 1975: 139].

orb on the forehead of that golden beast of power and grace. *Kācān* means “dog”, lit. “biter”; cf. the evolution of Mlr. *gazān* “biter, stinger” into Arm. *gazan* “wild beast” in general⁶⁸.

Ārtār, “milk” is Arm. *ardar*, “just” in the sense of “pure”. In the Epic of Kašt from the Moks region, in the Arm. dialect of Musa Dagħ, and in 19th-century Western Armenian butter is called *ardar iwł* “pure oil”⁶⁹. Oil is called *pāspālun* or *pāspālāun*, from standard Arm. *psplal*, “to glisten”. *Curān*, “honey”, is probably from Arm. *corem*, “flow”. I cannot help being reminded of Mandelstam’s lines of 1917 in *Tristia, Zolotistogo mēda struia iz butylki tekla/ Tak tiaguche i dolgo, cho molvit’ khoziaika us-pela:/ Zdes’, v pechal’noi Tavride, kuda nas sud’ba zanesla, my sovsem ne skuchaem — i cherez plecho pogliadela* “The stream of golden honey from the bottle flowed/ So viscid and long, that my hostess had time to pronounce:/ Here in sad Tauris, where fortune has swept us/ We miss nothing at all — and glanced over her shoulder.”

In the Song of the Birth of Vahagn, *erkn-im*, “being in labor”, *erkin*, “heaven”, and *erkir*, “earth”, are used in an intricate play of dualities; and it has long been noticed that Armenian *erkan* “millstone”, can reflect this ancient cosmological semantic cluster, with its rich array of phonetic interconnection so productive for poetry. In the argot of Moks, we find the word *nerk’yāvāk* for “woman, wife,” literally, “bottom millstone”; and, correspondingly, *vērāvāk* for “husband, man”, literally “top millstone”. The assonant collocation of the paired heaven and earth seems to be part of the fundamental linguistic furniture of an Armenian speaker; cf. the similar words for heaven and earth discussed above in Ruštuni.

Other designations of the two genders may reflect similarly archaic concepts and images. *Kāk’yāv*, “daughter-in-law” or “young girl”, is standard Armenian *kak’aw* “partridge”, a word used commonly in folk poetry of attractive girls. In Classical Armenian texts, from the translation of the Bible onwards, the word and its various nominal and verbal derivatives is synonymous with dancing, particularly a kind of suggestive, strutting dance performed by women (infamously, by Herodias)⁷⁰;

⁶⁸ See [Russell 1987(b):. 459].

⁶⁹ [Russell 2000: 90–91], n. 19; see also [Riggs 1847 s.v.]

⁷⁰ “Twist and twirl” is still Cockney rhyming slang for “girl” in London: see [Maurer 1981, p. 149].

and the complement to the felt-beaters' partridge in the argot is her *c'ic'*, "husband". This is standard Armenian *c'ic'*, meaning "(sharpened) stake" and "erect." In a medieval glossary it means "nail" or "tent peg"⁷¹; and here, it could be slang for a penis, *pars pro toto* of the man. (The word for "penis" itself is the equivalent of "beater", an approving nod to the felt-beater himself as well as an intuitively obvious association with the sexual act.) Movsēs Xorenac'i in his *History of the Armenians* recounts in chapter six of his first book how the son of Ziusudra (i.e., the Sumerian precursor of Noah), Zruan (i.e., the Zoroastrian god of infinite time), who was also Sem (that is, Biblical Shem), gave his name both to mount Sim (that is, the mountain named for Sanasar, the progenitor of the heroes of Sasun) and the province of Zaruand. And he notes, *Bayc' arawel yačaxagoyn hink'n Aramazneayc' i nuags p'andran ew yergs c'c'oc' ew paruc' zaysosik asen yišatakaw. Ew aysok'ik zroyc'k' sut ew kam t'ē ar-darew leal, mez č'ē inč' p'oyt'. Ayl vasn giteloy k'ez zamenayn, or inč' i lroy ew or inč' i grots', anc'anem and bnawn i girss yaysosik, zi imasc'is zar k'ez parzmtut'iw n imoc' xorhrdoc'.* "But even more often still the ancients of the progeny of Aram in the strumming on the lyre and in the songs of *c'c'oc'* and of dances recite these in memorial. And it is of no concern to me whether these narratives are a lie or occurred in reality. But only so that you may know all, whatever one has heard and whatever comes from books, do I cover entirely in this book, so that you may understand the candor of my counsels to you." The MSS offer the variant readings *c'uoc'*, *c'oyc'*, and *c'c'oyc'*; and R.W. Thomson compares to this passage an apparently similar usage in para. 180 of Agathangelos' *History*: as the lustful Trdat enters the chamber where the defenseless virgin nun Hrip'simē has been confined, the crowd inside and outside the precincts of the palace breaks into celebration. *Ar hasarak ergs areal barbarec'an kayt'iwk' vazelovk', c'uc' barjeal mardkan* "they all gave

⁷¹ This is the Rasūlīd Hexaglot, a 14th-century compilation from Yemen. The Armenian forms, probably collected in lands under Ilkhanid rule, reflect the phonology and morphology of Cilician Armenian. In the MS, *c'ic'* is the equivalent of Arabic *al-watad* and Persian *mīx* "nail" (cf. perhaps the present-day American expression "to nail somebody", i.e., to have sexual intercourse with them). The glossary is divided by topics; and by happy circumstance Arm. *c'ic'* rubs shoulders with *t'alik'*, "felt". See [Golden 2000: 179].

voice, breaking into song, capering and running, men raising up a *c'uc'.*" The latter word, taken by lexicographers to mean a song or celebration, seems to be related to Armenian *c'oyc'*, "show" (which in turn may well be a cognate of English "show"!); and Xoreñac'i's word would seem on the face of it to be a simple genitive plural of the same, meaning "of celebrations" or "displays" or the like. Khalatians (Xalat'eanc') translates Xoreñac'i's passage accordingly, песни древних арамазнийцев (армян), воспевавших на память, при представлениях и в пляске...⁷² rendering the mystery word *c'c'uc'*, which he gives in this form, with *-u-* rather than *-o-* in a footnote, as "performances". But the rather wide variety of spellings in the MSS suggests, at least, that the treatment of the term as meaning a show or performance by uncertain scribes just might be a case of *lectio facilior*; so I would venture the tentative suggestion that *c'c'oc'* be the genitive plural, not of *c'oyc'*, but of the rarer *c'ic'* — the word the woolbeaters of Moks were to use *pars pro toto* of a man, alongside the archaic designation "partridge" of a woman. Then the *patmahayr* or Father of Histories of Armenia may have been referring to ithyphallic songs of men — the counterpart of the lewd *kak'awk'* "partridge dances" of women. Such performances are well attested in Armenian antiquity. A sermon attributed to the fifth-century Catholicos Yovhannēs Mandakuni (more likely to be the work of another Catholicos John, Mayragomec'i, who lived three centuries later), has become the *locus classicus* for discussion of Armenian *gusans*, or minstrels. In "Concerning the lawless theaters of the demonic", the incensed cleric declares weak-willed women particularly susceptible to the lewd suggestions of drama: "For the custom itself is evil and so are those who encourage it: wine (*gini*), the minstrel (*gusan*), and Satan," where "women are cast into the role of prostitutes; and men, as rutting stallions mounting mares (*jioe' matakaxazac*')." There are also clowns or jesters at these performances: "For where jesters (*katakk'*) and minstrels and lewd play (*xal*) and mockery (*calr*) be; there the demons, too, join in the dance."⁷³ One recalls the ithyphallic satyrs who lurk at the beginnings of satire itself.

The slang of the felt-makers of Moks may perhaps then have preserved an archaic and antic designation of men and women. The felt-

⁷² [Khalat'ians 1896: 44].

⁷³ [Mandakuni 1860: 131–137].

beaters used the verb *xirkil* or *xilkil*, for the sexual act, lit. “plow a winter field”) — cf. the English idiom “plow” for “fuck”; the *tatič* lit. “beater” (vb. *tatil*), as noted above, is the penis⁷⁴. *Xärnäkum* was the party, mentioned earlier, that a felt-maker held before going away. Its literal meaning, “confusion”, possibly has lewd sexual overtones beyond a social mixer: *xärnel* just means “mix”, but Arm. *xärnakumn* is often in Classical and homiletic literature used to imply illicit intercourse. The party might have been more than a mixer.

Kyätälämān is the mouth, lit. “spoon holder”, but whatever salacious metaphors, wild parties, and the like the felt-makers enjoyed, the *širip* ‘*xāl*’ was still the woman of the house, lit., the one who moves or plays (*xalam*) the ladle (*šerep*). In the traditional Armenian *glxatun* — a house with central hearth beneath the squinch-constructed smoke-hole (*ert’ik*) — the ladle hung from the chief of the four pillars supporting the dome, and the woman who held the ladle fed the family⁷⁵. Some things never change, and God be praised.

5. Appendices

1. Description of St. Petersburg *Institut Vostokovedeniia* (“Institute of Oriental Studies”, abbrev. Or. Inst. here) MS A–29.

Yuzbashian 2005, pp. 76–77.

“142. IV, A 29, Miscellany. Lacks general title, contains diverse materials: examples of cryptography, prayers, theological compositions, dictionary of a hypothetical language, predictions, medical advice, etc. The manuscript was intended for personal use and has the character of a draft. Occasional jottings are left out of the description.”

I. Fol. 1a. Cryptographic alphabet corresponding to Armenian from *a* to *k*’, followed by [the ligature] *ew*, *ō*, *f*; abbreviations *ac im* [i.e., *As-tuac im*, “My God”] and an example of cryptography.

⁷⁴ The Middle Iranian loan *framaštak* is a Talmudic Aramaic hapax meaning “penis” that one quickly recognized in the common Modern Arm. *hrmštk-el*, “shove, push in” — clearly old, but not attested in the classical texts, at the time of whose composition **hramaštak* would presumably still have carried its slangy, lewd overtones (see [Russell 2013(a)]).

⁷⁵ See [Abrahamian and Sweezy 2001: 108].

II. Fols. 2a. Multiplication table, Arabic numerals.

III. Fols. 3b–31b. *Harc 'munk' erkbnakac' ar žolovs ullap'arac' nax i yAdamay, ew patasxanik' noc'in ənddimut'eanc'* ["Questions of dyophysites to the councils of the Orthodox, beginning with Adam, and the responses to the refutations of the same"] (fol. 5a), named in the preface as *Calik c'ankali* ["Desirable flower"] (fol. 3b), beginning: *Harc': Orpēs stelceac' Tēr Astuac Adam...* ["Question: When the Lord God created Adam..."]. Refutation of the errors of the dyophysites in the form of questions and answers. The authors of the composition are Yakob and Grigor (fol. 21a–b, acrostic; fol. 23a, attribution). References to the works of Grigor Tat'ewac'i, Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, Cyril of Alexandria, etc.

IV. Fols. 3a–34a. *Bank' omank' xrt'ink'* ["Some difficult words"], beginning: *Diwc'aznakan: Hrč'akatr ew kam yoyž taratr...* ["Heroic: notably (?) or very (?)"] Explanation of particular "difficult" words.

V. Fols. 37a–44a. *Aylakan lezu or ew asi ruštuni* ["Allegorical language which is also called *ruštuni*"], beginning: *Řštuni: Hayoc'. Mētray: Astuac...* ["*Řštuni* to Armenian: *Mētray*=God"]. Alphabet and dictionary of the hypothetical *Řštuni* language. Text published in Aganian [Ałaneanc'] 1894, cols. 845–852.

VI. Fols. 44b–49a. Cryptographic alphabet and texts of medical and other content. The same script is found on fols. 2b, 63b–64a, and 67a, and on the [inside] cover. See Abramian [Abrahamyan] 1973, pp. 244–280 with illustration.

VII. Fols. 50a–62b. Predictions, medical advice, the beginning of an explanatory dictionary, explanations of some philosophical terms, etc.

VIII. Fols. 64b–65a. *Aybubenk' bolor groc' Hayoc' ew i usac'* ["Alphabetical list of all the letters of Armenian and Russian"], beginning: *a-Aa*. Comparative table of the Russian and Armenian alphabets, with the names of the Russian letters: *az, bugi, veti* [i.e., *Az, Buki, Vedi*], etc.

The manuscript is a convolute of two parts, on white paper (fols. 1–36) and blue. The copyists of the first part are Yakob and Grigor (?). Paper with Georgian text is glued into the binding; and several other signs indicate the provenance of the manuscript from the milieu of Armenians in Georgia. From the collection of Fr. Aganian [Ałaneanc']. On fol. 3b is the seal of Grigor (the copyist?) from 1792; the manuscript was copied around this date.

17.3 cm. x 10.5 cm.; 67 fols.; text in a single column; 21 lines [per page]; paper; *šlagir* [Armenian cursive]; cardboard covers; inner front leaf preserved.”

The MS contains also, on fol. 21r, a short list of the abbreviated signs and hieroglyphs one finds in other Arm. MSS.⁷⁶ There is a text on the dimension of Noah’s ark (fol. 8v.); notes on the Antichrist (Arm. *nerñ*) and his descent from the tribe of Dan (fols. 14v., 25v.), and instructions for the recitation of Psalms so that one may behold divine light (*ard et’ē kamis gitel k(a)m tesanel zloyš gerazanc’ik*, “now if you wish to know or see the surpassing light...)(fol. 34v.)⁷⁷.

2. Glossary of the *Āuštuni* language, MS A 29, published by Ałaneanc’ 1894, cols. 845–852. I have checked the reading by Fr. Ałaneanc’ against my own direct transcription of the manuscript, and generally have accepted his reading. Where he has replaced a word thought obscene by a euphemistic circumlocution I provide the original. The MS gives the *Āuštuni* in the first column; the Armenian translation by the author of the MS, in the second; in the third, I add the English equivalents, though sometimes the Armenian itself is unclear.

mētray astuac God
awt’ay manuk child
vinōt bari good
mrēxt zawak boy
vrōvē šun dog
pituni anicac accursed
ēfrat’i hreštak angel
mētrayvin astucoy of God
asu hac’ bread
mēvōn řur water
srōřit ber bring! (2 pers. sg. imp.)

⁷⁶ For a discussion of these see Russell [2013].

⁷⁷ This recalls the instructions given by St. Gregory of Narek, 10th cent., for priests preparing to offer the Divine Liturgy to recite certain passages of the 33rd chapter of his 95-chapter cycle of mystical and theological odes, the *Matean olbergut’ean* (“Book of Lamentation”) until they behold a visible light coming from heaven: see Russell 1996–1997.

mivat xmē drink! (2 pers. sg. imp.)
srōfētōn xmeç 'ru make sm. drink (2 pers. sg. factitive imp.)
t'usrēfēti mi xmeç 'ni do not make sm. drink
atiōn gnac 'akan transitory
lēwōt 'rō anc 'kac' move (2 pers. sg. imp.)
t'ulēwōt 'rōnē mi anc 'kenal don't move
hrēsē mōk 'p'axi flee (2 pers. sg. imp.)
t'uhrēsēmōk 'ōti mi p'axč 'il don't flee
zēfōt hrašk 'miracle
rōmivan ēnpēs that way
rōmitay araw he did (aor.)
axi or which
zinōtaran datastan court
rōmit aray I did (aor.)
liwōtinē t'agawor king
p'ifōn išxan prince
xway krak fire
at 'rōn k'uray crucible
ap 'ōn zndan prison
xut 'ar č 'ak 'uĵ hammer (loan from Tk.)
grōmē mašay I was worn out (?)
alōt arcat 'silver
ōfeh ōski [sic!] gold
zrut 'xunk incense
šōnē č 'ešmak eyeglasses
k 'at 'or bun nest
bihōlōn yałt 'ol victorious
č 'aruk 'ōn mzxax spear
sonēr lusin moon
ziwōtēp aregakn sun
šuray asteł [sic!] star
halp 'ay mukn mouse
haxinōn banōł [sic!] workman (pres. part. act.)
hoxgayhoxinōn jułn banōł fisherman (?)
awridlōbi džoxayin hellish
awrid džoxk [sic!] hell
silubēn satanay Satan

lōlōp 'i sadayēl Sadael

lōgōfin beliar Belial

nimō arew sun

nimōfrē dusēkaw [sic! standard Arm. *durs ekaw*] he came out (aor.)

nim dus [sic! standard Arm. *durs*] outside

rōm ari come! (2 pers. sg. imp.)

o[r]p[ē]s asē ays lezu t 'ē rōmnīm vrōvē pituni or t'argmani dus ari šun anicac "As this language says, *Rōmnīm vrōvē pituni*, which is translated, 'Come out, accursed dog!'" [This abusive challenge in *Ruštuni* is then written out in the second cipher, of fol. 37a, with a symbol for Arm. *v* differing very slightly from the one in the key.]

verōtim manazil [Arabic *manāzil*, "houses", used as an astrological term in Arm.]

axin jew type, form

axvay hanon (?) — possibly Arm. *hanel* "remove"?

hōmēn hayi he looks

suti biz bristle

law ēlin ōrhneal ē he is blessed

aft'ōnē k'ristos Christ

lōbi a[stuaca]yin(?) divine; Aṭayeanc' reads this as the arm. adjectival ending *-ayin*.

sisō glux head

sisōvēn šlink' bowing, humbling of the neck and head

ašwu jeṛn hand

asēnē hambarē [sic!] be patient! (2 pers. sg. imp.)

asēn hambark' [abbrev. of *hambarec 'ēk'?*] (2 pers. pl. imp.)

sfōnēt disnim [sic! standard Arm. *tesnem*] let me see (1 pers. sg. pres. subj.)

asēnēsfoṇēt hamb[e]rē tesn[e]m hambar[ec'ē]k' noc'in kerpi
"Asēnēsfoṇēt: 'Hold on, let me see!' [The plural] 'Hold on' [is said] the same way."

[A list follows of the *Ruštuni* numbers one to ten:]

šuš, jēnō, krōn, lē, lōvēn, asur, krōmēn, hō, zunē, lōf.

[A list of *Řuštuni* words with the Arm. letters *i, l, x, c, k, h, j, ł, č* with *patiw* superscript, i.e., the numbers 20–100, above each in order:]

finōs, ibōr, sōlir, drōmē, xōf, slōnē, ōmē, čēmsay, mēvalēt.

verj hambaris xōgēn ṛ “That is all of these numbers; *xōgēn* [is] 1000.”

[Below this is an elaborate church-like drawing inscribed with the name Grigor, doubtless one of the pair named in the acrostic poem. Then the list resumes on fol. 40b:]

sōlēfan amenayn all
tolaš tačar temple
siforot'ēm bnu[t'i[wn] nature
aṛafēl aṛak'eal apostle
hramēt'ēm hrelēn fiery
trōpēn mard man
trōpēni mardoy of a man
*aspārī šṛlatasēr (?)*⁷⁸
šuršētōm ant'aṛam imperishable
valapert daṛabay (*davi daṛaba* is an idiom meaning an argument or conflict; the word is Arabic in origin and means literally “beating”).
asp šṛlat (?)
axbrōsi hetak'rk'ir interesting
xwēm golov being
prēr azg clan, nation
prērēm azgēn from the clan, nation (abl. sg.)
aswōt ark'ay king
aswōtin ark'ayin of the king (gen. sg.)
aswōtr ark'ayic ‘of the kings (gen. pl.)

⁷⁸ If one reads *lalatatasēr*, then “lover of vice” (Arabic *ghalat*, “transgression” + *-sēr* “loving, -phile”, used in various compounds and a verb in Arm., see Russell 1987, p. 44.); and cf. *asp šṛlat* (Aṭaneanc‘) or *lalat* (my reading) below.

aswōt trupē ark'ayakan kingly
aswōtaruhip ark'ayuhi queen
aswōtutin ark'ayacinn the king's progeny
atr goł thief
šinōxa gerezmand thy grave
adron mizan scale
abid kšerk' weights
ōtēr mulk' king (Arabic)
bēšōy šinē make (2 pers. sg. imp.)
bēšōlēf šinec 'i I made (aor.)
bēšōlēt' šinec 'ir you (2 pers. sg.) made
sirafēt adap 'xanay school (Persian, *adab xāna*)
č'ušēt mšal a measure of weight (Arabic, *mithqāl*)
mēt dang a piece, measure (Persian)
sēm kēs half
xalēš anem I do
t'ap'ēt'an t'anakaman inkwell
ap'it'rōnap 'it' hangstaran place of rest
ap'it'rōnap 'it'inō hangstaranum in the place of rest (loc. sg.)
apaxrōn č'ar evil
t'alim ptuł fruit
zat' cnund birth
srōfat'ēm k'unem I fuck (Aḷaneanc': *serakan yaraberut'iwn* "sexual relations")
sibem k'nem I sleep
sibēnōt' k'nenk' we sleep
bzēm k'oy [sic] your
asatrōn mayr mother
asatrōnib mayr im my mother
lētway t'uz fig
sēmat' xrijor apple
sēmsay tanj pear
agbudē xalol grape
mizway hon there
drōbēnit'ay mardkayin human
abzēdon k'amar girdle
t'ulabi t'ōlay [sic] I was left

sisbēlib sart'ap' weaponry (Persian)
apazinam bōrak [sic] borax
sum but'ak tuner (knob used to tighten the string of a musical instrument)
zit'ōrēb čagar [sic] bunny rabbit
buxut'i xoz pig
k'emasi k'awt'ar hyena: the Arm. word is used idiomatically in the dialect of Tiflis to mean also an old witch; see Martirosyan 2010, pp. 791–792.
bizmot' puc' cunt (word *puc'* almost erased, and note added: *k(a)n(a)c'i amōt'n ē noyn əd mardkayin orovayn noyn ccuk* “it is the feminine shame[ful part]; ‘thy X’ is the same thing; human belly; nipple for sucking, the same”).
bizmot'n puc'd thy cunt; Aḡaneanc' renders as *yetoik'* “buttocks”.
gxōvēt'n oṛd thine arse
gxōvēt'n oṛ arse
ēt'bay cock, penis; Aḡaneanc' renders as *cacuk andam* “hidden membrum”.
zint'afi p'anjaray window (Persian)
asbēt' k'un d''y sleep d''y (?)
nēwran t'awilay barn, stable
abzēn daxtak [sic] board, plank
rōsbē krāpašt idolater (cf. Persian *rōspī* “whore”?).
nēwt'ō darak' [sic] shelf
finat' lut'i box (Tk.)
dēmt'arē calik flower
dēmt'awlō calkeal flowering (ppart.)
čarōd kōxbēk [sic] button
sēlin sōlōmōn [sic] Solomon (cf. A.r. & Tk. Selīm).
p'ēt'awnit' p'ilisōp'ay philosopher
p'ēt'fanēt'ōn p'ilisop'ayu[t'i][wn] philosophy
ēu aysu by means of this (inst. sg.)
pēygvō payman condition
pēygvōyē paymanaw by (means of the) condition (inst. sg.)
rōlvē ašxarh world
rōšmēxe erkir earth
rōčki erkink' heaven

rōstēk' hurak' heat (?)
rōsōmēfmašar' small saw (?)
tiyubiwt' paltasar Balthasar
frōt'am cōvi ali wave of the sea
filsup' ē naw ship
fičatōn geami boat
fit'vē kot' handle
čēm karmir red
olt' kananč' green
sibjē sew black
ēbōn mavi blue
k'atlōn cirani purple
k'ēbut' moxir ash
k'insōlē at'ar attar
tigtō sʔwil to be shortened
tislōt lēvieat' 'n (? possibly lawut' iwn "goodness").
tip' anōs verew above
p'endrō ašul minstrel (Tk. aşıq; the Rūštuni term is perhaps from Arm.
p'andir̄n, cf. Ossetic faendyr, the lyre played by the ancient gusan-k'
"minstrels").
šēs̄vōk' šēydili (possibly the Ar. formula of an oath, šahīd Allāh "God
be my witness!" cf. Russell 1987, p. 115 line 116 and n.).
zit' rōt' mōvi fine silk cloth (?)
abdē karas jar
sadēb hor hole
sēfbētuyi serōbē [sic] seraph
asbil aʔik' innards
st' lōv aʔlung [sic] fingernail
dērō kext donkey's packsaddle (for kex?)
miv otn foot
ōlōt' olok' shin bone
c'up' ēt' cunkn knee
nivlō tur give (2 pers. sg. imp.)
bētxō xp' ē strike (2 pers. sg. imp.)
bētxōt' ē xp' ēc' ēk' strike (2 pers. pl. imp.)
t'ubētxōt' ē mi xp' ēk' do not strike (pl.)
ēyvoyi ver kac' stand up (2 pers. sg. imp.)

t'ūēyvoyi mi ver kenal do not stand up
dvō dur ayn orcakenir come and vomit it up (< *orckal*?)
dōlōt' dexcə [sic] peach
sišō šlor [sic] plum
*p'avt plor sabin*⁷⁹
pitur mori blackberry
dēmdō mirk' [sic] fruit
cundō jor valley
sōt' sar mountain
bēlfay oč'xar sheep
otrō uxt promise, covenant
ĵēmlēbēd sxalmunk' error
šēmt'ōbrōvēn hastatut' iwn establishment
bēysay əstambay rebellious, belligerent
lōčēnt'ēb basmay dried dung used as fuel
žarĵu larllu drowning (?) (<Ar. *γarq-* + Tk. *-li*)
žant'ēp' lamiš grass (Tk.)
t'ulēb alt'ap'ay cf. *alt'p'el*, to wash laundered clothes halfway
lōgdē lagan bowl
muhrēwē muhaĵar refugee, migrant (for Ar. *muħajir*)
əstēmp' momapat wick
əstēp'ōt' varaz wild boar
yēbōxtrōn naĵaray drum
mišwōt'ēbi č'ibux pipe (Tk.)
xunt'avē saruĵ mollah's turban
zēmbi xlink' Arm. dialect, *šlink'* "neck".
zēmbadi t'uk' sputum, spit
zēmbōvrē ayn ē orum asen gorcarar or ē sar "that is the one they call the agent, who is chief" (Ałayeanc' reads the last word as *ur* "where").
lamč'ēlēv or ē kariĵ [sic] "which is scorpion"
p'ēlēzmay or ew asi morm or yoyž xacatē "which is also called *morm*, which is very prickly"
žanlibōn or ew asin ozni "which they also call a hedgehog"

⁷⁹ See [Bedevian 1936: 342 no. 1981; and *HLBB* s.v.]

On fol. 44b are three more words, following the key to the third script:

Ayl ewš bark' ("Some more words"):
milduvēwk' tramabanu[t'jɪ[wn] logic
selduvēwk' čartasanu[t'jɪ[wn] rhetoric
jēmsayvēwk' k'erakanu[t'jɪ[wn] grammar

3. Glossary of the secret language of the felt-makers of Moks, Orbeli 2002, pp. 355–358: *Argo sherstobitov* ["argot of the wool-beaters"]. Orbeli's use of umlaut and circular superscription (here replaced by a macron) denote short and long a; other umlauted vowels are as in Turkish. The -y following a consonant denotes palatalization. His comments are in parentheses; mine, in square brackets.

Āmārnač' or, stone.

Ānjez, mullah (primary meaning [=p.m.], "raven").

Āntip// *āntāēp*, bad, ugly.

Āroc', oven.

Āruc, horned cattle [from Arm. *ariwc*, "lion"].

Āspätāur, bast sandal (p.m., "God's gift").

Āvgyēr, beard.

Ārtār, milk [from Arm. *ardar*, "just" in the sense of "pure", cf. *ardar iwł*, "pure oil", for "butter"].

Bäšō, sun.

Bäläzök, forearm (p.m., "bracelet").

Bərān, small cattle (p.m., "bleating") [more likely from Kurdish *beran*, "ram"].

Gyārdān, necklace (p.m., "neck").

Gyōsil, to beat.

Dōš, breast [from Tk.].

Zərō, lira coin (cf. *Kāžō*) [possibly from Iranian *zarr*, "gold"; Ottoman Turkish *oski*, "gold coin" is a loan from Arm. *oski*, "gold", the latter in post-Classical dialects generally pronounced with on-glide v-].

Zināc, meat (p.m., "slaughtered").

T'evnuc', clothing (p.m., "shoulder cloak").

Ink'y, good, beautiful.

Lōtrā, see *Āspātāur*.

Xānjārōr, 1. wool, 2. felt [from Arm. *xanjarur*, “swaddling clothes”].

Xārnākum, party held by a felt-maker before going away (p.m., “confusion”) [possibly has lewd sexual overtones; Arm. *xārnakum* “mixing up” is often in Classical and homiletic literature used to mean “illicit intercourse”].

Xātxātun, raisin (p.m., something piece by piece, or with pits).

Xirkil// *xilkil*, perform the sexual act (p.m., “plowing a winter field”) [cf. the English idiom “plow” for “fuck”].

Xuz, Turk [possibly from Ghuzz or Oghuz, Turkic tribal names, with popular etymological and pejorative contamination by Arm. *xoz*, “pig”].

Cālāc, candle rolled into a ball (p.m., “wrapped”), cf. *Kəpč’ān*.

Cālkil, to laugh (p.m., “to flower”).

Cāvār ānil, to talk too much (p.m., “to cook pilaf”).

Cērnuc’, stick for beating wool [into felt] (p.m., “handle”).

Cēt’il, to eat (p.m., “become smaller”) [cf. the Arm. idiomatic *jet pet* “small and great”].

Cēt’un// *cēt’āun*, dinner.

Cēkāc’, trousers [perhaps from Arm. *cak*, “hole”, into which the leg is inserted, cf. Biblical Hebrew *mixnasāyīm*, “idem”, lit. “twin inserters”].

Cəxk’yēš, pipe for smoking (p.m., “chimney”), i.e. *cux k’aš* “smoke-puller”.

Cəvil, to drink.

Cux// *cāux*, tobacco (p.m., “smoke”), perhaps shortened *cxaxot*, lit. “smoke-grass”.

Curān, honey [probably from Arm. *corem*, “flow”].

Curil, to run away [cf. *Curān*].

Cōv, great (p.m., “sea”).

Kāžō, lira coin, cf. *Zərō* [possibly from Arm. *k’a(r)žē*, “it’s worth”?].

Kākul// *kākāul*, cotton wool (p.m., “soft”).

Kānāč’āmusk// *kānāč’āmāusk*, Russian (lit., “green-eyed”).

Kānt’, woman, wife (p.m., “handle of a vessel”).

Kānč’ān, rifle (p.m., “shouter”).

Kāvkuł, shoes.

Kārmir čūr, wine (p.m., “red water”).

- Kyāp* ' , bread.
Kāk'yāv, daughter-in-law, young girl (p.m., "partridge").
Kēcāk, fire (p.m., "lightning").
Kyālxānuc ' , hat (p.m., "headgear") [standard Arm. *glxanoc*].
Kēcān, dog (p.m., "biter").
Kēcēyk // *kēcēk*, daughter, girl (p.m., "skein").
Kəpč'ān, candle (p.m., "kindling"), cf. *Cālāc*.
Kərvān, nut.
Kyətālāmān, mouth (p.m., "spoon holder").
Ktrācurēk [-*urēyk*], a five-piastre coin [contains standard Arm. ppart. *ktrac*, "cut off", so "piece"].
Kətril, steal (p.m., "cut").
Kətruc ' , 1. knife, 2. saw (p.m., "cutter").
Kəraŋgyl, go away, escape (verb formed from p.m., "heel").
Kyörcāc, satin (lit., "woven").
Kor'k'yēt ' , felt-maker's tool (lit., "stick with a curved end").
Korəngyān c'ānil, see *C'ānil*.
Korkil, to arrive.
Kuru, bag for wool (from the imperative form of the verb "to lose" with the sense of "hide!").
Härt'nuc ' , bag, wallet (p.m., *samannik* "mud brick" (?)).
Čālāc ' , mouth (p.m., "watermill").
Čärtək'yar, root tooth (p.m., "white stone").
Čəməc'əc'il, to kill (p.m., "squash, squeeze").
Čəmil, aorist *Čəməv*, to die (p.m., "to be squeezed").
Māzwor // *māzwür* , 1. goat, 2. priest (p.m., "hairy").
Māunj, 1. blanket, 2. felt.
Māusk, eye (cf. also *Musk*). *Muskäyn*, early in the morning, at dawn, tomorrow⁸⁰.
Māuskil, to look.
Māt, brother (p.m., "finger").
Mērāc, yoghurt (p.m., "fermented").
Munč ' , 1. socks, 2. shoes.
Musēk, night.

80

[HLBB, Vol. 4: 95], cites *mauskil* "to look" and *musk* "eye" as *cackabanut'yun* "secret language"; and mentions also *musēk* "night".

Musk, window. Cf. *Māusk*.

Nerk'yävāk, woman, wife (p.m., “bottom millstone”).

Nəstvāc, floor [lit., that which is sat upon].

Noḡil, to sleep.

Šenk', 1. house, 2. door. [Cf. standard Arm. *šēnk'*, “building”.]

Šārēšt cāxil, to collect alms.

Širip'xāl, woman of the house [lit., the one who moves or plays—Arm. *xalam* — the ladle — Arm. *šerep*].

Šorāc, milk (cf. *Artār*) [cf. *šor*, “stream of milk from a cow’s udder” in standard Moks dialect, Orbeli 2002, p. 304].

Šōrəkoł, man of the house.

Č'alə'nk'y, Let's go! [Cf. Indic *čal-* through Romani?]

Č'ārč'ārac, *t'an* [i.e., yoghurt mixed with water] (p.m., “tortured”).

Č'ur, money (p.m., “dry”).

Č'ōnā, Go! [From Kd. *ču-* “go”?]

Pälärčil, to kiss.

Pärc', hand.

Pästil, to defecate.

Päräkəpuč', horse [lit., “fine-tail”].

Pärakil, to urinate.

Pärkupučäx, paper [lit., “fine edge, corner (?)” Tk. *bucak*].

Pat cak əē, Careful! They're listening in on us! This will give us away! (p.m., “there’s a hole in the wall.”)

Pərtun// pərtən, felt (cf. *Xänjərör*).

Pəspəlun// pəspəlāun, oil [from standard Arm. *psplal*, “to glisten”].

Pülür, piaster.

Pün, house (cf. *Šenk'*) [from standard Arm. *bun*, “native”, derivative verb *bn-ak-em*, “dwell”].

Sēzəē, wife (cf. *Kānt'*, *Nerk'yävāk*).

Sēzuc', see *Sēzəē*.

Sēx, dagger (p.m., “riveting hammer”).

Suril, 1. to run away, 2. to escape (cf. *Curil*).

Vāzān, dog [possibly from Arm. *vazel*, “to run” > “runner”, cf. *Kəcān*].

Vāzkān, lentil.

Vānk'yəē, 1. a little, 2. There isn't any!

Vānk'yil, to steal, cf. *Kətril*.

Vānk'yōm, theft.

- Vārək*, daughter-in-law, young girl (p.m., “chick”, cf. *Kāk’yāv*).
Vāstkoł, father.
Vārəc’c’il, to steal, imperative *Vārəc’c’u’* (cf. *Vānk’yil*).
Vārıl, to go, aorist *vāric’*. See also *Vāērnāl*.
Vērāvāk, husband, man (p.m., “top millstone”).
[Vāērnāl], to go, aorist *vāerc’āv*.
Vilkil, see *Suril*.
Vōstān xərıl, to be hungry, aorist *xērāv*; *Vōstān xərük aē*, he is hungry.
Vōstānc’ə, wheat.
Tāxtāk, tongue (p.m., “board”); see also *Tāxtəxkič’*.
Tāknuc’, felt (p.m., “bedding”), cf. *Pərtun*.
Tākpün, mosque. (From Ar. *takbīr*, the act of declaring *Allāh hū akbar* “God is great”?)
Tārčūr, vodka (p.m., “bitter water”).
Tātākān, bull; see also *Tātōl*.
Tātōl, see *Tātākān*.
Tāk’yčūr, tea (p.m., “hot water”).
Telāc, see *K’yārānāc*.
Tāxtəxkič’, see *Tāxtāk*.
Təp’əsil, to carry off.
Təp’ič’, penis [lit. “beater”, cf. standard Moks dialect *təp’il*, “to beat”, Orbeli 2002, p. 336].
Təxōl (1), 1. felt-maker, 2. man of the house.
Təxōl (2), ram.
Tīp// təp, good, beautiful (cf. *Āntip*).
Tīr-pāc’, door (p.m., “Open! Shut!”).
C’āx, beard (p.m., “straw”).
C’ānil, to fear.
C’ərük, boy, son [cf. standard Arm. *c’ruk*, “snout”].
C’ic’, husband; cf. *Vērāvāk*. [Cf. standard Arm. *c’ic’*, “stake, erect”.]
Wornuc’, trousers; cf. *Cēkāk’*. [Probably to be understood as **(v)or-noc’*, lit. “container of the anus”.]
Worvānk’y, *cacık* [Tk., thickened yogurt to which diced cucumber or yogurt is added] (p.m., “sediment, waste”).
Wotnuc’, 1. socks, 2. shoes. [Arm. **(v)ot-noc’*, lit., “container of the foot”; cf. reconstruction of *wornuc’*, *supra*.]
P’āt’ət’āc, cigarette [lit. “roll up”].

P'ētatil, to fuck. [Possibly from standard Arm. *p'ettel*, “to pluck out”.]

P'it'nil, to be tired.

P'ukār//p'āukār, daughter-in-law, married daughter.

K'yālāk, upper part of the torso (p.m., “boat on inflated skins”)

K'yāmuc, loop on a stick.

K'yār, village. (From Semitic *qīrya*?)

K'yārānāc, cheese; see also *Telāc*.

K'yet'rik, bag for wool; cf. *Kuru*.

K'yerāšt, wrist (p.m., *vila* (?)).

K'yāšōl, 1. village elder, 2. shepherd (p.m., “herder”).

K'yōš, bek [Tk. or Kd. chieftain].

4. Texts in the “third script” of Petersburg MS A 29

Although the author of the MS seems to have intended his script for use with his invented language, and for philosophical tracts, it is employed here mainly to encode all or part of various magic spells. A number are transcribed and translated here: where they mix the standard Mesropian script of Armenian with the cipher, the words in standard Armenian are transcribed in bold face. Sometimes but not always they are the most innocuous parts of the text, unsurprisingly; but sometimes also a word may be written with a mixture of the two scripts, either with the intention of complication for reading or perhaps because of a *lapsus calami*. In at least one case the scribe confuses the characters for the letters *g* and *d*, which are adjacent in the Armenian alphabet — an indication that although he wrote the cipher elegantly, he was not so thoroughly practiced in it as not to be thinking any longer of which letters of the standard alphabet its characters replaced. One interesting lexical feature of the spells is immediately evident: over and over, the scribe idiosyncratically employs (and variously spells) the adverb *anpatčar*, literally “causeless” and generally used as such in Clas. Arm., with the secondary meaning, now most common in vernacular Mod. Arm., “definitely, absolutely”. This may reflect the idiom of the day: on 12 March 1747, for instance, an Armenian merchant of Tokat employed the word to mean “must absolutely” in addressing a letter to

a merchant from Bursa at Canton in China⁸¹. It is at any rate an indication that, whatever his source for these incantations, the rendering of them is his own.

Fol. 45v. *grē t'ē filani ordi filann korč'i* (magic square) *ays veroy greal tlisms eōt 'n ktor t'lt'i vrēn ōrēnn* [for *ōrinak?*] *mēk ktorn tār kraki vrēn deṛ gc'ac' č'aes* [for *gc'ac č'es?*] *asa: lic' zeresn anarganōk'.* *Filani ordi filanin hōr anun tu* [for *tur?*] *ew apa asa ayn salmosn. A(stua) c o nmani k'ez?* *minč'ew ayn teln or asē o(r)p(ēs) baz kez" w zlerins ew apa jgea krakn ōrn mēkn e ways veroy greal salmosn asa minč'ew eōt 'n ōr ew apay k'o č'araēamn* [for *č'arakamn?*] *veṛan: zk'ēn A(stuco)v.* "Write this so that X's⁸² son X will be lost. (Magic square) Make copies on seven pieces of paper of the talisman written above, take one, hold it over a fire and just before you cast it in say, 'Fill his face with dishonor.' Give the father's name of X son of X and then recite the Psalm, 'God, who is like unto you' up until the place where it says 'as a fire He burns the mountains'⁸³ and then cast it into the fire. Recite as above once a day for seven days and then your *enemy... you, by God."

Fol. 45r. *Gir siroy siracit mazn ays ē surma šinē ač'k't sirē k'ez anp(a)tčār.* "A love spell: Take a hair of your beloved and use it to dab antimony around your eyes, and she will definitely love you."

Ayl gir siroy akr'awi lelin muškow hetā pahē siren k'ez anpatčār. "Another love spell: keep a crow's liver together with musk (?), and they will definitely love you."

Wasn [sic!] hiwandi grē nerk'oy t' lismns aḡ jeṛn pṛnea tur t'ē cicali apri t'ē lay meṛni. (Magic symbols) "For a sick man: write the talisman below on your right hand and have him seize it. If he laughs, he will live; if he cries, he'll die. (Magic symbols)"

⁸¹ [Aslanian 2011: 89 and 92] fig. 4.

⁸² Arm. *filan*, from the Turkish loan form of Arabic *fūlān*, "somebody or other".

⁸³ Ps. 82.1, *Astuač o k'ez nmanic'ē* "O God, who may be likened to You?"; Ps. 82.14 ... *orpēs boc' zi kizu zlerins* "for as a fire He burns the mountains." The author may be citing from memory, since the precise first verse he cites is actually Ps. 88.8, *Tēr Astuač zawrut'eanc', o nmanē k'ez*, "Lord God of hosts, who is like You?" Armenians in olden times knew much of the Psalter by heart; and numerous Psalms were employed for magical purposes: see for example the modern magico-medical MS analyzed in [Russell 2011].

Grē nerk'oy dliṣn gnē [for *dnē*] *furn t'ē takn ankani mēni, t'ē takn č'a ənkni ku apri. Ays ē:* (Magic symbols) "Write the talisman below and put it in water. If it sinks to the bottom, he will die; if it doesn't sink to the bottom, he'll live. This is it: (Magic symbols)"

Fol. 46r. *Xrat vasn anerewoyt 'ut 'ean ar dan maztak V msxal ew gnay hangstarann. Krak tar hetd ew cxē e(w) karda ays nerk'o greal anuank's minč'ew V shat' amēnn ar minč' i jeri p'ayt ar:*

*ōsē mušin di mušin mēhr
dišn mēhrdišin mēhmēlēsēmi
ahiun ahiun ahran hēho
šin k'umšin mēhmēšun t'ēr
mušin aprašin k'elšin hēy
eljibēāē ors mazgel. Vēl
k'ēlmayē mēr duk' xam
č'a eaknč'is* [for *erknč'is*⁸⁴] *ha!*

"Advice concerning invisibility: Take a portion of mastic, five measures⁸⁵, and go to your chamber⁸⁶. Take fire with you and suf-fumigate it and recite the names below, for five hours⁸⁷. Do it all while holding a staff in your hand⁸⁸. (*Nomina barbara*)⁸⁹ Don't fear, then!"

⁸⁴ Cf. the instruction in the spell on Fol. 47r., *infra*, with the same word and injunction not to fear after performing a magical operation in a graveyard.

⁸⁵ Arm. *msxal*, for Arabic-in-Persian, *mithqāl*.

⁸⁶ Arm. *hangstaran*, lit. "place of rest" — a word for which our author gives a *Řštuni* equivalent (*ap'it'rōnap'it'*) in his glossary, even adding its locative singular form!

⁸⁷ Arm *shat'*, for Arabic in Turkish *sā'at*.

⁸⁸ The word here is Arm. *p'ayt*, "piece of wood, stick", a term used also of the Tree of Life of the Cross; but the context here would indicate a magician's staff, analogous to the *gawazan* "crozier, scepter" of a clergyman or noble, or the sword of an exorcist (see [Russell 2000(a) and 2001]).

⁸⁹ These rhyming nonsense words appear to contain Persian *mehr*, "love", and Turkish *elçibey* "emissary". As with the *Řštuni* language, their phonetic un-Armenianness is stressed by the frequency of long vowels and the absence of sounds like /dz/ and /ch/. The intent here seems to be to mimic a spell in Persian. See Russell 2012(c) on *nomina barbara* and *voces mysticae* in Armenian magical texts.

Gi[r] vasn siroy. Knoġ kat'n kt'ea tur aynk'(a)n or XLIX msxal alurn xmorn ē ayn uzacit nman pat[k?]er šinē ew apay ays t'lisms nerk'oy gre(a)l hasarak tan(a)k'ov grē i v(e)r(ay) t't'i ew kpc'ru i v(e)r(ay) xmorē pat[k?]eri p'orin ew dir melm mōrmōti fro(y) č'ayrē aynpēs takana(y) siri anpatčar tlišmn or ē ays: (Magical symbols) ew apa gre siracit ano(w)nn i groc's t'lms t'ē filani dustr filann inc sirē ays ē. "Love spell: sprinkle enough of a woman's milk to make dough of forty-nine measures of flour. Make an image in the likeness of the one you desire. Then write in common ink this talisman written below and fasten it to the belly of the image made of dough, and place it in the juice of a soft bramble plant so that it doesn't burn, that way she may grow hot and definitely love you. This is the talisman: (Magical symbols) And then write the name of your beloved, in the writing of this talisman, thus: may X's daughter X love me."

Fol. 46v. *V(a)sn knoġ č'aylanaloy et'ē uzarliki tak'in knikn vrēn pahē č'i yłana*. "For a woman's not becoming pregnant. If a woman keep over her the root of the wild rue⁹⁰ she will not become pregnant." Marginal note: *boxsur mariam* "starwort"⁹¹.

⁹⁰ This is *Peganum harmala*, Tk. *üzerlik otu*, Pers. and Arm. *s(i)pand* (see Bedevian 1936, p. 444 no. 2575 and Gabikéan 1968, p. 187, no. 1392: *uzērlik*, *iwzērlik* in the Arm. dialect of Sebastia/Sivas) burned as incense by Iranians, who attribute to it numerous magical properties; the Iranian name means "holy", and Prof. Martin Schwartz has proposed that it was a component of the original mixture of entheogenic plants pounded in Indian and Zoroastrian sacrificial ritual, the Av. *haoma*, Ved. *soma*; and explains the Turkic name as meaning "conferring a hundred virile potencies" [Flattery and Schwartz 1989: 149–150]. As for the root the spell prescribes, the greatest amount of psychoactive components in *Peganum harmala* is in mature seeds (up to seven percent) and in the roots (up to just over three percent), but the latter is richest through the early part of the year till the former ripen [*Ibid.*, pp. 34, 82]. The plant was believed by mediaeval Muslim doctors to induce menstrual flow [*Ibid.*: 32–33]; so perhaps this was a reason the Armenian magician-herbalist prescribes it against conception — after which a woman's menses stops until the child's birth.

⁹¹ Ar. *baxūr maryam*, Tk. *mariam buhuru*, Arm. *maremaxnkeni* ("Mary's frankincense") or *p'ok'r mškacalik* "little musk flower": [Bedevian 1936: 435 no. 2521].

Gir siroy. Smbuli calikn vardn ew manušakn et'ē č'orac'nes i miasin ew manr p'oši anes ew xārnēs, delin momi het um or k'ses sirē kez' anpatjař. "Love spell: If you dry the hyacinth flower, rose, and violet and make a fine powder and mix them with yellow wax, whomever you rub with it will definitely love you."

Fol. 47r. *Tatruk gir siroy tatragi jun xōrōwa ew č'orac'ru um or (e)w kirakri vrēn anes manr p'oši ara: k'ez sirē anpatčar.* "Turtledove love spell: Roast the egg of a turtledove and dry it, then sprinkle it as a fine powder over the food of that person and (s)he will definitely love you."

Ays nerk'wo greal t'lismi grē lñkit vr(ay): zor ōrinak (Magical diagram). *Ayspēs III ōr anc'eal lini III ōr(o)wan v(e)r(ay) gišern erku sahat'n anc'eal lini: gnay meřeli gerezmani v(e)r(ay) yet kōys parkil II jerōk'g* [for -d] *gerezmani holic'n ver ar ayn hołn pind pahir ap'it mējn šutov gas anc'anes mēk gnac'akan get ork'an ahac'uc'anen mi erkñč'ir oč' yet mtik tur oč' jayn tur miaynak gnay. Ays holis xasiat'n ays ē min p'ok'r ays holic's ealluin kapē dnes mēk mardo(y) coc' inč' ban or xndres k'ez kutay ew ink'n k'un ku lini ayn t(o)wac zatn knw mořana(y) yetoy ayn hołn hanē coc'ic'n k'ez hamar pahē. Inč' k'un mardo(y) coc'n dnes mna(y) aynpes k'un o(r)pēs meřeal. Olj leruk'.* "Write the talisman below on your fingernail, as for instance thus: (Magical diagram) Let three days pass. Go to the grave of a dead man on the night of the third day after the second hour and lie upon it with a virgin. With both hands take up earth from that grave and grip it tightly in the palm of your hand, then come quickly to, and cross, a fordable river. No matter how much they terrify you, fear not. Pay no heed to what is behind you and do n't let out a sound, just keep going. The function⁹² of this soil is that if you take just a little of it and bind it with

⁹² Arm. *xasiat'*, more commonly *hasiat'* in magical texts, from Arabic-in-Persian: in the much-corrupted late Middle Armenian paraphrases of the Testament of Solomon, where the ancient king and archmage interrogates some seventy-two demons, "What is your *hasiat*?" (i.e., role, function, specialty) is part of the standard list of questions posed to each spirit in turn. And the demon willingly recites both its particular baneful talent and the talisman capable of summoning and controlling it: see [Russell 2012(c)]. The magical rite of MS A-29 apparently combines zombification with inducement of a comatose state.

butter⁹³ and place it upon a man's breast, he will give you whatever you seek, while he himself will be asleep, and will forget whatever he had given (?). Then remove the soil from his breast and keep it for yourself. Any sleeping man's chest you put it on, he'll stay asleep like a corpse. Be ye well."

Fol. 49r. *Et'e t'ln* [for *t'lsmn?*] *mējn k'o sermn kat'ac'nes um or tas utel aržamayn k'ez sirē: ayspēs* (Magical symbols). "If you ejaculate your semen onto this talisman, the person to whom you give it to eat will love you instantly. Thus: (Magical symbols)."

The text on Fol. 67r-v is not so much a spell, though it is of magical content, as a curiously garbled account of the Armenian magical flower called *hamasp'iwṛ* (lit. "all-spreading"), which first sprouted from the blood of martyrs, and to which are ascribed numerous virtues⁹⁴. The author of the MS has not got the name of the flower right and conceals it in cipher the two times it is mentioned; the rest is in Armenian plaintext. The misreading, *hamarfiws*, is of interest since as a standard Armenian compound the word *hamasp'iwṛ* is not in the least esoteric or unusual, though the flower it denotes is probably mythical. One might not therefore exclude the possibility that he was miscopying a manuscript not his own in which the word was already written in cipher: in the cryptogram, the characters for *f* and *p'* are nearly identical, and the characters for *s* and *ṛ*, already adjacent in the order of the Mesropian alphabet and cipher alike, are 180-degree inversions of each other. The cartonnage facing fol. 1r, as noted, is made of glued-together fragments of cipher text. Though its style of handwriting does not differ from that of the MS proper, the rather unlikely misreading of the word *hamasp'iwṛ* and one's suggestion of the reason for it, as well as the presence of text in the cipher in the material of the cardboard binding, together allow the possibility that our author might not have been the inventor and sole user of the cryptogram. I have in a study of another cryptogram attested in many MSS coined the term "hetaerogram" for a cryptogram so widely shared by some guild or sodality (Gk. *hetaira*) as to be more

⁹³ Arm. *eallu*, i.e., standard Tk. *yağlı*, "possessing or containing oil". One standard Western Armenian term for butter is *ardar el* or *iwl*, lit. "pure, righteous oil" [Riggs 1847: p. 8].

⁹⁴ See [Russell 1997: 93–94 with refs].

a marker of belonging than a method of concealing information. Perhaps we deal, then, with a “hetaerogram” here, though that suggestion must remain hypothetical until and unless another MS by another hand comes to light. The author seems at the end of the brief text to have conflated the *hamasp* ‘*iwr*’ with the mandrake (Arm. *loštak*), about whose human form and loud cry Armenians and others hold many superstitions in common.

Hamařfiws c(a)lki meknu(t')i(w)nə: Dionēsēos imastasērñ or akanates elēl ays hamařfiws calkis or ew banalik ‘d am(enayn) k(a)p(a)c bannerun. Anuřahot burastanoc ‘terewn kanač ‘ew bolor or jax ač ‘k ‘n uni i t(e)r ew elern karmir ew řurf řini zinč ‘ařelakn or inč ‘anē: calikñ ciranagoyn ē, telew aysp ‘iwr. Kaputakd ink ‘n apa am(enayn) imastasirac ‘ew ġitnakanac ‘ew yusumnasirac ‘. Ew yoržam ařnen zna hřom, jēt ‘n xarñen zna ew k ‘sen otin ew jerk ‘n eresn ew berann: XXII azgi lezun xōsi ew XXII ġir ġrē ew k(a)rd(a)y. Ew yoržam řirimē elanes am(enayn) calikk ‘xōsin ə(nd) k ‘ez. Ew asen t ‘ē zinč ‘irac ‘deřēn ew t ‘ē uzes or ġtanes zna, i ġiwlñ ġrc t ‘uxi leařn naranic ‘i ġarñoy k ‘alač ‘n or aržrum i bark ‘oy leařn i ġorn masanc ‘i dařtn masic ‘or hayer xaxway ġnay: ġit i bolorn varagay leařn, i ġluxn III vēm kay, min vimac ‘n ġtanes zřnorhali caliks ays: hastateay i yunisi amsoy, XXē ew i k ‘aloc ‘i XIn ew III ġr i pah kac ‘ir, ew alač ‘ē zhogin s(ur)b or tay k ‘ez. Ink ‘n piti elanē XXI ġiwlē ew bažani X čiwł. Ew āsen t ‘ē erb calikñ otac ‘zēt mardoy ġlux řinay kam mñay ač ‘k ‘it berann bac ‘zspē: k ‘ez v(a)s(n) ġcin. A(stua)c yusac ‘ir ew ġnay.

“Explanation of the *hamasp* ‘*iwr*’⁹⁵ flower. Dionysus the philosopher was eyewitness to this flower, the *hamasp* ‘*iwr*’, which is even the key to all things locked. It is sweet in scent in gardens; its leaf is green and it has an eye on the left on the leaf (?) that is red, and around it bends (?). Its flower is purple in hue, and in the place where it spreads out (?) it is blue. It is then for all philosophers and scholars and the studious. And when they take it to Rome, they compound it with oil and smear it on their feet, hands, faces, and mouths. It speaks 22⁹⁶ kinds of languages and writes and

⁹⁵ The final *s* instead of *ř* seems to be a scribal error: in the cipher, the character for the latter is the former flipped vertically over.

⁹⁶ This is an unusual number for a magical text in that it has no obvious Pythagorean or other cosmological symbolism, though the Hebrew alphabet does have 22 letters. Perhaps the tradition is grabbed here, as elsewhere, and

reads 22 alphabets. And when you emerge from the grave all the flowers talk with you. And they say that it is a medicine for various things. And if you want to find it, go to the village Örc⁹⁷ of Black Mountain, from it, to the city of Karin which is Erzerum, to the mountain Bark'oy to the valley of Masunk' in the plain of Masis facing Xaxo. Find it around mount Varag⁹⁸: on the summit there stand three boulders, and on one of them you will find this flower full of grace. It is fully blossoming in the month of June, from the 20th, and on 11th K'ałoc'. And fast for three days and beseech the Holy Spirit that he may give it to you. It sprouts from 21 branches and divides into 10 branches. And they say that when the flower has feet like a man and rears its head or turns openmouthed to your eye, restrain it⁹⁹. It is (good) for you for snakes. Hope in God and go."

LIST OF PLATES

1. Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, MS A 29, endpapers and fol. 1 r.
2. MS A 29, fols. 44 v.-45 r. with the table of the "Third Script".
3. MS A 29, fols. 45 v.-46 r.
4. MS A 29, fols. 46 v.-47 r.
5. MS A 29, fols. 66 v.-67 r. with the beginning of the history of the *hamasp'iwri* flower.
6. MS A 29, fol. 67 v. with the conclusion of the history of the *hamasp'iwri* flower.
7. The "Ałuan" or "dove" cipher (A.G. Abrahamyan, *Hay gri ev grč'ut'yan patmut'yun* ["History of Armenian script and writing"], Erevan, pp. 220–221).

the original had "XII" (Arm. *žb*; in cursive *šelagir* the first letter, for "X" can, if the contunation of the loop to the right of the vertical is hooked, easily be misread for *i* "XX"). On 12 and 12000 in Armenian magico-mystical writings see Russell 1989, p. 230.

⁹⁷ Could this be Urc (lit. "wild thyme"), where the Cross-stone of 1279 discussed above came from?

⁹⁸ This is the mountain south of Van with its famous monastery that contained a relic of the true Cross.

⁹⁹ These are the legendary characteristics, not of the *hamasp'iwri*, but of the *loštak* ("mandrake").

8. The Seh-lerai script (Stamatiadis 1921, p. 99).
9. The Seh-lerai script (Stamatiadis 1921, p. 100).
10. The Seh-lerai script (Stamatiadis 1921, p. 101).
11. Title page of Tghransar, *Ans hailanzar*..., Smyrna, 1864.
12. Tıngırtepe, Izmir, with statue of Rumi.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Gevorg Abgaryan, “Č‘arenc‘i č‘vercanvac cackagrērə” [“The undeciphered cryptograms of Charents”], *Nork‘* 1991.8–9, Erevan, pp. 147–160.
- Levon Abrahamian and Nancy Sweezy, eds., *Armenian Folk Arts, Culture, and Identity*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001.
- A.G. Abrahamyan, *Haykakan cackagrut‘yun* [“Armenian Cryptography”], Erevan: Erevan State University Press, 1978.
- Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy*, New York: Ballantine, 2005.
- Michael Adams, *Slang: The People’s Poetry*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Fr. Nersēs Akinean, Grigoris I Aht‘amarc‘i, *keank‘ə ew k‘ert‘uacnerə* [“Grigoris I of Aht‘amar: His Life and Poems”], Vienna: Mxit‘arean tparan, 1958.
- Fr. Giwt Ałaneanc‘, Simēon Kat‘ulikosi yišatakaranə, *kensagrut‘eamb ew yawelucnerov ew canōt‘ut‘iwnnerov* [“The Memorial of Simeon Catholicos, with Biography, Appendices, and Notes”], *Diwan Hayoc‘ patmut‘ean* [“Record of Armenian History”], vol. III, Tiflis, 1894.
- Paolo Albani and Berlinghiero Buonarroti, *Aga Magéra Difúra: Dizionario delle lingue immaginarie*, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1994.
- Fr. Łewond Ališan, *Ayrarat*, Venice: S. Lazzaro, 1890.
- Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.
- Abraham Ayvazean, *Šar hay kensagrut‘eanc‘* [“Series of Armenian Biographies”], Constantinople, 1893, part II.
- Levon Azaryan, *Haykakan xačk‘arer* [“Armenian khatchkars”], Holy See of Echmiadzin, 1978.
- Alessandro Bausani, “About a curious mystical language Bāl-a i-Balan,” *East and West*, Year IV, No. 3, Rome: IsMEO, 1954, pp. 234–238.
- Alessandro Bausani, *Geheim- und Universalsprachen: Entwicklung und Typologie*, Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1970.

- Armenag K. Bedevian, *Illustrated Polyglottic Dictionary of Plant Names*, Cairo: Argus & Papazian Presses, 1936.
- Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Ten Lost Tribes: A World History*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Marjorie Boulton, *Zamenhof: Creator of Esperanto*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960.
- George A. Bournoutian, *Russia and the Armenians of Transcaucasia, 1797–1889, A Documentary Record*, Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 1998.
- George A. Bournoutian, tr., *Simēon Kat'oghikos Erewants'i, Jambī* (Archival Chamber), Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2009.
- Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, Vol. 1, Leiden: Brill, 1975.
- Tyler Burge, "A Theory of Aggregates," *Nous* 11.2, May 1977, pp. 109–111.
- Glenn Burger, ed., *Hetoum, A Lytell Chronicle: Richard Pynson's translation of "La Fleur des histoires de la terre d'Orient"*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.
- Yakov Chernikhov, *Graficheskie shdevry Yakova Georgievicha Chernikhova* ["The Graphic Masterpieces of Yakov Georgievich Chernikhov"], Berlin: Dom, 2009.
- B.L. Č'ugaszyan and P.M. Muradyan, eds., *Sayat' Nova, Xaṭer, Nmanahanut'iwn* ["Sayat' Nova, Songs, Facsimile"], Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1963.
- Philip K. Dick, *Valis*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2011.
- E. Drezén, *Historio de Mondolingvo*, 3rd ed., Osaka: Pirato, 1967.
- Umberto Eco, *Serendipities: Language and Lunacy*, Italian Academy Lectures, New York: Columbia University Press, 1998.
- Mircea Eliade, *Youth Without Youth and Other Novellas*, tr. by Mac Linscott Ricketts, Columbus, OH: Ohio State University Press, 1988.
- Daniel L. Everett, *Don't Sleep, There Are Snakes: Life and Language in the Amazonian Jungle*, New York: Vintage, 2008.
- Ronald A. Farrell, "The Argot of the Homosexual Subculture," *Anthropological Linguistics* 14.3 (March 1972), pp. 97–109.
- Charles Fossey, *Notices sur les caractères étrangers*, Paris: Imprimerie Nationale de France, 1948.
- David Stophlet Flattery and Martin Schwartz, *Haoma and Harmaline: The Botanical Identity of the Indo-Iranian Sacred Hallucinogen "Soma" and its Legacy in Religion, Language, and Middle Eastern Folklore*, University of California Publications: Near Eastern Studies, Volume 21, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989.
- Karapet Gabikéan, *Hay busašxarh* ["The Armenian Botanical World"], Jerusalem: St. James', 1968.

- Peter B. Golden, *The King's Dictionary (The Rasūlid Hexaglot: Fourteenth Century Vocabularies in Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Greek, Armenian and Mongol)*, Leiden: Brill, 2000.
- Andrew Colin Gow, *The Red Jews: Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age*, Leiden: Brill, 1995.
- Loren Graham and Jean-Michel Kantor, *Naming Infinity, A True Story of Religious Mysticism and Mathematical Creativity*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009.
- Wayne G. Hammond and Christina Scull, *J.R.R. Tolkien, Artist and Illustrator*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995.
- Wendy Heller, *Lidia: The Life of Lidia Zamenhof, Daughter of Esperanto*, Oxford: George Ronald, 1985.
- HLBB= Hayoc' lezvi barbarayin bararan ["Dialectological dictionary of the Armenian language"], Vols. 1–6, Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 2001–2010.
- Gevorg Jahukyan, *Hayeren stugabanakan bararan* ["Armenian Etymological Dictionary"], Erevan: Asolik, 2010.
- G. Khalat'iants, *Armianskii epos v istorii Moiseia Khorenskago* ["The Armenian epic in the history of Movsēs Xorenac'i"], Moscow, 1896.
- Victor Klemperer, *The Language of the Third Reich (LTI — Lingua Tertii Imperii, A Philologist's Notebook)*, New York: Continuum, 2000.
- K. Kostaneanc', ed., *Grigor Magistroi t'it'erə* ["The Letters of Grigor Magistros"], Alexandropol, 1910.
- Thomas Kühne, *Belonging and Genocide: Hitler's Community, 1918–1945*, New Haven, CT: Yale university Press, 2010.
- Paul Lerman, "Argot, Symbolic Deviance, and Subcultural Delinquency," *American Sociological Review* 32.2 (April 1967), pp. 209–224.
- Yovhannēs Mandakuni, *Čark'* ["Orations"], Venice: S. Lazzaro, 1860.
- Hrach K. Martirosyan, *Etymological Dictionary of the Armenian Inherited Lexicon*, Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Yaron. Matras, "The Romani element in German secret languages: Jewish and Rotwelsch," in Y. Matras, ed., *The Romani Element in Non-Standard Speech*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1998, pp. 193–230.
- David W. Maurer, *Language of the Underworld*, Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1981.
- R.R. Mehrotra, *Sociology of Secret Languages*, Simla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1977.
- Gurgen Melikian, "On the Problem of Secret Languages and Slangs in Iran," *Iran and the Caucasus* 6.1–2, 2002, pp. 181–188.

- A.A. Ōdabašyan, "Xosk'i hmayut'yunn u cesn Axtark'um" ["Verbal enchantment and ritual in magico-astrological texts"], *Mraber hasarakakan gitut'yunneri*, Erevan, 2000.1 (601).
- Marc Okrand, *The Klingon Dictionary*, New York: Pocket Books, 1985, 2nd ed., 1992.
- Arika Okrent, *In the Land of Invented Languages*, New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2010.
- Leonardo Olschki, *The Myth of Felt*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1949.
- Iosif Abgarovich Orbeli, *Fol'klor i byt Moksā* ["The Folklore and Everyday Life of Moksā"], ed. Karen N. Yuzbashyan, Moscow: Nauka, 1982.
- Iosif Abgarovich Orbeli, *Izbrannye trudy v dvukh tomakh* ["Selected works in two volumes"], Vol. II, ed. P.M. Muradyan, Erevan: Gitut'yun ["Science"], Armenian Academy of Sciences, 2002.
- Ēlias Petropoulos, *Kaliarnta: erasitekhnikē glōssologikē ereuna* [English title, "Kaliarda, an Etymological Dictionary of Greek Homosexuals' Slang"], Athens: Nephelē, 1982.
- Fr. Ep'rem Pōlosean, *Guyumčean ew T'ənkərean gerdastannerə* [German title, *Die Familien Kouyoumdjian und Tingir*], Vienna: Mxit'arean tparan (Mechitharisten-Buchdruckerei), 1951.
- Y.P. Pōlosean, *Hačəni əndhanur patmut'iwnə ew šrjakay Gōzan Tači hay giwlerə* ["The General History of Hajin and the Armenian Villages of the Surrounding Kozan Dagħ"], Los Angeles, 1942.
- M.N. Priēmysheva, *Tainye i uslovnye iazyki v Rossii XIX v.* ["Secret and invented languages in 19th-century Russia"], 2 vols., St. Petersburg: RAN, Institut lingvističeskikh issledovanii (Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute for Linguistic Research), 2009.
- Elias Riggs, *A vocabulary of words used in modern Armenian but not found in the ancient Armenian lexicons*, Smyrna: W. Griffitt, 1847.
- Ėaffi (Yakob Melik'-Yakobean), *Xač'agoči hišataranə* ["The Cross-Thief's Memorial"], *Erker* ["Works"], Vol. 2, Erevan: Haypethrat, 1962.
- Stephen D. Rogers, *A Dictionary of Made-Up Languages*, Avon, MA: Adams Media, 2011.
- J.R. Russell, "A Poem of St. Grigor Narekac'i," *Revue des Etudes Arménienes* 19, 1985, pp. 435–439.
- J.R. Russell, *Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i and the Mediaeval Armenian Lyric Tradition*, University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 7, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987.
- J.R. Russell, "A Wandering Herder of Camels," *Annual of Armenian Linguistics* 8, 1987(a), pp. 5–15.

- J.R. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, Harvard Iranian Series 5, Cambridge, MA, 1987(b).
- J.R. Russell, "The Book of the Six Thousand: An Armenian Magical Text," *Bazmavēp* 147.1–4, Venice, 1989, pp. 221–243.
- J.R. Russell, "On Mysticism and Esotericism among the Zoroastrians," *Iranian Studies* 26.1–2, 1993, pp. 73–94.
- J.R. Russell, "On the Origins and Invention of the Armenian Alphabet," *Le Muséon* 107.3–4, 1994, pp. 317–333.
- J.R. Russell, "On the name Mashtots," *Annual of Armenian Linguistics* 15, 1994 (b), pp. 67–78.
- J.R. Russell, "Liturgical Mysticism and the Narek," *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes* 26, 1996–7, pp. 427–439.
- J.R. Russell, "Scythians and Avesta in an Armenian Vernacular Paternoster, and a Zok Paternoster" *Le Muséon* 110, fasc. 1–2, 1997, pp. 91–114.
- J.R. Russell, tr. of Karapet Sital, *The Heroes of Kasht: An Armenian Epic*, Ann Arbor, MI: Caravan Books, Armenian and Caucasian Series, 2000.
- J.R. Russell, "A Scholium on Coleridge and an Armenian Demon," *JSAS* 10 (1998, 1999 [2000(a)]), pp. 63–71.
- J.R. Russell, "The Scepter of Tiridates," *Le Muséon* 114.1–2, 2001, pp. 187–215.
- J.R. Russell, "Room at the Inn: P'ut'kavank' and Sraoša," *Festschrift Shaul Shaked*, *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 26, 2002, pp. 205–215.
- J.R. Russell, "The Rime of the Book of the Dove (Stikh o Golubinoi knige): From Zoroastrian cosmology and Armenian heresiography to the Russian novel," in Christine Allison, Anke Joisten-Pruschke, and Antje Wendtland, eds., *From Daena to Din: Religion, Kultur und Sprache in der iranischen Welt* (Festschrift Prof. Dr. Philip Kreyenbroek), Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009, pp. 141–208.
- J.R. Russell, "The Script of the Dove: An Armenian Hetaerogram," *Journal of Armenian Studies*, Belmont, MA, Vol. IX, Nos. 1–2, 2010, pp. 61–108.
- J.R. Russell, "An Armenian magico-medical manuscript (Bzhshkaran) in the NAASR Collection," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 20, 2011, pp. 111–130.
- J.R. Russell, "Hārūt and Mārūt: The Armenian Zoroastrian Demonic Twins in the Qur'ān Who Invented Fiction" (Irano-Judaica conference, Hebrew Univ., Jerusalem, Oct. 2010), in publication, J. Rubanovich and Shaul Shaked, eds, *Irano-Judaica VII*, Jerusalem (2012).
- J.R. Russell, "Magic Mountains, Milky Seas, Dragon Slayers, and Other Zoroastrian Archetypes," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, Ann Arbor, MI, 2012(b).

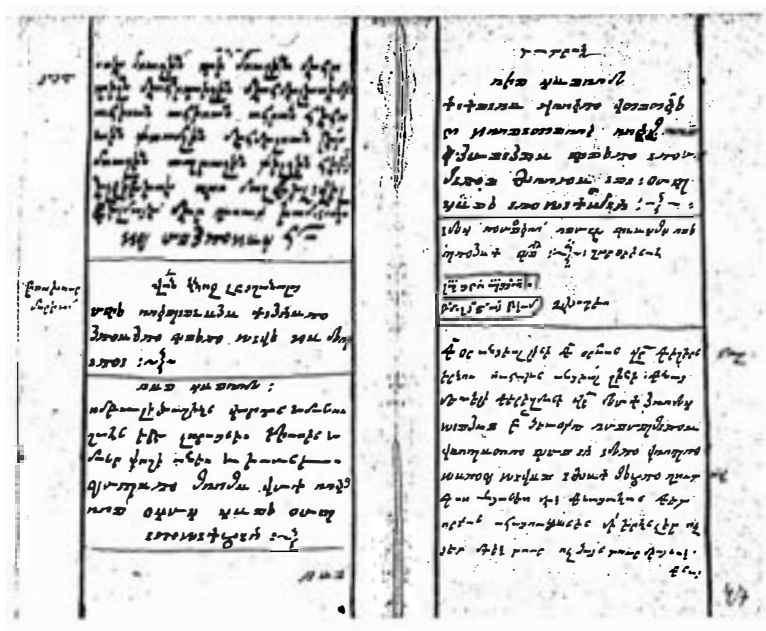
- J.R. Russell, "Languages of Men, Languages of Demons: Concerning Infernal Babble in Armenian Magical Manuscripts," (lecture at the University of Manchester, 9 November 2009) in publication, *Festschrift Michael Stone*, ed. Theo Van Lint, 2012(c).
- J.R. Russell, "Mashtots and Nga'ara: Writing and Cultural Survival in Armenia and Rapa Nui", forthcoming in Theo Van Lint, ed., *J.J.S. Weitenberg Memorial Volume*, 2013.
- J.R. Russell, "A Note on Armenian hrmštk-el," *Festschrift Garnik Asatrian*, forthcoming 2013(a).
- J.R. Russell, "On An Armenian Magical Manuscript (Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, MS 10558)," in publication, *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities*, Jerusalem, 2013(b).
- David Salo, *A Gateway to Sindarin*, Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2004.
- Jesse Schotter, "Verbivocovisuals: James Joyce and the Problem of Babel," *James Joyce Quarterly* 48.1, Fall 2010, pp. 89–109.
- Klaus Schubert, ed., *Interlinguistics: Aspects of the Science of Planned Languages, Trends in Linguistics, Studies and Monographs 42*, Berlin and New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1989.
- William Henry Sleeman, *Ramaseeana: Or A Vocabulary Of The Peculiar Language Used By The Thugs*, Calcutta: Military Orphan Press, 1836 (repr. Kessinger Publishing Legacy Reprints).
- Yuri Slezkine, *The Jewish Century*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004.
- Daniel Sperber, "On the Unfortunate Adventures of Rav Kahana: A Passage of Saboraic Polemic from Sasanian Persia," in Shaul Shaked, ed., *Irano-Judaica [I]*, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1982, pp. 82–100.
- Garegin Srnanjtecanc', *Mananay* ["Manna"], Constantinople, 1876.
- Tg(h)ransar [Petros T'ənkərean], "La lingvo Sehlerai" (tr. from Gk: by Anakreon Stamatiadis), *Bizantio: Esperantikē Epitheōrēsis*, Revue rédigée en esperanto, en Grec, et en Français, 1.3, Constantinople, 30 Sept. 1921, p. 64; 2nd part in *Bizantio* 1.4, 31 Oct. 1921, p. 99.
- Tghransar, *Ans Hailanzar ou Alpha-Gnomonomic de Seh-lerai: ouvrage*, Smyrne, 1864.
- J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Return of the King (Lord of the Rings, Part Three)*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1955.
- T'ovmay Arcruni, ed. K'. Patkanean, *Patmut'iwn tann Arcruneac'* ["History of the House of the Arcrunis"], St. Petersburg, 1887 (repr. as *Thomas Artsruni, History of the House of Artsrunik'*, Delmar, NY: Caravan, 1991).

- Robert W. Thomson, tr., Moses Khorenats'i, *History of the Armenians*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Robert W. Thomson, tr., T'ovma Artsruni, *History of the House of the Artsrunik'*, Detroit, MI: Wayne State University Press, 1985.
- Daniël Varužan, *Banastelcakan erker* ["Poetical Works"], *Ant'iliās* [Antelias, Lebanon]: Tparan Kilikiōy Kat'oīkosut'ean [Press of the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia], 1986.
- Dmitrii Vlasov, *Esperanto: polveka tsenzury. Razvitie Esperanto-dvizheniia i ego zhurnalistika v usloviakh tsenzury v Rossiiskoi Imperii i SSSR (1887–1938 gg.)* ["Esperanto: a half century of censorship. The development of the Esperanto movement and its journalism in the conditions of censorship in the Russian Empire and the USSR (1887–1938)"], Moscow: Impeto, 2011.
- Vardan Voskanian, "The Iranian Loan-Words in Lomavren, The Secret Language of the Armenian Gypsies," *Iran and the Caucasus* 6.1–2, 2002, pp. 169–180.
- Xorenac'i: M. Abelean, S. Yurut'iwnean, eds., *Movsisi Xorenac'woy Patmut'awn Hayoc'* ["The History of the Armenians of Movsēs Xorenac'i"], Tplis [Tiflis], 1913.
- Karen Nikitich Yuzbashian, *Armianskie rukopisi v peterburgskikh sobraniakh* ["Armenian manuscripts in Petersburg collections"], *Pravoslavnyi Palestinskii sbornik*, vypusk 104, St. Petersburg: Rossiiskaia Akademiia Nauk, Imperatorskoe Pravoslavnoe Palestinskoe Obshchestvo, 2005.















The Demon Weed

J A M E S R. R U S S E L L

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, CAMBRIDGE

The Zoroastrian world teems with *xrafstras*—the evil beings cobbled together by a resentful Ahreman in opposition to the good creations of Ohrmazd. Though Christian doctrine affirms that all creation is the Lord's, in practice the faith is no stranger to dualism and demonization: the curious Middle Armenian poem offered here for the first time in translation into any Western language has as its subject a weed of the New World no denizen of the Sasanian realms could have known. But in the course of its demonization it was associated with Egypt, proverbial in the Biblical and Mazdean worlds alike as a place of dark magic. It is a pleasure to offer this small lucubration to a great scholar and esteemed colleague, Prods Oktor Skjærø.

One hears little good of tobacco these days. But even before billion-dollar judgments against the cigarette companies, people disapproved of the plant. Chekhov's dramatic monologue, *O vrede tabaka* ("On the harm tobacco causes") starts out that way, but after the first few lines it is plain that what the lecturer really wants to tell us about is his nagging wife and miserable life: the audience is left with the conviction that the pleasure and distraction tobacco can afford far outweigh the harm to one's health it can do. Chekhov was a physician, and did not live much past forty. And for those who do, no prizes are offered: eat broccoli and work out, but you will still be sick and lonely someday, and you will die. The gift of wine offered by Dionysus to mankind was understood by the Greeks as pity on our lot. Follow the advice of Baudelaire in his *Paris Spleen*: Get drunk! (And have a smoke while you're at it.) On wine, on anything at all you please. But you must get drunk!

The seventeenth-century Armenian poem here offered in translation, *Patmut' iwn piłc t'ut'unin*, affords a brief and fascinating glimpse into every-

day Armenian life four centuries ago, when the use of tobacco in the Old World was little more than a century old. It has an unintended resemblance to Chekhov, in that what it has to say about something else— weird East Christian legendry, in this case—is much more interesting than the subject of tobacco, though here the plant becomes literally a demon weed. It not only kills you. It sends you to Gehenna. Maybe it does. But I do not mean this article to be understood in any way as discouraging or disapproving of smoking or any other merciful vice that lightens the terrible fardel of time. Fire up your *narghileh*, and read the verses as a postprandial entertainment.

Tobacco is pure American, and, like much else in the culture of this fair land (though not Mom's apple pie), it is pleasurable, harmful, and addictive: the natives have been using it constantly up and down both continents for eight thousand years as a recreational, medicinal, and shamanistic drug. It is smoked, drunk in decoctions, chewed or applied in wads, inserted into the rectum in enemas, patted on the vagina as a pain-killer, mixed with the bodily juices of decomposition of a dead shaman and quaffed sacramentally, or mixed with other, more potent, hallucinogens like *yagé*. The first European references to it belong to Christopher Columbus and his crew. In 1527, Bartolomeo de las Casas reported that the Indians smoked the plant in cigars called *tobacos*. In 1557, André Thevet calls tobacco by the Indian word *petun*, from which Turkish *tütün* and the Armenian loan from there, *t'ut'un*, come (modern Arm. *cxaxot*, "smoke-grass," is a purist neologism).¹ In modern Turkish, *Nicotiana glauca* is *tembeki*, *N. rustica* or *N. tabacum* is *tütün*.² Most people smoke tobacco now, as cigarettes, cigars, and bidis; but in the Near East it is smoked also with a waterpipe, called by the Iranians a *qalyun* (pronounced *ghalyun*, and thus transliterated in the

Arm. poem, which uses that word repeatedly), by the Turks and Greeks *narghileh*, and by the Arabs, *shisheh*. People often mix opium or hashish with tobacco to enjoy a waterpipe, though this is illegal. One contents oneself with the legal and sufficiently enjoyable mode: a mixture of tobacco, apple, and molasses made in Egypt, which produces a pleasant and mild fragrance. A great pleasure of life in Iran today is to relax in a *qahve-khāneh* with friends, drinking tea, eating dates, and smoking a *qalyun*. A girl or boy carries around to the customers a metal *manghal*—brazier—with smoking incense of *sepan*—rue—to ward off the evil eye. A modest consideration is appreciated.

The Armenian poem is of anonymous authorship (though the writer, given his chiding of clergymen who smoke and his harping on church and hell, might have been a man of the cloth) and the earliest manuscript containing it dates to 1701; some of it derives from a rather less colorful or interesting poem by one John (Yovhannes) that does not refer, for instance, to the Egyptian magicians I will mention presently. Manuscripts of John's poem predate this one by half a century, and texts of both are fairly numerous, so it may be assumed that tobacco-smoking had become a real social problem amongst Armenians perhaps as early as the year the Mayflower weighed anchor at Plymouth Rock, in 1620—and certainly by the time England relieved the Dutch of New Amsterdam, two-score years and some thereafter. The Arm. poem is printed in H. Sahakyan, ed., *Uš mijnadari hay banastełcut'yunə XVI–XVII dd.* (The Armenian poetry of the late Middle Ages: 16th–17th centuries), vol. 2 [Erevan, 1987], pp. 643–47; and John's *Vasn t'ut'uni*, "Concerning Tobacco," appears on pp. 335–39 of the same volume.

The poet makes some astonishing claims that are extra-Biblical, to say the least, about Jannes and Jambres, the Egyptian magicians of uncanonical Old Testament legend who opposed (and, according to the pagan Numenius, second-century A.D., defeated) the magic wrought by Moses. This devious duo are known in Armenian: the most obvious and probable conduit will have been, in all ages, the *Penitence of Cyprian*, a work of ca. the fifth century about a magician of Antioch who converted to Christianity, whom the devil had hailed as "a new Jambres." Another source might have been the Chronology of Michael the Syrian, in which the Byzantine emperor Leo IV is

said to have sent to the Caliph al-Mahdi, "who had devoted himself to the practice of witchcraft and guided himself by the stars" a copy of the "book of Jannes and Jambres the sorcerers that they had employed against Moses, and he received it with delight."³ Our author claims they planted in the earth the limbs God caused the Serpent in Eden to lose, and tobacco grew from these.⁴ Perhaps what inspired him was the beginning of the text of the pseudepigraphon, where a king, presumably that of Egypt, has summoned his sages to examine the "growth of some miraculous tree or other plant, the branches of which have quickly formed a shelter from the sun's heat."⁵ It sounds a bit like the way tobacco grows. Jannes arrives and sits under an apple tree in the text. Later, he gives Jambres a book of spells there: the apple tree could have reminded our late-mediaeval Arm. author of Eden. In the Christian East, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil is the fig; but there were Catholic missions in Anatolia, so the Latin tradition of the apple as the deadly fruit of our perdition—*malum* means both "apple" and "evil"—had been in currency in the East long enough by the seventeenth century for an Armenian to have made the association! Since the anonymous poet insists that Scripture is silent on tobacco, but claims that books (unnamed) condemn it, his source might have been the inspired sermon of an earlier divine.

The History of Foul Tobacco

O Christians, give ear!
See how foul a thing tobacco is:
They pay money—throw it in the fire—
And do their souls harm besides.

(5) The *qalyun*-pipe is richly adorned:
Putting their mouths to it, they lap it up like dogs,
Drink, and expel the smoke from their mouths,
Their noses, eyes, and ears.

They expel the smoke in billowing clouds:
(10) The angels flee the stench,
Soar up, and rise to Heaven
And make complaint to the Son of God.

There is a man hungry for tobacco
Who smokes fifty waterpipes in a day

(15) And swallows the smoke, which reaches
his gut
And—worse than a dog⁶—turns and comes out.

He's withdrawn his hands from any work,
Fallen to the demons' lot.
What wretched children all they are!
(20) And not a scrap of bread's left in his house.

At night his thoughts dwell on it.
He turns and tosses, cannot sleep,
Gets up, sits down, and strikes the flint—
And imbibes filthy tobacco greedily.

(25) This world has phony priests
Who drink to excess foul tobacco—
They are like the evil Pharisees
And partners to the Hebrews' company.

They sit and drink in public
(30) With hacking coughs like junkyard dogs.
Their waterpipe is marble black;
Of finely worked ebony, its handle.

The laity see all this
And are emboldened to imitate it.
(35) The pastor knows how to read—they say—
And must know best, for ignorant are we.

He's the shepherd, we're the sheep,
We'll follow him home, wherever he goes.
If he doesn't say that it's a sin,
(40) Then what do we care about such things?

Tobacco is a weed that grows:
Scripture does not refer to it.
But now it's found a cozy home,
A dwelling for the demons' throng.

(45) The sermon's plain when you get up close:
Worms and blood fall off the tongue.
The serpent deceived Adam and Eve.
The evil Tempter was the cause.

They didn't keep the Lord's command:
(50) Deceived, they ate of Eden's fruit.
As soon as they had, they felt regret,
And were stripped of the ineffable light they
wore.⁷

They saw that they were naked
And wrapped themselves in fig leaves.
(55) Where are you, Adam?—cried the Lord.
For shame he fled and hid.

He says: You did not keep the commandment!
Come on, get out! This is not your house.
They say: The serpent tricked us—
(60) And point at the tree with the fruit.

Our Lord cursed the serpent.
Off fell its limbs—it had to slither.
The demons collected them
And took them to the bold devil.

(65) We found the potion of perdition—
They said— Destroyer of men's souls.
Jannes and Jambres, they say, in the Garden
Planted them, and tobacco grew.

First they called it *k'ark 'i*.⁸
(70) This is tobacco—the devil said.
They sowed its evil seed in the world,
A trap, a moth to eat men's souls.

Thus have they hunted down mankind,
Made a place for themselves, a home.
(75) Men have forgotten church and prayer:
Night and day they drink foul tobacco.

They do not want the aroma of incense.
They are blinded by this ugly smoke.
They have consigned their will to Satan,
(80) Signed on with the wicked foe.⁹

They impoverish their widowed souls,
Consigning them to hell's undying flames.
They collect somewhere and drink that scum
And, like hounds barking, belch coarse coughs.

(85) With smoke you have blackened your soul.
You never come to church to pray.
Wretch! Go and see for yourself
What the interpreter of Scripture has to tell.

They fasten on the waterpipe and pass it round,
(90) And, taking it, raise their hands above their
brows
And declare: Let its dust and flame
Pile up and on our heads crash down!

They take it from the Muslims' mouths,¹⁰
Drink, suck the poison up.
(95) The body enjoys a little pleasure,
But the soul becomes black within.

They have become the demons' habitation,
Spending the whole day in that company,
For all the writings testify:
(100) Repulsive is foul tobacco.

The soul clamors from within,
To the angels makes complaint
And says: Take me out of this place,
Out of this repulsive and foul body!

(105) Better far the reek of hell
Than this foul tobacco that they smoke:
They smoke it, spill the smoke on me,
And murder me right now.

My place is hard and ugly, foul
(110) And dark and muddy, gloom:
Satan's fattened us all up
To make of us the fiend's food.

Brethren, I counsel you,
Think well on what I've said.
(115) Do not perform Satan's will,
For hard and bitter is the day of death.

You despatch yourselves to hell for nought—
You do harm to your own soul.
When that evil *k'ark'i* grows green,
(120) They say it is shunned by the bee.¹¹

Notes

1. See J. Wilbert, *Tobacco and Shamanism in South America* (New Haven, 1987), passim; and M. Dobkin de Rios, *Hallucinogens: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (Albuquerque, 1984), esp. pp. 42–51.

2. See A. K. Bedevian, *Illustrated Polyglottic Dictionary of Plant Names* (Cairo, 1936), pp. 414–15 (nos. 2406–8).

3. *Žamanakagrut' iwn* Teafn Mixayēli Asorwoc' Patriark'i (Jerusalem, 1871), p. 353.

4. This is not the most fanciful or grotesque conception: in Russian lore, for instance, tobacco was said first to have grown from the huge genitalia (*udishch*) of Satan. The folkloric theme animates the story "What is Tobacco" (1906) by A. N. Remizov, discussed in E. Obatnina, *Tsar' Asyka i ego poddannye* ("King Asyka and his subjects") (St. Petersburg, 2001), p. 156.

5. See A. Pietersma and R. T. Lutz, intro. and trans., "Jannes and Jambres," in J. H. Charlesworth, ed., *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha*, vol. 2 (Garden City, New York, 1985), pp. 427–42. Simon Magus, Jannes and Jambres, Cyprian of Antioch, & Co. tend to travel together in late and odd Armenian pseudo-pseudepigrapha: see J. R. Russell, "The Mother of All Heresies: A Late Mediaeval Armenian Text on the *Yuškparik*," *Revue des études arméniennes* 24 (1993), esp. pp. 276–79 and nn. 8–11. Cyprian is best known to Armenians

from the *Kiprianos* a small amuletic prayer-book that bears his name. In addition to an abbreviated version of the Penitence, it contains various prayers—some Armenian Apostolic, some Catholic—to protect the reciter by the Holy Sign against unclean spirits.

6. Muslims dislike dogs, thinking them dirty. In Armenian, the animal bears the additional pejorative connotation of fornicating (cf. Clas. Arm. *šn-em*, "I copulate"; *šnūt'iwn*, "fornication"). A *tekke*, or den, with *narghileh*, *raki*, and Middle Eastern blues, was of course also a good place to pick up a wanton girl or boy. Vices should never come singly. The finest music of the genres of the *rebetika* and *amanedhes* of Modern Greece belong to the milieu of such establishments—in Constantinople, and, later, Athens.

7. The Hebrew tradition has Adam and Eve in garments of skin ('*ôr*), which was later misunderstood as light ('*ôr*): the earlier lyric poet Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i (whose lyric *oeuvre* this writer translated and published in the Univ. of Pennsylvania Arm. Series, 1987) is among those who repeat this common detail.

8. Unless saffron is meant, this is an unknown word.

9. Arm. *jeṛagir*, with the sense of "signature" here, a signed contract (usually in Modern Arm. it means "manuscript"), refers to the apocryphal tale of the *Cheirograph of Adam*, where the first human couple, freshly expelled from Eden, are terrified at nightfall. The devil promises them the Sun will rise again in a few hours (being just a bit older than they, he knows about the alternation of day and night) if only they will swear fealty to him, the contract to last till the unborn is born and the immortal dies. This is Christ, of whom Satan has no foreknowledge—so the devil was tricked in the end, and Jesus freed mankind of its bond. The cigarette that bears a lipstick's traces here signs a ticket to infernal places. See M. E. Stone, *Adam's Contract with Satan: The Legend of the Cheirograph of Adam* (Bloomington, 2002), reviewed by J. R. Russell, *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 10.2 (Fall 2003), pp. 309–12.

10. The word often used for a Muslim is, as here, *aylazgi*, "alien": Armenians learnt from their Muslim neighbors to smoke, though it was Christians, of course, who brought the weed to the Old World. In the poem, social intercourse with the unbelievers is also implied, and condemned. It is quite likely that the cozy den, with *narghileh* and music, was one of the few places where men of various faiths might socialize together.

11. With the start of this doubtless interesting *non sequitur*, the stub of the poem unexpectedly burns out. A continuator on this theme of "Where the bees don't suck" (*pace* the Bard), might borrow Ariel from *The Tempest* as an angel, and say, "Thank you for not smoking."

ЖИЗНЬ ДОРОГИ И ДОРОГА ЖИЗНИ: ОТРАЖЕНИЕ ОДНОЙ МЕТАФОРЫ В ЖИВОПИСИ И
ЛИТЕРАТУРЕ СРЕДНЕАЗИАТСКИХ КУЛЬТУР И АРМЯНСКОГО СРЕДНЕВЕКОВЬЯ

Поговорка гласит: «Жизнь прожить — не поле перейти», ибо жизненная дорога не прямая как стрела времени и не ровная и гладкая как скатерть. Согласно преданию, Магомет утверждал, что путешествие равняется одной шестидесятой мучений ада. Равнины «Мишны», однако, определили именно одну шестидесятую как меру незначительности: сон, например, является одной шестидесятой пророчества — и по сей день арамейское выражение *ботул бэ мишн*, т. е. шестидесятая доля не считается — употребляется в языке идиш. Пророк ислама, очевидно, либо не хотел преувеличить трудности дороги, либо не желал уменьшить страх верующих перед судным днем. Жизненный путь в переносном смысле и так тернист, не говоря уж о собственно дороге. А для значительной части экономического ключевого населения Средней Азии — я имею в виду купеческий слой согдийцев, а также монахов и проповедников различных религий и этнических групп — Великий Шелковый путь действительно был дорогой жизни. Важные торговые пути проходили и через Армянское нагорье, и с раннего средневековья до наших времен международная торговля способствовала образованию армянских общин (*գաղութ*, заимствование от арамейского *галут*[а]) от Средиземноморского побережья до Юго-Восточной Азии.

Соответственно с реальными условиями жизни и хозяйства, в живописи согдийцев и других ираноязычных народов Средней Азии нередко встречается тематика дороги. Значительная часть владельцев пенджикентских домов, в которых на фресках изображены путешественники и подвиги героев, либо состояла из купцов, либо была каким-то образом связана с международной торговлей. Жизнь представлялась как трудная дорога, однако материальные условия жизни зависели в то же время от этой же самой дороги. Само по себе это совсем не удивительно: ведь каждое нравоведение, известное владельцам домов, где были обнаружены фрески, утверждало, что нам выдана лишь транзитная виза по пути в потустороннюю жизнь, где нас ожидает, в зависимости от выбранного вероисповедания, буддийское или манихейское перевоплощение и повторение всего процесса, или же несколько более затяжной цикл, согласно представлениям евреев, зороастрийцев и христиан. Несмотря на существенные различия между этими системами, каждая из них завершается вечностью и считает привязанность к переменчивому земному бытию одинаково суетливой и напрасной.

Поскольку господствующая церковь во многом определяла сферу армянской живописи (в отличие от религиозного плюрализма Центральной Азии, где, по крайней мере, до мусульманского завоевания подобных ограничений не было), то из ее произведений, передававших светские сюжеты, сохранилось очень немногое: это рукописные миниатюры к «Истории Александра Македонского», «Истории Младенца Фармана» и нескольким другим средневековым романам, а также к пособиям по астрологии и колдовству, таким как «Алавид»¹. В настоящем докладе опыт сравнения сосредоточен на одном из редких произведений светской литературы (хотя и само понятие «свет» в данном контексте не совсем точное или удовлетворительное). Собрание притч, житий святых, и назиданий *Ջրաց պղնձէ բաղաբի* («Повесть о медном городище»), получило свое название еще в средневековье от своей самой длинной части — знаменитой повести из сборника «Тысяча и одна ночь», переведенной с арабского на армянский в нескольких вариантах, начиная с конца X в. Дошедший до нас в самых ранних рукописях текст, очевидно, подвергнулся языковым и стилистическим изменениям и принадлежит к XIII в.² Рассказ широко известен: халиф Маруан желает посмотреть на злых духов-джиннов, заточенных Соломоном в банки. В поиске этих сверхъестественных узников, посланники дамасского двора проходят пустыни и находят старинные над-

¹ См.: *Macler F.* L'enluminure armenienne profane. Paris, 1928; *Feydit F.* Amulettes de l'Armenie Chretienne. Venise, 1986; *Симонян А.* (ред.). Повесть об Александре Македонском. Ереван, 1989 (на арм. яз.). В связи с последним, интересно заметить, что детали и общая композиция страницы, где изображено единоборство героя с единокором в «Венецианской рукописи Мхитаристов», № 424, ст. 95а (ст. 384 в издании Симоняна) — явно восходят к персидским прототипам. О книге *Алавид* см. доклад автора: *Russell J. R.* A Preliminary Report on a Newly-Acquired Armenian Magical Manuscript at ALMA // Armenian Library and Museum of America Newsletter. Fall 2001 (Watertown, MA).

² См.: *Հ. Ն. Մկրտչյան, «Պղնձէ Բաղաբի Պատմութեան արաբական և հայկական տարբերակները», Պատմա-բանասիրական Հանդես, Երևան, 1986.2 (113), էջ՝ 130—138.*

писи и городища, где все возвещает о тщетности нашей доблести и славы. Наконец, у берегов океана, на краю земли они обнаруживают банки и возвращаются на родину. Однако при вскрытии их темный джинн восклицает: «Каюсь я, грешник, о пророк Господний!». Халиф в горечи познания надевает ризу юродивого и покидает свой трон³.

Символика повести и некоторые из ее особенностей имеют древнеиранские корни, в то время как ее тематика отражает нравоведение, типичное для буддизма, а буддийские притчи сами нередко проникали на запад при посредстве манихейских переводчиков: такова судьба знаменитого произведения «Билаухар и Бодасаф», которое в христианизированной переработке очень популярна чуть ли не по сей день. Остальные тексты в армянском печатном собрании — «История вешего Пахлула», «Назидания царя Нуширвана», «Советы Ахикара Премудрого», «История Юноши и Девы», «Житие святого Алексия», «Житие Хусика и сына его Степана» и «Развлечения для молодых» — либо прямо говорят о мудрости и о суете бытия, либо косвенно освещают эту же тему, посредством повествований о длинных и мучительных путешествиях, о преобразовании характера и извилистой перемещенности жизни, о неожиданном обнищании и просвещении некогда гордых, пренебрегавших судьбой, временем и смертью. В некоторых текстах чередуются стихотворные части и проза (как, впрочем, и в армянском варианте «Истории Александра Македонского» вставлены *кафы* средневековых редакторов), в других указываются роли, исполненные различными читателями: вместе с тематикой жизненной дороги и т. п., собрание охарактеризуется постановочным характером⁴.

Почти все произведения этого собрания переводные, в первую очередь, с арабского, хотя сами арабские тексты, за исключением «Ахикара» и «Жития св. Степана», восходят к более древним источникам, по большей части, индийским. Армянское собрание переиздавалось многократно на протяжении двух столетий (последние издания в Тифлисе относятся ко второй половине XIX в., а перевод на западноармянский *аишхрхабар* осуществлен в Стамбуле после Первой мировой войны). Большинство рукописей, содержащих три-четыре текста из основного списка, относится к XVI в., однако ссылки на эти тексты показывают, что подобный сборник существовал гораздо раньше. Он, таким образом, сопутствовал развитию купеческого и торгового классов в армянском обществе и возмужанию светской культуры; а тематика дороги и накопления жизненного опыта отражает настоящий быт и религиозное мировоззрение этого социального слоя. Хотя отдельные тексты из собрания частично тщательно редактировались и публиковались⁵, его феномен пока еще не привлекал должного внимания исследователей. Отсюда и цель настоящего доклада: предварительно определить широчайший контекст этого собрания в целом.

Однако историческую и культурную значительность сборника «Повесть о медном городище» можно установить, только рассмотрев его в целом, правильном контексте. Для того, чтобы определить этот контекст, я беру группу так называемых *бьен-уэн* — «текстов трансформации преобразования» на китайском языке, найденных в Дуньхуане и относящихся к танской династии — периоду теснейших культурных, культовых и экономических связей между Китаем и иранской Средней Азией. Само название Дуньхуан, греч. *вроана*, является, по всей вероятности, заимствованием с иранского, ср. согд. *drw'n*: «крепость». В. Мэр⁶ охарактеризовал *бьен-уэн* как повествование, имеющее общую форму композиции прозы со стихообразными частями — язык последних часто ближе к современной разговорной речи, чем текст в прозе (то же самое может быть отмечено и в армянских стихах-*кафах* к «Истории Александра»). *Бьен-уэн* также имеют характер исполнения, притом сопровождаемого картинками. Эти тексты рассказывают о путешествиях и переменах судьбы: например, Махамандагальяна уезжает по делам службы, а по возвращении узнает, что его мать умерла и за свои грехи попала в ад. Он становится монахом для того, чтобы искупить грехи матери, и боги ее прощают. В этом рассказе есть много общего со средневековым армянским «Житием Степана Артаметского», и не потому, что они обязательно связаны одним источником, а потому, что служили общей цели для читателей и слушателей, образ жизни и интересы которых сходны. *Бьен-уэн* отражают, безусловно, и особенности местной цивилизации: Будда сам цитировал преобразования в проповедях его закона (*дхарми-катхэ*); более того, подобного рода трансформации

³ См.: Russell J. R. The Tale of the Bronze City in Armenian // Russell J. R. Armenian and Iranian Studies. Cambridge (MA), 2004.

⁴ В своем предисловии к книге: Kevorkian R. H. Catalogue des «Incunables» arméniens (1511—1695) ou Chronique de l'imprimerie arménienne. Genève, 1986, Жан-Пьер Махе замечает, что назидательный материал в собрании передается в развлекательном виде для того, чтобы предотвратить безостановочное, досадное чтение и заставить читателя активно задумываться над текстом и даже участвовать в нем.

⁵ Например, Срапян А. (ред.). Повесть о юноше и девушке. Повесть о царе Пахлуле. Ереван, 1983 (на арм. яз.).

⁶ Mair V. H. T'ang Transformation Texts. Cambridge (MA), 1989.

типичны для шаманских и даоистских повестей. Это вполне естественно: есть основание предполагать, что именно кризис конфуцианского мировоззрения за несколько столетий до возникновения *бьен-уэн* возбудил в китайском обществе интерес к даоизму и алхимии.

Посредине между армянскими и китайскими ойкотипами жанра сборников нравоучительных повестей, притч, и назиданий, где применялся образ жизненной стези, есть общий источник, сугубо космополитический и, одновременно, коренной иранский и ближайший к Индии. Волшебная, исчезнувшая страна, о которой с вожделением и боготворением сказали бы, «Имя твое — Согд»⁷. Согдийские фрески, найденные при раскопках городища Пенджикент и принадлежавшие, очевидно, местной знати (так называемым «свободным», ср. арм. *азаты*), занимают на стенах три регистра, представляя тем самым три социальных и вселенских слоя — божественный, героический и общечеловеческий⁸. Б. И. Маршак сумел истолковать почти полностью темы этих настенных картин, ссылаясь на индийскую литературу, на цикл подвигов сакского героя Рустама и на эзоповские притчи⁹ (в армянской устной литературе часто встречаются повести о Рустаме в качестве приложения к Сасунскому эпосу, а по свидетельству Моисея Хоренского, повести о геракловых подвигах — *сагджика* — были весьма популярны с незапамятных времен). Некоторые из индийских сюжетов пенджикентских картин засвидетельствованы и на согдийском языке — в текстах, слегка переработанных проповедниками манихейства. Таким путем, как известно, притчи «Панчатантры» и другие тексты проникали через сасанидский Иран на христианский (и, в дальнейшем, на мусульманский) Запад. Многие из пенджикентских фресок изображают тему дороги: купец отправляется в путь, спрятав золото под деревом; другой купец обещает жертвоприношение духу морей; продавец сандала очутился в стране такой далекой, что местные жители либо не знают, что такое сандал, либо такие нищие, что купить его не могут. Эти сказки повествуют о глупости, хитрости и мудрости, о нравственности и о суете мира сего, но в контексте торговли и путешествий — т. е. в духе мироощущения согдийского общества.

В Армении тексты возмещают отсутствие потерянных фресок светского содержания, а на фоне согдийской живописи и дальнего эха Дуньхуана собрание *Ջրոյց Պղնձէ Բարդաբի* — уже не курьез или изолированное явление. Мы можем восстановить его контекст: оно является характерным отражением общей духовной и художественной культуры просвещенного среднеазиатского космополиса купцов, проповедников, монахов, переводчиков, художников и читателей — буддийских, христианских, зороастрийских — скитальцев по жизненной дороге, протянувшейся от крымского побережья, от Су(г)дака, по армянским хребтам и долинам, через иранские равнины до Чинумачина и океана.

⁷ Разнообразие языков и письменностей всего красноречивей свидетельствует о космополитизме согдийского общества в эпоху поздней античности, см.: *Sims-Williams N. Sogdian and Turkish Christians in the Turfan and Tun-Huang Manuscripts. Firenze, 1992.*

⁸ Между прочим, и армянское собрание можно разделить, *mutatis mutandis*, на такую троичную композицию, где христианские жития, светские назидательные пословицы и загадки, предназначенные для молодежи, занимают соответствующие места.

⁹ См.: *Marshak B. Legends, Tales, and Fables in the Art of Sogdiana. New York, 2002.*

The shrine beneath the waves

JAMES R. RUSSELL

To the memory of my beloved teacher and friend Professor
Mary Boyce,

August 2, 1920–April 4, 2006.

*Ashtadz hokin lusavore: May God keep her soul
in eternal light.*

There shines and palaces and towers
(Time-eaten towers that tremble not!)
Resemble nothing that is ours...

But lo, a stir is in the air!
The wave—there is a movement there!
—Edgar Allan Poe, *The City in the Sea*

We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
Till human voices wake us, and we drown.
—T.S. Eliot, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, 1917.

Sasna tser (The Wild Men of Sasun), a narrative that has sometimes been hailed as a secular scripture of Armenian Christian culture, is generally known as a composite text of four chapters (each called in Armenian *chugh*, “branch”) assembled from scores of oral recitations. At the beginning of the epic, in this composite text, the twin brothers Sanasar and Baghdasar go to Lake Van, and the former, who is braver, dives to the bottom to a chapel where he drinks from a Milky Fountain (apparently the same one by which he and his brother were engendered), and the Madonna gives him his talking horse and magic weapons. But if one examines the dossier of primary oral variants—and this study of a discrete, key episode is the first to do so—the tale, already rich in mythological data, becomes much more complex: The chapel of the Madonna is located in some narratives on a high mountain, and in others on the Van islet of Arter (fig. 1). The latter figures in a legend of a vision of the Madonna vouchsafed to the tenth-century mystical theologian St. Gregory of Narek in which the monk is transported from his home on the southern shore of the lake to the islet. A legend about the saint has him save a drowning child, battle an aquatic monster, and build a refuge on the bottom of the lake; several passages in St. Gregory’s *Book of Lamentation* touch metaphorically on these themes. Since the evidence of the Ossetic Narts, an epic cycle closely related to the Armenian, suggests the legend of Gregory’s flight to Arter was itself informed by old epic material, the study of the oral variants reveals a

continuous dialogue between folk epic preserved in oral dialect and formal Christian literature written in high *grabar*, classical Armenian. The cross-fertilization proven is so rich that the designation of *Sasna tser* as “secular,” which would separate it from the nation’s formal religious culture, ought to be discarded as misleading; moreover, one offers the complementary assertion that it is methodologically erroneous to study Armenian literature of the mediaeval period without reference to the sources of mythology and folklore.

1.

It is a phenomenon universally observed that a sacred place remains a locus of pilgrimage even after the religion that first elevated it to sanctity is succeeded by another. In Armenia, particularly in the Van region, some Christian shrines that replaced Zoroastrian ones continue, their names slightly modified by the Kurmanji ear, to be sacred to Muslim Kurds. An example is *Pur’ki Surt Gevorg* (in Armenian) “the Guest-house of St. George” (in Kurdish, *Dira Khani*, “Monastery of the Guest-house”); in Turkish, *Horozvank*, “Monastery of the Rooster”) on a mountain pass in Moks, south of Van. The monastery’s cherished rooster—the bird sacred to the Zoroastrian divinity Sraosha, Persian Soroush—used reliably to warn travelers if a snowstorm was coming. Monks traveled across the country to collect charity for the maintenance of the inn, armed with a scroll narrating the miracles of the rooster, who was depicted above the text (it is also carved upon the lintel of the entrance to the site). When the rooster died, it received Christian burial; and its reincarnation was promptly sought and found.¹ Since the 1915 genocide, neither the monk’s *Paternoster* nor the cock’s *Coccorico!* is heard at St. George’s Inn: Only the ruins, legend of sanctity, and name endure.

Armenia can claim as fairly as Jerusalem to be the center of the world: Two of its occulted holy places are well known and axial to scriptural history; bygone visits to their vicinity, somewhat less so. The Ark of Noah rested on a mountain of Ararat—the Hebrew for Urartu (the name of the Lake Van and the city on its shore

1. See Karapet Sital, *An Armenian Epic: The Heroes of Kasht (Kasht’i k’ajet)*, int., trans., annot. J. R. Russell (Ann Arbor: Caravan Books Anatolian and Caucasian Series, 2000), pp. 123–132, n. 36.



Figure 1. The Vaspurakan region and Lake Van, Armenia. Drawing by the author.

preserves the country's native designation, Biaina). But when St. James of Nisibis climbed Jabal Judi, the mountain identified by early Christians with Noah's peak,² an angel put him to sleep before he could attain the summit. He was rewarded for his pious pains with a piece of wood from the Ark. The garden of Eden, physical access to which has been denied to the sons of Adam for all but slightly under one day of the existence of our fallen race, floats in the sky atop a cosmic mountain towering over the province of Hark' (also called Khnus, Turkish: Hınıs) in western Armenia, northwest of Lake Van, where the Tigris and Euphrates rise. Though most cannot see the garden itself, the waters of its four mighty floods cascade down to earth. The four rivers, symbolic of the four cardinal points of the compass, define Eden as the world's center. For the purposes of Christian exegesis it is fortunate that they are, additionally, cruciform.

But some have been vouchsafed a vision of Eden. According to a legend recorded and illustrated in a

fifteenth-century Armenian manuscript from Kaffa, in the Crimea, of the *Lives of the Desert Fathers*, a band of traveling monks were allowed to behold Paradise in all its glory from afar: In a corner of the miniature painting portraying the scene, one member of the party is shown relating the vision to the patriarch of the church, St. Nerses the Graceful (Shnorhali, died in 1173) at Hromkla in Cilicia (fig. 2). He subsequently wrote of it in a lost commentary on Genesis.³ The flowers and trees of Eden appear in the miniature as intricate gems of color, but the sword-bearing guardian angel at the garden's gate did not give the visiting monks a blossom as a souvenir. The core of the text is the *Apophthegmata Patrum*, the powerful compendium of the lives of the holy men who dwelt in the vast solitudes of the desert west of Alexandria: The book, St. Augustine wrote in his *Confessions*, spurred his conversion to the Christian faith. The Armenian manuscript adds portraits and narratives of later meditative religious leaders, notably the tenth-century Byzantine father of Hesychasm, St. Symeon the New Theologian, and the latter's contemporary, St. Gregory of Narek. Narekats'i spent

2. Greater Ararat; in Turkish, *Aghri dagh*; in modern Armenian, Masis (from classical Armenian: *azat* ["free, noble"]; *Masik*), perhaps from Old Iranian **masyah-* and meaning "very big": There is another mountain, Sip'an or Subhan *dagh*, north of Lake Van, called *Nekh Masis*, the epithet perhaps from *nakhwa*, "first" across the modern border from Erevan, is in myth the place of the confinement of the apocalyptic King Artawazd. This noble snow-capped titan towers over the sacred city of Echmiadzin, and folk and ecclesiastical belief gradually accorded it the honor of having been Noah's mooring place.

3. See Nira Stone, *The Kaffa Lives of the Desert Fathers: A Study in Armenian Manuscript Illumination*, (Leuven: Peeters, 1997), cited in J. R. Russell, "The Credal Poem *Hawatov Xostovanim* (I Confess in Faith) of St. Nerses the Graceful," *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9 (Cambridge, Mass.: 2004; thereafter *AIS*), p. 1016 and n. 47.

most of his life in the monastery of Narek, which stands in the midst of a small village (Kurdish: Nerik; Turkish: Yemişlik) on a hill over tilled fields: the monastery, refounded in the region of Sebastia of Cappadocia in the eleventh century by refugees from the Seljuk invasions, stood on its original site also till its final destruction by Kurdish marauders in 1912.⁴ The shore of Lake Van is but a short distance to the north, directly opposite Aght'amar island, where in 920, thirty years before Gregory's birth, King Gagik of the Armenian realm of Vaspurakan had built the church of the Holy Cross. The church is richly encrusted with bas-reliefs, prominent among them the scene of Jonah and the whale.

The Biblical legend was interpreted by Christian exegetes as a prefiguring of the election of the Gentiles; and on the bas-relief at Aght'amar, Jonah's whale is in fact not a whale at all, but a vishap, or sea dragon. This Iranian word was given to the mythical creature whom the old Urartean weather god Teisheba defeated; for the exploit was at the time of the Armenians' adoption of Zoroastrianism attributed to a similar divinity, Vahagn (Avestan: Verethraghna). The latter's name means "he who smites opposition"; but that opposition was incarnated as a serpent—Verethraghna's Vedic counterpart, Indra, slays a dragon named Vritra (cognate to Iranian verethra-), and the god thereby acquires the honorific epithet vritrahan- (han- being the Indic reflex of the form gan-, "strike," in Iranian—so, Verethraghna). The Armenians found, thus, literal and metaphorical depth for their reading of the story of Jonah in the fearsome abysses of their very own inland sea, Lake Van. Narekats'i employed those layers of story and imagery in his meditations on the imperilment and rescue of the soul. These were in turn to shape legends about him and

to help to propel a place associated with him into the very oral epic whose roots had originally shaped his own visions: a case of multiple, reciprocal influences of written and oral narratives and of ecclesiastical and folk reciprocity as well.

Farther out in Lake Van, just northwest of Aght'amar island, is the tiny, monastery-crowned islet of Arter. The saint, as we shall see, beheld from his monastery a vision of the Virgin hovering over the island. He was magically transported thither across the water to her. Because of the use of vishap-legendary in the lake and the topos of his magic locomotion over it to the isle, Arter was to find its way into an important episode of Armenian oral heroic epic. In the last years of his life, St. Gregory retired to a cave above the village of Pagan, high above Narek in the foothills of the great Moiks range—the mountains where St. George's Inn offered shelter to travelers. There he compiled a cycle of ninety-five meditational prayers, the *Book of Lamentation* (Matean oghbosur'ean). These poetically intricate litanies can be divided into three sections, corresponding architectonically to the porch, nave, and altar of a church; temporally, they follow the progress of the Divine Liturgy as well. Narekats'i's masterpiece bears a number of similarities to the Hesychastic ideas and practice of St. Symeon, particularly the attainment through prayer of the vision of celestial light: Though contemplative prayer had existed in the country before him, Narekats'i so powerfully revived it that he can fairly be said to be its refounder. If a traditional Armenian home had a book other than the Bible or Psalter, it was usually his cycle, called simply the *Narek*. The book, perhaps because it was constructed to be employed for a supernatural journey—the attainment of mystical experience—gradually acquired in folk belief the reputation of possessing magical powers; and ballads and folktales recited over the next millennium accordingly celebrated not only Narekats'i's sanctity, but also his thaumaturgical abilities.

In the two centuries after St. Gregory's passing, St. Nerses, discussed above in connection with the visit of a party of monks to the foot of the Edenic mountain, and his successor Catholicos Gregory (sumamed Tgha [boy]), continued the venerable practice of contemplative penitential prayer. They sought in particular to perpetuate Narekats'i's summation of the tradition. Nerses in his poems, very many of which for their beauty and lucidity have been adopted into the Armenian Hymnal and Divine Liturgy, emphasizes the imagery of fire and light in a manner at once redolent of Hesychasm and consonant with the Zoroastrian

4. When I first visited Narek in 1994, an ugly, boxy new mosque was under construction on the hill where the monastery had once been. Some stones with small crosses inscribed by pilgrims to Narekavank were re-used in the building; and I photographed a large cross-stone (Armenian: khach'kar) with an equilaterally-armed cross, perhaps tenth-century, and multiple inscriptions, that lay nearby—it was being used to ford an irrigation ditch. When I returned in 1997, the villagers, who still call the village Nerik (the Turks renamed it Yemişlik), told me that right after my departure a few years before, Turkish government officials came and shattered the khach'kar to pieces. This act of deliberate vandalism characterizes the policy of the successor-states to the architects of the Armenian genocide: In the last few years, the authorities in Azerbaijan have systematically destroyed tens of thousands of Armenian cross-stones in Julia and elsewhere. This act, analogous in its systematic barbarity as an attack on religious culture to the demolition of the Buddha statues at Bamiyan, has merited little international attention and no action of any kind.

substrate of Armenian Christian culture.⁵ This substratum is evident not only in dualistic symbolism, but also in an abundant Parthian terminology coopted to Christian use; in iconographic forms;⁶ and even in the manipulation of pre-Christian *topoi*, both from Zoroastrian religious usage and from heroic epic, in hagiography.⁷ This nexus is important, because popular tradition invests great saints with a magical power indistinguishable from their mystical piety and wisdom. Such tradition in Armenia often takes the literary form of balladry, as in the case of a popular medieval poem on Narekats'i,⁸ or of legends about features of the landscape or places of pilgrimage sanctified by association with a holy man and his deeds.

In Armenia, both these forms—ballad and folk tale or legend—borrow freely from the epic themes, imagery, and ideology of the country's pre-Christian religious system. This is not at all surprising: the same process obtains, *grosso modo*, in other Christianized cultures. In Romania, for example, where the Sarmato-Thracian substrate and peripheral position in Christendom relative to Islam are somewhat analogous to Armenia's situation, the correspondences are striking. The case of Armenia is still of special interest: It has a rich and unbroken documentary record in its indigenous language and unique script fifteen centuries old, containing testimony

going back perhaps a millennium further still. Armenia is the only distinct and living Christian civilization whose previous creed was the religion of ancient Iran, Zoroastrianism. It is important here also to note that there is no sharp distinction that can be drawn between ancient Iranian epic tradition, heroic poetry, and the scriptural corpus of the Mazdean faith itself; the chivalric code of the warrior was not at odds with the morality of the Magi. Armenian oral heroic epic is steeped in Christian tradition—where the dogma of the latter is at odds with the heroic ethos, Christian Armenian writers have often reshaped the material to hand in creative, controversial ways. Let us examine one well-documented example of the process of cooptation and adaptation at work.

The anonymous chronicler of Armenia's conversion, the *Agathangelos*, or "Messenger of Good (Tidings)," describes the persecution of the nation's patron saint, Gregory the Illuminator (*Iusaworich'*) at the hands of King Tiridates. Narekats'i was named after this Gregory. For his mistreatment of God's messenger, the monarch is transformed into a boar (Parthian loan-word *varaz*): As Nina Garsoian demonstrated in a series of brilliant and groundbreaking studies,⁹ this alteration of the *topos* of Nebuchadnezzar's metamorphosis into an ox in the book of Daniel is a deliberate inversion of the Zoroastrian sacred symbol of the boar, which is both the totem of the divinity Verethraghna (Vahagn) and the seal of the Arsacid royal house. Vahagn—as we have noted above—is also a dragon-slayer who drags sea monsters (*vishap*) from Lake Van and casts them into the sun to burn. The Arsacid charisma holds to its heart this *Drachenkampf*, and it was to be absorbed also into Armenian folk epic and into a legend of Narekats'i. Following Professor's Garsoian's line of research, I have further shown how the episode of Gregory's imprisonment in Khof Virap, where he was tormented by serpents, both recapitulates Christ's harrowing of Hell and inverts the Iranian myth of the tyrant Azhi Dahaka (Persian: Zohhak). The latter is plagued by two snakes that grow out of his shoulders. On a bas-relief on the drum of the ninth-century Bagratid church of the Holy Apostles at Kars, where, in keeping with Armenian tradition, St. Gregory is elevated to the dignity of a

5. On Narekats'i, see J. R. Russell, "A Poem of Grigor Narekats'i," "A Mystic's Christmas in Armenia," "On St. Grigor Narekats'i, His Sources and His Contemporaries," "A Shipwreck Awesome and Marvellous: Chapter 25 of the Lamentations of Narekats'i," "Two Notes on Biblical Tradition and Native Epic in the 'Book of Lamentation' of St. Grigor Narekats'i," "Virtue and Its Own Reward: The 38th Meditation of the Book of Lamentation of St. Grigor Narekats'i," "Armenian Spirituality: Liturgical Mysticism and Chapter 33 of the Book of Lamentation of St. Grigor Narekats'i," "The Four Elements and the Cross in Armenian Spirituality, with an Excursus on the Descent in Merkavah Mysticism," "Bedros Tourian's Cruciform Prayer and Its Antecedents," and "Loytsn matsuts: On Cosmological Mysteries in Armenian Tradition," all in *AIS* (see note 3). On Shnorhali's imagery, see "A Credo for the Children of the Sun," also in *AIS*.

6. An example is the Armenian practice of depicting in bas-relief the cross surmounting a pair of wings, the latter an emblem of sanctity in Zoroastrian iconography: see J. R. Russell, "The Scepter of Tiridates" in *AIS* (see note 3), p. 1141 and pl. 2. To the dossier may now be added several cross-stones with such wings at the monastery of Mughni near Erevan.

7. On the subject generally, see J. R. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, Harvard Iranian Series 5 (Cambridge, Mass.: 1987) and "Pre-Christian Armenian Religion" in *AIS* (see note 3); on *topoi*, see my "Scythians and Avesta in an Armenian Vernacular Paternoster and a Zok Paternoster" and "A Bas-Relief on the Cathedral of the Holy Apostles at Kars, Armenia" in *AIS* (ibid.).

8. See J. R. Russell, "Introduction," in Grigor Narekats'i, *The Book of Lamentations*, Classical Armenian Text Reprint Series (Delmar, N.Y.: Caravan Books, 1981).

9. See N. G. Garsoian, "The Iranian Substratum of the Agathangelos Cycle," in *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period* (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1982), pp. 151–174; and "The Locus of the Death of Kings: Iranian Armenia—the Inverted Image," in *Armenia between Byzantium and the Sasanians* (London: 1985), vol. 11, pp. 27–64.

thirteenth Apostle, he is shown with a snake on either shoulder. But, unlike Zahhak, he is vanquishing them; and the Arsacid who has imprisoned him is to become a Christian monarch.

Tiridates also wielded a mighty saber, the legendary *Hay(ha)luni*: In a series of legends St. Gregory literally inverts the instrument of death, making it a cross—the weapon with which Christ vanquished death. Still more interesting is the sword's subsequent fate: It is either sealed in stone, in a mountain shrine above the Armenian city of Erznka (Turkish: Erzincan), where it can be seen only by the faithful, or it is submerged in the lake northwest of Van called *Khach'iva*, literally "cross-washing."¹⁰ Both details—of a sacred place visible only to the faithful, and of a locus high in the mountains, under water, or on a tiny island—will be of relevance presently to our discussion of a sacred shrine in Lake Van in Armenian epic. The motif of Vahagn the dragon-slayer at Van will be seen to be not only re-used, but deftly reshaped, in the epic episode under water, too. The sword itself remains an accessory of oral epic: In the Epic of Sasun to be considered, the heroes receive in the sea, and return to the sea, the *r'ur ketsaki*, or "lightning saber." It is of more than passing interest, also, that the Armenian mythological material might through the vector of the oral epic, the Narts, of Armenia's Alan neighbors, have helped to shape the legend of King Arthur's sword, Excalibur, with the Sword in the Stone and the Lady of the Lake.

The monks who traveled to Hark' and were permitted by its guardian angel to behold Eden from afar can be compared to Rabbi Akiva and his companions, who, according to the famous account of the Mishnaic tractate *Hagigah*, traveled to the heavenly antechambers, the *Hekhaloth* of the divine presence. These visions rewarded piety and may be understood metaphorically as a state attained by the soul. But it is relevant to our discussion to note that in neither case was an eirenic way of life a prerequisite to vision even for such saintly souls: St. Nerses Shnorhali wrote a vengeful lament upon the fall of Edessa (modern Urfa) in which he called for a new Frankish crusade to extirpate the Saracens, seize the black stone of the Ka'aba, and drown it deeper than Prospero's book. And Rabbi Akiva in his time had supported the armed uprising against pagan Roman rule led by Shim'on Bar Kokhva. Armenian epic heroes whose whole life is dedicated to fighting will also be deemed fit, because of their quality, to behold another

realm as well. St. Gregory the Illuminator may have inverted the fabled Arsacid saber to form a cross—but Christian soldiers have marched onward since Constantine more to war than as if to it, with sharp swords in hand, not the cross of Jesus.

2.

In 1874, Bishop Garegin Srvandztyants' first published an oral heroic epic of which scores of recitations have been recorded in the century since. The epic centers on four generations of a family originating in the Van region from the house of Gagik. They establish their fortress in the mountain fastness of Sasun "mighty" (a folk etymology, since the toponym is a contraction of an older Armenian form *Sanasun*, *Sanasneayk'*), west of Lake Van and south of the plain of Mush. They wage ceaseless war against what are called, unjustly but typically, the *krapashr* ("idolatrous") invading armies of the Arab Caliphate. Although much of the material of the epic is archaic and presents special interest for the study of the origins of Mithraism, the main story line crystallizes around the Armenian rebellion of A.D. 851 that eventually brought to power the Artsrunids in Vaspurakan and the Bagratids in the northeast of the country. The latter invented a claim of Davidic ancestry; and the principal hero of the cycle, with whom the majority of the recitations deal, is *Sasunts'i Davit'*, David of Sasun, who belongs to the third generation of the *tsner*, the wild or recklessly brave heroes of his line.

However, most of the narratives strive to accord priority to David: He is a culture hero who introduces various animals to human use. His battle with *Msramelik'* (lit., "King of Egypt"),¹¹ the caliph, recapitulates all previous victories. At the tragic end of his life he fights, Rostam-like, with his only son, *P'ok'r Mher* (Mithra the Younger); as befits a man at the inglorious end of a heroic age, he dies by treachery. He is also made to rediscover the magic talking horse of the heroes, *K'umkik Jelali* ("Fierce Little Colt" who resembles, again, Rostam's steed *Rakhshi*), and to rededicate the shrine of the heroes, the Holy Mother of God of Marut'a, *Marat'uk Surb Ashtatsatsin*, which his father *Mets Mher* (Mithra the Greater) had erected in

11. By Meser Armenians meant not Cairo but the other nearer metropolis, Baghdad. It is conceivable that the biblical association of Egypt (Hebrew, *Mitzrayim*) with darkness and black magic influenced the designation of the despised enemy. In Zoroastrian Pahlavi, the invader Alexander of Macedon is derided as *msrayig-menishar*, "the dweller in Egypt."

10. See my articles on the scapler of Tiridates and the church of the Holy Apostles at Kairi, cited above (notes 6 and 7).

Sasun on a mountain near Tsovasar, the “Sea Mount.” The heroes of Sasun all invoke *Bandzrik Mara’tuk Surb Astuatsatsin*, “The High Marat’uk Holy Mother of God,” together with their magic weapons. Before going into battle, David, too, cries out *Ya havatam khostovanim/ Bandzrik Marat’uk Surb Nshan / Hisus ordi du ognakan* (“By [the prayer] ‘In faith I confess,’ / By the Holy Sign of High Marat’uk, / ‘Jesus the Son’ be my help!”) combining—anachronistically, if he is to have lived in the ninth century!—an invocation of Marat’uk with two compositions by St. Nerses Shnorhali: the credal *Hawatov khostovanim* and the didactic poem *Yisus ordi*. Nerses is thus drawn into the epic orbit. In an act of devotion of which the saint might have approved less, David follows advice given in a dream by sacrificing forty heifers to *Bandzrik Marat’uk* and bathing in their blood.¹²

One of the last Armenians in Diyarbakir, ancient Amida, which Armenians still call by the name of the capital of Tigranes II the Great, Tigranakert, is a woman, originally from Sasun, who was converted to Islam in childhood. She grew up speaking Kurdish and in adulthood settled near the ruined church of St. Stephen. When in 1997 I met her and questioned her about things Armenian, she was, understandably, uncommunicative and nervous, but when I asked her whether the name *Marat’uk* meant anything to her, her face was transfigured by a kind of ecstatic wonder. Pointing up and to the north, she exclaimed that the mere sight of holy Marat’uk could cure one of a scorpion’s sting.

Srvandztyants’ left this description:

Marut’a, or Marat’u mountain, is the holy and pious one amongst them. It seems to bear the name of the ascetic and bishop Marut’a—he who brought the remains of Bp. Simeon and the Eastern Martyrs from Persia, collected tens of thousands of relics and built the city of the martyrs, Np’rkert, which is not distant from this mountain. Sasunk’, or Sasno mountain, is the strongest of the brothers, unconquerable, with its iron flanks and stone brow. It was the hospitable abode of Adramelik’ and Sanasar [Sarasar], the sons of Senek’erim [Sennacherib], king of Assyria, millennia ago. The peak called Tsovasar [lit., “Sea Mount”] is their beautiful sister, near the monastery of the apostles

[Armenian *Arrak’elots’ vank’*], is called thus because there is a small lake on its summit. Roundabout the lakelet bloom bashful violets, displaying the meadows in a sky-blue color; and innumerable, diversely tinged blossoms of all kinds dazzle every creature by their shape and hue. And the rhubarb [*khawartsil*] on this mountain is incomparable and most noble.¹³

Adramelik’ and Sarasar become the rhyming twins Sanasar and Baghdasar, progenitors of the heroic line of Sasun. The notice by Srvandztyants’ of Marut’a’s relic-gathering activity is too modest; and details of the life of the saint go some way to explain why he became popular among the rugged Armenian mountaineers of Sasun.

In the fourth century, one Mariam, a woman of noble Armenian blood married to the governor of the province of Sophanene, gave birth to a son, Marutha. This is an Aramaic name: The members of the family were, like many in the southern reaches of Greater Armenia, speakers of Syriac. The boy studied medicine and later, while accompanying a Roman embassy to Ctesiphon in 399, he cured king Yazdagerd’s son of either demonic possession or migraine. Accounts differ, but either way he humiliated the Magi, who, despite their reputedly as physicians, had been unable to help the prince. Nine years later, Marutha returned to appeal to the Shah to accord better treatment to Persian Christians. When offered a parting gift, he asked to be given relics of the faithful. He received two hundred eighty thousand, according to his Armenian *vita*, and transported them all to Maypherkath (Syriac; the Armenian *Np’rkert* reveals the Armeno-Parthian origin of the toponym, with its suffix *-kert*, “built (by)”) or Mayafarīqīn, a few miles from Amida. The town, now called Silvan and thought by some scholars to be the location of ancient Tigranakert, got a new name thanks to Marut’a: Martyropolis.¹⁴ The saint’s noble Armenian pedigree, his renown as a healer, and his brave advocacy of Christians at the Sasanian court would have been elements instantly attractive to Armenian folk; and the collection of so many holy relics in an ancient and possibly royal Armenian town would have added to his charisma. Marut’a in its dialect forms might also have come to be associated among Armenians with an element of the name of the magical *horot-morot* flower, which is called after two closely associated *Amesha Spentas*, or

12. Garegin Srvandztyants’, *Erker* (Erevan: 1978), vol. 1, pp. 99, 101, 105. It is only the prodigious, epic number of animals of this taurobolism that Nerses might not have liked. For Armenians approve of and practice blood sacrifice: In 1982 I saw villagers in Sevan, Armenian SSR, sacrifice a cock before a *khach’k’ar* and smear a cross of blood on the forehead of their sick child. The Armenian church approves ritual sacrifice of a firstling (*matagh*).

13. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

14. See E. K. Fowden, *The Barbarian Plain: Saint Sergius between Rome and Iran* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), pp. 48–57.

"Bounteous Immortals" of the Avesta (there are seven in all): Haunvatat and Ameretat (Persian Khordad and Amurdad), "Health" and "Immortality" preside over the waters and plants. On Ascension Eve, Armenian village girls used to prepare a bowl of water for divination and sprinkle over it petals of the flower: Heaven opened during the night (and, incidentally, the cave at Van in which P'ok' Mher, David's son, is immured till doomsday), spilling cosmic secrets. In Armenian dialects, the name of the flower and the assonantal pattern with privative *ma-*, will have contributed to the formation of the expression *khorotik-morotik*, meaning "pretty." The possibility of an association of Marat'uk and Morot/Ameretat might seem too implausible to be worth mentioning, were it not for a folk poem recorded by Srvandztyants' in the area, which tells of seven men reaping grass on Marat'ku koghere, "the flanks of M'airat' (ulk): two are named Urtik and Murtik."¹⁵

Thus far, we have assembled the dossier where the corpus of Armenian oral heroic epic and the legends of Armenian and pan-Christian holy beings—the Theotokos, St. Nerses Shnorhali, St. Grigor Narekats'i, Marut'a—intersect. Heroes and saints are not necessarily irreconcilable in character, but Christianization of an older *topos* often requires manipulation or even reversal. Epic draws more promiscuously upon both the charisma of the saints and pre-Christian, mainly Zoroastrian, substrata: dragon-combat, magic swords. The geography of epic and Christian legends is also coterminous—both magical—the Garden of Eden, the unapproachable summit of Ararat—and terrestrial—the monastery of the High Mother of God of the Holy Sign of Marut'a on a Sasun mountaintop, the various monasteries and islands of the Van region. Let us now examine one of the most complex sacred places of Armenian tradition: one that is sometimes a rock with a milky spring flowing out in four directions, sometimes a submarine chapel enclosed within a palace complex with a garden, sometimes a particular holy isle, and sometimes a mountain cave.

Diverse transcriptions of the Epic of Sasun, starting with those made by Srvandztyants', were published in three huge volumes in 1936, 1944, and 1951 by the Armenian Academy of Sciences. These variants are sufficiently divergent that it cannot be asserted with confidence that there was a single Ur-text, and in the case of oral epic such a text is neither a desideratum, nor likely to exist. But classical literary study has its

habits: One wants *die Quelle*. The nineteenth-century nationalists wanted an Armenian Homer and the twentieth-century Stalinist commissars of culture wanted a monument of primordial folk culture with which to crush Formalism. And anyway the bones of the story, known in its entirety by some bards but recited only in part by most, are coherent enough that the artificial, composite text achieved at Erevan in the mid-1950s upon which translators have relied (Frédéric Feydt while translating into French for the UNESCO series; Artin Shalian—into English) is not misleading if one wants a general idea of what the epic of Sasun is about. But the intriguing differences of detail are, of course, lost. It is that detail that this study of the invisible, inaccessible, or submarine shrine requires; so the discussion to follow will enlist not the version settled upon in the composite text but the kaleidoscopic, many-voiced testimony of actual, separate recitations. These are given in my translation from various Armenian dialects in the appendix.

3.

The composite text of the Epic of Sasun does give the bare bones of the story, and it begins, in general, thus: cross- or God-worshipping Armenia is at war with the idolatrous (!) Arab caliphate.¹⁶ The Caliph of Baghdad (called Meser [Egypt] in the text) demands the hand of King Gagik's daughter, Tsovinar, in marriage, threatening to devastate Armenia otherwise. She agrees to sacrifice herself for the sake of her people, but asks to take a walk along the shore of Lake Van. She gets thirsty, and God causes a rock in the lake to gush water. She disrobes, swims to it, and drinks one-and-a-half handfuls; after nine months, she gives birth to unequal twins, Sanasar and Baghdasar.¹⁷ After some time, the two escape from the caliph, flee north to Armenia, and found Sasun, building a church there. They then go down to Lake Van to look for a sea-born horse: The elder and greater, Sanasar, dares to jump into the water, but

16. Medieval Christians in the West, most of whom had no direct contact with Muslims, were wont to believe that Muslims worshipped a tiny gold statuette of Mercury called a *muammer* (Muhammad). Since Armenians lived in close proximity to Muslims, idolatry must refer to the Ka'aba. Unlike Greeks and Russians, Armenians do not have a tradition of painting and venerating icons: The cross is the main object of worship. See J. R. Russell, "The Armenians, the Holy Cross, and Dionysius Bar Salibi," *AIS* (see note 3), pp. 1193–1203.

17. See J. R. Russell, "Iran and Israel in the Epic of Sasun" and "Epic in the Armeno-Iranian Marchlands" in *AIS* (note 3) for detailed discussion.

15. Srvandztyants' (see note 12), p. 606; on the flower and Ascension (Hambardzum) ritual, see J. R. Russell (note 7), pp. 375–398.

his brother is afraid to follow him. Sanasar descends to the bottom and finds there a garden, palace, and pavilion. The talking steed K'urrkik Jelali is hitched there, with the Lightning Saber hanging from its saddle. Sanasar proceeds to a chapel and falls asleep: The Mother of God comes to him in a dream and instructs him to take the magic weapons. Upon waking, he drinks water from a fountain and sleeps again, waking strong and huge enough for the armor of heroes to fit him and for him to tame K'urrkik Jelali. Sanasar's son, Mets (Great) Mher, later builds the monastery of Marut'a.¹⁸

Lake Van itself is a place of danger, known for its *vishap* (sea dragons): On the church of the Holy Cross at Aght'amar the bas-relief of the story of Jonah shows one such *vishap* swallowing the prophet; and since antiquity Armenians have believed that the sudden squalls that arise on the lake are caused by *vishaps* thrashing their tails when the god Vahagn drags them from the depths to be burnt up by the sun. Therefore Sanasar's dive is proof of his superior courage. In a convoluted reflex of the myth, when Sanasar—who calls himself *tsovayin*, “sea-born”—first mounts fiery K'urrkik Jelali, it flies to the sun, trying to burn him. But he masters it. Sanasar later fights *vishaps*: in one variant, in Lake Van.

Tsovinar's name evidently contains the Armenian word *tsov* (sea), a loan from Urartean *tsue*. An Urartean inscription on the blind carved door at Toprak Kale, Van, believed by Armenians to be the place of P'ok'r Mher's occultation and accordingly called *Mheri durnn* (Mithra's gate), mentions a sea god, *Tsueninaue*: The epic narrative may thus echo an ancient *hieros gamos*. The suffix *-nar* could be from an old Iranian word for “woman,” with an original long *a* (with a short *a*, the word *nar* means “man”), and perhaps the toponym Narek might once have been understood as an adjectival form of the latter. The spring from which Tsovinar drinks and becomes pregnant is sometimes called a *kat'naghbiur* or “milky fountain”: It would seem Sanasar imbibes this same liquid, a sort of Divine *semen virilis*, to gain strength. Such a collocation of milk, semen, and power, for which there is other Armenian evidence, has a parallel in the kindred Indo-European tradition of India, as well as in Syriac Christian religious poetry.

The milk, as we shall see, can flow out and down from a rock in the four directions of the compass: In the

Avesta, the waters of the cosmic sea Vourukasha (lit., “that of the wide boundaries,” and Van is described in the epic as “boundless”) flow down from the axial world-mountain *Hara Berezaiti* (high Hara); and in the Sanskrit translation of the Zoroastrian scripture, Vourukasha is named *Kshirasasamudra*, “the sea of milk.” This place in the Mahabharata is the abode of the *nagas*, “serpents,” and the hero Bhima visits it (1.21).¹⁹ Anahita, literally “the undefiled,” was hailed in ancient Anatolia by the epithet *barzohara* (of high Hara). She inhabits those cascading waters and enables the pregnancy of women to be successful. One recalls that the unblemished (*anarat*) Theotokos is hailed as “high” (*bardzr*; dialect: *bandzrik*). These details of Avestan sacred geography and of the cult of the goddess Anahit, much beloved by the ancient Armenians, underlie the pattern of the narrative. The birth of Sanasar and Baghdasar reminds one both of the births of the Nart heroes of Ossetic epic to the lady Satana and of the *petrogenesis* of Mithra in the Roman mystery rites. The controversial argument has been advanced that the orally transmitted myths of the Ossetes' Alan ancestors were a vector for the transmission of such tales to Celtic Europe with its Arthurian cycle, Eastern Anatolia being the original source.

Let us now look at the place where the Princess Tsovinar conceives and where her sons return to become heroes in the variants of these episodes in the appendix, which I refer to henceforth by my numeration. The princess becomes pregnant from the same spring that makes her son Sanasar a hero later on; sometimes he gets his magic weapons, too, at the same place where the spring flows. So some of the narratives take pains to stress the parallelism of Tsovinar's and Sanasar's motivations, as well as their experiences. The princess in some versions goes to kill herself (see appendix, section 3) rather than be the wife of an idolatrous alien, and when her sons return to the same place, they, too, prefer suicide to being sacrificed to the idols (sections 4, 5). But in other versions she is impelled by a supernatural agency, such as an old man, speaking in a dream (2). In this case, her experience is parallel to Sanasar's dream of the Virgin (or, in 2, of the same old man) to be considered presently. If that place is the sea, she goes by boat to an unnamed island (1), or to a great rock (10), or to the Isle of Arter (7, 8, 9). Sanasar later goes either to Arter also, with its palace (8), or to a place under the

18. David of Sassoun: *The Armenian Folk Epic in Four Cycles*, trans. Artin K. Shalian (Athens, Ohio: Ohio University Press, 1964), pp. 5–13, 44–49, 149.

19. J. R. Russell, “Some Iranica in Eznik,” *AIS* (see note 3), pp. 1340–1343.

sea with other palaces, a chapel, and a garden—where he sleeps and the Virgin counsels him in an initiatory dream (7). He either tumbles through the waters (5) or goes as if on dry land—though all that his uninitiated brother Baghdasar, who is of faint heart and little faith, can see is water (4, 7, 8). The lake is a place of danger. Only a hero can both brave its perils and take its hidden blessings: So, in one episode, Sanasar gets a dragon in Lake Van drunk, dives to the sea bottom, and steals a ring from its mouth (6). When the monster discovers its loss, it raises a frightful storm. If the locus is land, the girl goes to the mountain shrine of the Mother of God at Marut'a (2) or to the springs of the pilgrimage place of the Mother of God at Hili (11). At loci of both land and sea, there is sometimes a cave (3, 8): This reflects the contamination of the first part of the epic by the final segment in which P'ok'i Mher is immured in a cave at Van till the end of time. The water from which she drinks comes from an "immortal" (*anmahakan*: 1, 2) or "white" (*svtak*: 10), or "milky" (*kar'n/aghblur*: 12) spring. If the spring gushes plain water, then there is some sign of sanctity added: Pieces of holy wafer (*rshkhaz, masunk'*: 3) are to be found at the place, or the girl drinks only after a priest's blessing (7). The life-giving water flows in all four directions around the rock—one may recall here, perhaps, the four rivers of paradise.

In a number of variants, Baghdasar, the smaller of the twins, is afraid to dive into the water and waits anxiously for his brother on the shore. He is smaller in spirit, as well: He envies his brother's size and newly acquired strength and sexual prowess. The Armenian epic narratives, from the fragments dealing with the kings of the early second century a.c. down to Sasun, are intimately related to the Ossetic cycle of the Nart heroes. There are specific parallels to the episode in the Sasun epic under discussion. We encounter Nart twins named Aekhsaer and Aekhsaertaeg, whose names may contain the Iranian base *khsha-* (to reign); and Professor John Colarusso notes that another pair of twins in a Northwest Caucasian version of the Narts, Pyzyghash and Pygya, pursue a dove to the sea. The younger of the two goes after her under water; the elder, Pygya, who is more restrained, waits on shore. Even more intriguing is the episode in the Ossetic legend, noted by Colarusso, of the visit of the Nart Uryzmaeg to the aqueous realm of Don Bettirs: The hero is snatched up by a giant eagle and deposited upon a pillar in the sea. This incident suggests that the legend of St. Gregory of Narek's vision of the Virgin and Child above Arter and his magic transportation to the rock islet might have had an

antecedent in an epic topos now lost in Armenian but attested still in Ossetic—essentially, a *Nebenüberlieferung*. The reshaping by the Arter/Narek legend of some variants of the Sanasar/sea episode should thus be regarded as one stage in a continuous process of mutual interchange and cross-fertilization of folk epic and official Christian narrative in the Van region of Armenia.

The place at which the mother of the race of heroes becomes pregnant is, in all cases, a spring. As a rock rising from the waters of Van, it seems to be the phallus of the sea god Tsuenaue at the wedding of his sea-bride Tsovinar, whose children are to be boyavin, sea-born. The place is marked as sacred: It is the Isle of Arter in Lake Van, which has a little monastery. The hero Sanasar drinks of the same spring; but now it is on the sea bottom and is in a complex of palaces and gardens, with a chapel. The Virgin speaks to him there in a dream; and it is plain that the undersea shrine is a double of the one on the mountaintop in Sasun: The High Mother of God of Marut'a, or Marat'uk. He must demonstrate faith and courage by diving into the waters, but then they either part for him, as the Red Sea did for Israel when it came out of Egypt, or he tumbles safely through the depths. To his timid brother, though, his safe progress is invisible, as though both journey and destination belonged to a spatial and perceptual Otherworld. His magic weapons come from the undersea realm; and to it they are to return. The variant in which the locus is the carved rock of P'ok'i Mher's, imprisonment and suspended animation places the spring outside ordinary time as well. But here, too, the aspect of sanctity is indicated by the presence of pieces of holy wafer in the cave.

In text (2), the girl's name is given not as Tsovinar, but Sandukh. The element *sar-* is common to the name Sanasar (from an original, biblical Sarasar, perhaps by assimilation to Partho-Armenian Sanesan) and to the original form, Sasunus of the toponym Sasun. There was also a shrine of St. Sandukht in the monastery of Narek, however, next to the tomb of the saint; and several versions of our text name the place Tsovinar and her son visit as the holy Isle of Arter, which is associated with a legend of St. Gregory of Narek that shares elements of the epic narrative—as noted above, it has a specific parallel in an episode in the Ossetic epic of the Nart hero Uryzmaeg. The islet, now called in Turkish *Kuş adası* (Bird Island) is to the northwest of Aght'amar. Tradition explains the name by a pun: Narekats'i was at prayer at Narek when he beheld a vision: The Virgin was floating on a cloud above the islet with the Christ Child in her arms, and a voice said: "Gregory, come to the

Lord (*arr Ter*).” To the legend belongs also his punning reply: “*Arr, Ter, zhogin im* (Take, O Lord, my soul).”²⁰ He was thereupon transported miraculously to the islet, where he adored the Holy Mother of God. Though she is not named with the epithet Marut’a in narratives of the legend, her power to work from afar—to transport Gregory over land and sea to the little rock—is typologically akin to the ability of the Holy Virgin of Marat’uk to cure a scorpion’s sting from her distant mountaintop—it suffices for the afflicted person to look toward it. *Arterivank’* (Arter Monastery) was built in his memory: Inscriptions found at the site date from 1292 to 1766.²¹ It is not difficult to see how St. Gregory’s vision and supernatural journey across the waters to the Isle of Arter in the legend could have influenced the epic in oral transmission—and indeed, since Narek is at the heart of the region where the ancient sources of the epic took shape, the legend of Arter itself might have arisen out of a local myth.

Text 13 comes not from an oral recital of an epic, but from a tale, obviously of local origin, about Narekats’i written in a late and corrupt classical Armenian, in a

nineteenth-century manuscript.²² In this story, a childless couple from the island of Aght’amar visits the monastery of Narek, prays for St. Gregory’s intercession, and is granted a son who is named after the saint. When the boy turns seven, the parents set sail again on pilgrimage, but their boat is blown off course in a storm opposite Archesh. The boy, somewhat like Jonah in the scene on the bas-relief at Aght’amar, falls overboard. Indeed, a sea monster is about to devour him; but St. Gregory appears, holds back the *vishap* with his staff, and takes the child safely to the bottom of the sea. There, young Gregory remains happily for a year beneath a tent of the saint’s crozier and cape. Narekats’i signs the four directions with the cross, and the submarine refuge is flooded with light. The boy is nourished by holy wafers that the saint brings him. Meanwhile, his parents are blind with crying, so on the anniversary of their son’s disappearance they are persuaded to visit Narekavank’ in the hope that the saint may restore their sight. Upon arrival, they find their son, bewildered and dripping wet but strong and healthy, seated on Narekats’i’s tomb. This tale brings together many familiar elements: a storm and a monster, a supernatural journey, an undersea shrine. If the legend of Narekats’i’s Isle of Arter has colored the epic, the epic has evidently reciprocated by weaving a legend out of itself around the saint.

One detail is curious. Arter Island is just northwest of Aght’amar, and both are but a short distance from the southern shore of Lake Van, where Narekavank’ once stood. But the boat carrying Gregory and his parents when the storm rises stands off Archesh, which is on the northeastern shore of the lake, many miles in the wrong direction. Unless they had taken ship at Avants’ (now Iskele), the port of Van city—going with other pilgrims to visit the Isle of Lim as part of a long itinerary—the presence of Archesh would make no sense. But there are two cities of the same name: the early modern one on the shore and the ancient and medieval one down below, under the rising waters of Lake Van. So, perhaps, the lure of that Armenian Atlantis, coupled with the submarine theme, accounts for its otherwise inexplicable mention: Drowned cities have always excited human imagination.²³ St. Gregory of Narek

20. In the fifth-century *History of the Armenians* of P’awstos Buzand, which is very rich in epic and mythological material, fourth-century Armenian soldiers battling the Sasanian armies cry “*Arr Arshak kaj*” as they slay their foes. The phrase means either “To brave Arshak!” or “Take, brave Arshak!” Either way, it is a dedication to their lost king, Arshak II: Narekats’i’s pun is a remote echo of the same usage and even has similar reference to sacrifice and transit to the Otherworld.

21. See J. M. Thierry, *Monuments Arméniens du Vaspurakan* (Paris: Paul Geuthner, 1989), p. 292. Here are two folk versions of the Arter legend, reprinted in Aram Ghanalanyan, *Avandapatum* (Erevan: 1969), p. 84, no. 224:1 from Mko, “*Vana tsovi kghziner*,” (Ardzagank’: 1882), p. 20: “Grigor Narekats’i had a great desire to see the Mother of the Lord with the Christ child in her arms. And once there appeared from that little island opposite his place of prayer that which he desired. Captivated by the vision, Gregory went across the sea [*ants’num e tsove*], bowed before the Mother of the Lord . . . who called to him, *Arr zTer k’o, zor khndreir* [“Take your Lord, whom you sought”]. Because of this the name of the island remains Arter.” Another version comes from A. Solak’yan, “*Vana banahyusut’yunits*,” *Azghagrakan handes* 19 (Tiflis: 1910):99: “Grigor Narekats’i used to cry in his place of prayer night and day; he prayed so much that the rocks under his knees wore out. His request [*khndirk’n*] was to see just once with his own eyes the Mother of God with Jesus in her arms. For many years he wept and wailed, struck the rocks on the ground with his hands and poured out bucketfuls of tears . . . one night he suddenly [*nakyakhtan*] beheld light streaming from the sky over lake Van [*Vana tsovu erknuts’ los m’ kat’av*]. A fine wind arose and the Mother of God appeared over the island opposite, her arms cradling [Jesus]. Narekats’i, when he beheld it, said, ‘*Arr Ter khokis, arr mka* [Take, Lord, my soul. Do it now] since I’ve attained my desire.’ The vision vanished [*tesilk’ vert’s’av*], the name of that island remained Arter.”

22. Erevan MS 9861, written in Astrakhan in 1837, a miscellany containing Nerses of Lambron’s Life of Narekats’i, a collection of prayers, and prayers of St. Ephrem Syrus (*Ts’uts’ak dzeragrats’ Mashtots’i anvan Matenadaran*, ed. O. Eganyan et al. [Erevan: 1970], vol. 2, p. 1006).

23. Dunwich, in East Anglia, gradually sank below the North Sea (see Rowland Parker, *Meh of Dunwich: The Story of a Vanished Town*

seems to reclaim, for a time, his namesake and the gift of his intercession in an undersea realm where he wields occult powers. This aspect of the tale, an obvious folklore motif, has a parallel in the Russian *bylina* (ballad) of the merchant of Novgorod, Sadko, whom the tsar' vodiansoi (emperor of the waters) enriches but then takes to his undersea kingdom by way of payment.²⁴ The Armenian legends of a stone phallus, timeless cave, holy islet, or shrine beneath the waves of Lake Van are seen to reflect the successive strata of Urartean, Iranian, and Christian religious traditions, which combine in a great national epic cycle, chanted by exiles and the dead, in a lost paradise that is not Eden, but Van.

The venerable comparison of the soul's plight to that of a shipwrecked man drowning in turbulent seas, the story of Jonah and his monster, and the local topos of the Drachenkampf in mythology and heroic epic seem to be blended in the eighty-second chapter of Narekats'i's own meditations (appendix, section 14). In that prayer, hermits are evoked as valiant (arapets) fighters who help the soul to escape the turbulent sea and to fly (rimuts'nal) to the safety of a ship's haven (nunahangistn). He summons with the word "ark" (tapan/ak') the Deluge and Noah. In the prayer, God is He who lifts out (veratsich') rather than the one who submerges (enighmich'), saving the soul from the fangs of vishap. St. Gregory was in every way the ideal candidate for cooption into the great mythologem of the shrine beneath the waves: in his hieros topos, every topos is there.

[New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1978]. H. P. Lovecraft (who died in 1937 in Providence, Rhode Island) named a mythical town in Massachusetts after lost Dunwich in one of his tales of supernatural horror. But in his story "The Call of Cthulhu," a semi-divine, octopoid sea monster is immured in suspended animation in a tomb in the city of R'lyeh, deep beneath the waters of the Pacific ocean. When the stars align in a certain order, he is to rise to wreak destruction and salvation. His followers recite this mantra in the invented Aklo language of Lovecraft: *Pf'inglui mglw'nath Cthulhu R'lyeh wgahngai Ithaq'n* ("In his house at R'lyeh, dead Cthulhu waits dreaming"). It is as though Lovecraft had read the Armenian epic—the cycles of both Sanasar and Pok'y Mher! But although there were many Armenians in New England in his day, there is no evidence he knew of Sanasar and his heroes. There is little doubt, though, that he knew Lord Tennyson's poem "The Kraken," about the fearsome giant octopus of Nordic nautical lore (see Richard Carlington, *Mermaids and Mastodons: A Book of Natural and Unnatural History* [New York: Rinehart and Co., Inc., 1957], p. 49. The sea monk and sea bishop, illustrated on p. 59, must have inspired Lovecraft's fish-men in "The Shadow over Innsmouth").

24. *Byliny*, ed. B. N. Putilov. Series Biblioteka Poeta, (Leningrad: Sovetskii Pisatel', 1957), p. 224 ff.

In the same Slavic north where Sadko plied his maritime trade, there is a city that God caused to sink to safety beneath the waves of Lake Svetloyar (the Luminous), lest it be defiled by the Tataro-Mongol infidels. It is to remain invisible till the second coming of Christ. This is Russian Great Kitezh; its double, Little Kitezh nearby, was lost to Khan Batyi in the thirteenth century. One might prudently regard this as no more than the sort of a parallel, which abound in folklore, save for the notice in an old Russian chronicle that Great Kitezh was founded in memory of "the holy martyr St. Gregory of Greater Armenia" (na pamyat' svyatago svyashchennomuchenika Grigoriya Velikiya Armenii).²⁵ Perhaps, then, the famous legend of Kitezh contains an echo of the episode we have studied in the epic of Sasun and of the tales surrounding another Gregory, the saint of Narek, that intersect, as we have seen, with the epic. He might thus have been conflated in Russia with the better-known St. Gregory the Illuminator—who was himself the hero of another cycle of epic considered above. The millennial occultation of Kitezh reminds one of the cave of Pok'y Mher; the two towns Little and Great Kitezh, of new and old Archesh; and the divine protection from infidel defilement, the flight of both Tsovinar and her twin sons. It would not be the only case by any means of an Armeno-Slavic correspondence in medieval times;²⁶ but that is for another study, and this one is ended.

APPENDIX²⁷

1. 52, pp. 238–240. Recited by Murat Hovsep'yan of Ayarat and transcribed by Sargis Haykuni.

(King Ghumrik's daughter goes on an outing to the sea—Lake Van—before being taken in marriage by the idolater (knapash: Muslim king.)

She went for a walk, strolling along the sea shore, / What did she see? / In the sea she saw an island (Turkish: ada). / She said, "What's that island there?" / The heralds (jam'yek'n) said, "We have no idea (khabar, lit.: "news")." / The king's daughter ordered them to bring a boat (lor'ken, from Russian lodka). / She sat down in the boat and set out for that island.

25. V. L. Komarovich, *Kitezhskaya legenda* (Moscow: Izd. AN SSSR, 1936), p. 163.

26. J. R. Russell, "Solov'i, solov'i," in *Studies in Honor of Prof. Nina Ganssler*, St. Nessess Theological Journal, forthcoming in 2007.

27. From Sasna tseret, ed. Manuk Abeghyan and Karapet Melik-Ohanjanyan (Erevan: 1936), vol. 1 (n51) and (Erevan: 1951), vol. 2 (n52).

It was a short trip—she took that way, and went. / She came, and there appeared a door to a hall [*zagħ*, from Russian *zal*]. / She entered and saw: there was a little monastery in that hall. / In that monastery there was a spring. / That spring flowed and spilled into the sea.

(She has a priest say a mass, telling him *Mer Ter Astvats me durr bats'i* ["May our Lord God open a door above us"], and drinks one-and-a-half handfuls of the water. Nine months later, Sanasar and Baghdasar are born.)

They went to the land of their fathers, / Arrived at that island of the sea.

Where their mother had gone and drunk water. / "Son," she said, "you go too, / Drink from that immortal spring [*anmakhakan haghbrits'i*]." / The boys went and drank from that spring in the middle of the monastery. / They were sated, and by God's command they came out huge, full-grown men. / They came out of the monastery and on its top they saw a colt standing. / The two brothers seized it, brought it down, / And it, too, drank water from the spring, was sated, became great. / The boys saw there was a door in the monastery; so they opened it. / It was a storeroom: a saber hanging on the wall, / And a helmet lay there—they took that, too; / There was a pair of shoes, and they took them.

2. S2, pp. 392–393. An anonymous reciter from Van, published in *Azgarakan handes* (The Ethnographic Review; Shushi and Tiflis) in 1910.

(Lord Ter-Nerses has a daughter, Sandukh, whom the idolater-king wants to marry. The monastery of Narek contained a chapel to St. Sandukht; the name might have contaminated the epic, replacing Tsovinar, because of the contamination by the Narek cult of the narrative or because the element *san-*, Iranian "conquer," was seen as common to this name and, by popular etymology, to Sanasar. The original name of Sasun was Sanasun, too. An old man [*khalivor*, from standard Armenian *alewor*: a similar mysterious old man appears to the twins to name Sasun for them] advises her in a dream to take a walk on the mountain opposite, saying, "When you go, you'll find an immortal spring [*anmakhakan āghbūr em*] there." She and her horse should both drink of it. She arrives at *Marut'a pants' r sar*, "The high mountain of Marut'a," and drinks. Later on, the old man returns in a dream again, and says her son is to build a church [*zhām*, lit., "hour", cf. Armenian *zhamatun*, "chapel"] there to be called *Marut'a Pants' r Aspatsatsin*, "High Mother of God of Marut'a.")

Upon saying or not saying these words, he brought many giant [*chöch'*] cross-stones [*khach'ak'ār*] and planted them at the spot as a sign of what he had said, and thereupon instantly vanished.

3. S2, pp. 92f. Recited by Arrak'el Shakoyan of Nor Bayazet and transcribed by Ervand Lalayan in 1905.

(The princess is here called *Pirzat khanum*, Persian for "lady born to an old/holy man"; and her son is not Sanasar, but Mher. She is betrothed to a Muslim king. Here, the place where she becomes pregnant seems accordingly to be identified with *Mheri durm*, "Mithra's gate," the place of the millennial confinement of *P'ok'r* Mher. After the latter fights with his father, David curses him [S2, pp. 164, 172]: "You are Mher— / So why have you caused me pain these three days? / I ask of God there / That you remain in the Carved Rock [*Kerpats k'ar*], / Your daily food be three pieces of holy wafer [*nshkhar*], / And death not come to you till Christ comes for the judgment." The door of the cave—an Urartean blind portal—opens miraculously on Ascension Eve. K'urrik Jelali's stale drips from the lintel the rest of the time: opening gate, Communion bread, and dripping water—urine instead of semen?—all play a role in this version.)

The girl stood in thought, and said, / "Better let me go and kill myself. / I won't go become an idolater / And lose my faith of light. / The girl got up / At break of day / And went into the mountains: / She was going to kill herself. / She went, saw a cross-stone planted in the ground, / Knelt and took refuge in her God [*Yiran Astvats apavinet's*: this may reflect the Muslim *tawakkul*, but the latter itself derives from Zoroastrian Middle Iranian *apastan*, "refuge (in God)," and the latter word also is loaned into Armenian] / And her eyes shed many tears. / Then she looked and saw there was a door at the side: / She saw the door open. / She saw pieces of Communion bread [*masunk*] there, / Entered, prayed. / It was summertime, and she was thirsty. / She walked around, saw water dripping from the ceiling, / Went and drank three handfuls of water. / Her heart felt very straitened there; / So she turned back and went outside, and the door shut. / After six months had passed, the child made itself known in her womb [*ereken p'ori meje malem arav*]. / The heralds brought her mother the tidings: / "Your daughter is pregnant."

(Her mother is scandalized. The girl explains.)

When I was sad, I rose and went / Up on our mountain to kill myself. / There was a chapel [Armenian *maturr(n)*, from Greek *martyrion*, lit. "shrine of a martyr"] there. / I went in, said my prayers, drank water: / The child has come from that water. / By God in His place, / In mine am unblemished [*anarat*].

(The child is born.)

The child grew in one month as if it had been a year. / When he was a year old, / He was as big as a twelve-year-old boy. / Whatever name they gave him wouldn't stick. / When he played with the other kids, the boy / Would strike them and break their arms, break their legs. / His neighbors complained

to his grandfather, / "He's killing our children, slaying them," / The latter went in turn and said to his lord, T'oros [K'eri / "Uncle" T'oros, a figure in the epic], / "Put him on a horse / To go hunting with his friends. / Cast a spell [sere, from Arabic *sihr*] on that horse." / They brought a horse, gave it to him, / He mounted up and rode off to the hunt. / He went, and came straight to that chapel. / The horse reared: / The boy fell down on his face and lost consciousness. /

When he got up and entered the chapel a dream came / And said: "Your name is Mher. / Your mother's tears have ascended to God / As your sacrifice. / It is God who has granted you: your name is Mher. / Now go tell your grandfather the king / And bring ten heifers who have not calved. / Bring priests to perform a mass: / The chapel's door will open / So that you may put a charm [amayik: the word is used also of magic scrolls] on your breast, / Lift the saber with your arm, / Take the mace [guzuz, from Persian *guzr*] in your hand, / And go to do battle with the idolater / That the Armenian faith not perish. / Your horse, K'unike Jalat'e, is in the cave [jeri mejn al]. / Thus has God ordained for you."

(Sacrifice is duly offered to Mayram Asvat'sabin, Mary Mother of God, at the place, which is called Marat'uk.)

4. 51, pp. 130–131. Transcribed from a reciter from Moks by Garegin Hovsep'yan and published in 1892.

They went along the sea shore: / Sanasar was the elder brother; Baghdasar, the younger. / Sanasar said to Baghdasar, "Let's jump into the water. It's better than walking: / The idolater king is going to sacrifice us to his idols." / Baghdasar's heart wasn't in it, so / Sanasar threw himself into the sea. / By God's command he went through the sea as if on dry land. / The sea opened, he walked through a garden / And saw: a horse was saddled there, / The Lightning Saber [Keb'akan T'ur] hanging from it. / He took heart to mount the horse. The horse said, / "Earthborn one, what are you doing, what have you in mind?" / He said, "I'm going to ride you." / It replied, "I'll give you to the sun [eregakan] and roast you!" / He said, "I'm sea-born [tsavayin], I'll hang under your belly." / When it gave him to the sun to roast, he hung under its belly. / When it turned over, he got on its back. / It said, "I am your horse, you are my master. / You are of a troubled sort— / Let's go. Drink some water and relax [vahan?]. / He went and saw a helmet there. / He stuffed it with two litres of cotton / But still it would not stay on his head. / There was a belt there: / He wound it round his waist seven times, but it did not stay. / There was a pair of shoes: he put in each a litre of cotton / And put them on, but they were still too big. / He couldn't understand that when he drank water, he'd fall asleep. / He drank water, slept. / He slept a while, God gave him grace: / He rose, took the two litres of cotton out of the shoes, / Put them on his feet; / The girdle, round his waist; the helmet, on his head. / He rose, mounted

the horse, rode through the garden, / And beheld again the surface of the sea."

5. 51, pp. 311–312. Recited by Sakho of Moks and transcribed by Sargis Haykuni, published in 1901.

Sanasar and Baghdasar rose and walked along the sea shore. / Both sat down there and wept. / Sanasar said, "Brother, / Come, let's jump in the sea / And drown. It's better than the king taking us / To sacrifice to idols." / Baghdasar said, "Brother, / Life is sweet. I won't jump in." / Sanasar got up and jumped into the sea himself. / He invoked the name of God / And it made him tumble head over heels [shalaputik] through the sea. / He reached the sea bottom, looked—what did he see? / There was a palace [k'oshik] and a chamber [sare] there, / With a pool [havuz] between them. He jumped in. / A horse was hitched there, and to each of its four legs hung: the Lightning Saber, / The A'aben Girdle [possibly from Turkish *atabay*], the Little Helmet for the head, / The Belt [k'emur] for the waist. / He entered and bathed. / He mounted K'urrik Jalali, flew out of the sea. / Sanasar was a kid when he entered the sea: / He came out, filled out, became fiery [hreghen].

6. 51, pp. 321–322. Same source as #5.

(A Drachenkampf: Sanasar here does not so much fight the dragon, though, as narcotize it in order to snatch a ring from its mouth. One recalls here the Gnostic Hymn of the Pearl in Syriac, in which a Parthian prince is sent to seize the Pearl of great price kept by the dragon in the Sea of Egypt. The prince is himself drugged; but when he awakens, he performs magic on the dragon and accomplishes his quest. The text is a kind of compressed epic, evidently intended for proselytes, perhaps of Manichaeism, in the Armeno-Irano-Syrian region: see J. R. Russell, "The Epic of the Pearl," in *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9 (Cambridge, Mass.: 2004), pp. 1261–1332.)

The old man slept, but Sanasar still could not sleep. / He saw the old man asleep / And went that night into the town, / Found forty camels, forty loads of wine. / He took them in the night, left them on the shore of the sea. / The camels returned—he stayed there. / He emptied those forty loads of wine into the sea: / The dragon got tipsy [veshap sarkhosh?av]. / He went then, diving to the sea bottom, / And saw the dragon had raised its head. / He dipped his hand down from above / And seized the ring from the dragon's mouth. / Turned back, came to the inn, lay down on his side. / When the morning light dawned, the sea was raging. / A dragon-wind [veshap k'ami] burst upon the town. / The king summoned his herald. / "Who has removed the ring from the dragon's mouth?" / They searched and found no one, asked the old man, / Who said, "Last night nobody but that boy came to

my inn: / As soon as he got there, he just collapsed and fell asleep." / Sanasar said, "What's all this about?" / They told him. / Sanasar said, "I did it. / Do what you can about it." / They said their piece; Sanasar, his—and the fight began.

7. S1, pp. 476–477, 479–481. Recited by Vardan Mokhsi-Bazikyan of Moks and transcribed by Harut'yun Gilanyan of Moks in 1911.

A month passed, a year passed, / Again they visit the priests of Gagik the king. / They go on pilgrimage to Hili monastery, above Vostan [now Gevash, a town on the shore of Lake Van opposite Aght'amar and near Narek]. / There she sits eating and drinking on the meadow, / Two springs, one to either side. / The girl takes the cup at her bosom, gives her great aunt to drink, / Filling it with water from that spring. / The priest seals the water with the sign of the cross, / Gives it to the girl and she drinks. / He gives her some more from that spring, / Gives it to the girl from the one on the other side: she drinks. / Both springs cease to flow. / They give there glory to God; / And, having completed the pilgrimage, turn back / And come to the court of king Gagik. / Some time passes and the girl is pregnant. / They inform the idolatrous king, saying, / "Your wife, king Gagik's daughter, is with child. / You had said you would not come to her for seven years, / But you have. What say you? What shall we do?" / He replies, "Be on your guard! / Let's see when the child comes, whose will it is. / I'm the lord and she's my wife: don't you get involved." / Then he waits, nine months are completed, / And God grants two boys: so it is. / The priest takes them, baptizes them, / And names the bigger boy Sanasar; / The smaller, Baghdasar

Then there is trouble among them. / Sanasar and Baghdasar also rise, / Take their household, mother, priest, / And go to the home of their uncle, to king Gagik. / They tell king Gagik: / This is the matter, this is how it happened. / King Gagik says to them, / "You're decent lads, go to Ärtrel [i.e., Arter], / And let things be set straight by the Mother Theotokos [Mayr Astvaratsnits']. / If you're worthy, the Battle Cross [Khach' Patratin: the latter word is often found elsewhere as standard Armenian *paterazmin*, "of war"], / the Lightning Saber, K'urrik Jälali, / The armor, everything's there. / You'll see whether it comes to you." / Then the boys left, / Went to the meadows of P'shävank', / And walked around there. / By God's command as they walked / The sea opened before them to Ärtrel. / Before Sanasar's eyes it becomes dry. / Sanasar goes straightaway to Ärtrel. / Baghdasar stays there, saying, / "Alas! My brother went and was lost in the sea." / Sanasar reaches the place, / Loses consciousness in the church, / Sleeps, and sees a dream: / The Mother Theotokos comes by miracle in the dream and says, / "Your Battle Cross is here. / Rise and kneel before me seven times in prayer. / If you are worthy, you shall receive / K'urrik Jälali, / An armored shirt, / the Ozeni Belt, / The K'äzähk Helmet, / The K'üsül Shoes, / the Lightning Saber, / The Nerez

Dagger. / All are there—take them. / Go, attain your heart's desire, / Then bathe in the spring / And your strength will be greater than that of seven: / One will be as seven, you will fill out." / Then he arose, bathed in the spring. / He took those things, / God's grace was full above him, / He mounted K'urrik Jälali, / The way opened in the sea, / He departed and returned to his brother's side.

8. S1, pp. 533–535. Recited by Vardan Mukhsi-Bazikyan of Moks and transcribed by Senek'erim Ter-Hakobyan in 1915.

(In his initiatory dream in this variant, Sanasar is told by the Virgin *ke ketrch'anas* [you'll become a brave hero]. The Armenian civic and religious fraternities of Erznka in the thirteenth century—and Ukraine, in later centuries—were called *ktrchworats' miut'iwnk'* [unions of *ktrich*], the latter word meaning a brave, heroic young man. These organizations bear similarities to the Iranian organizations of *javanmardan* [young men]. Other designations of the latter include Arabic *futuwwa* [young men], *akhi* [brotherhood], and 'ayyan. The latter word comes originally from Middle Persian and means "helpers," but it also has a connotation of reckless, outlaw behavior—cf. the Armenian designation of the heroes of Sasun as *tsurr* [crazy, wild]. The ethic of the Iranian and Armenian associations is closely bound up with the traditions of the hero in epic: The member must be intrepid and athletic, as well as altruistic and mystically religious.)

So it happens that he and his brother come home. / They take their mother, the priest Melik'set', and their great aunt, / And set out for Aght'amar. / Sanasar and Baghdasar spend some time there, / And go to the sea shore for a walk. / Before Sanasar's eyes / The sea becomes dry land all the way to Arter; / But in Baghdasar's eyes it stays the sea. / On that dry land he has seen, Sanasar / Goes to Arter through the sea. / But all Baghdasar can behold is the sea. He cries, says, / "My brother went into the sea and was drowned." / Sanasar goes, reaches Ärtrel [Arter], / When he arrives, a church is there. / He walks into the church. / When he enters the church / He loses consciousness, falls in a heap, sleeps. / A dream comes in his sleep: in the dream / The Mother of God comes and says, / "Hey, Sanasar, arise. / There's a cave [*meghare*] here: dig it open. / There's armor: a shirt; / Armor: the Belt; / Armor: K'äzähk Helmet; / Armor: K'üsül Shoes. / There's a great pot, in the pot a sheath, / And in the sheath, a saber. / The saber's name is Lightning Saber. / On the sea shore is a stone / Beneath the stone, a bridle. / Seize it, draw it away, / And a horse will come out of the sea: it is a sea [*tsovayin*] horse. / The horse's name is K'urrik Jälali. / Sanasar, rise, go to the palace [*därbese*], bathe in the water. / You'll become strong, become gigantic [*ke chüch'anas*], you'll become a brave hero [*ke ketrch'anas*]. / Take all those things. Take them for yourself." / Sanasar woke from sleep, stood up, said, / "What a dream I saw! / Is it true, or a lie?" / He went where she had shown him, / Dug the cave open, saw / What he had seen in his

dream, and removed it all. / He bathed in water at the palace, became strong and brave. / Put on the armor—the Shirt, / Bound on the armored Girdle. / Put the K'azakh Helmet on his head, / Put on the armored K'asıl Shoes, / Put on the Lightning Saber, / Went to the sea shore, turned aside the stone, / Struck the sea with the bridle, caught K'ürrik Jalali, / Bridled him, mounted him, left Arter and came away.

9. 51, p. 609. Recited by Manuk Harut'yunyan of Mokts and transcribed by Karapet Melik'-Ohanjanyan in 1933.

(In this variant, it is not the Caliph of Baghdad who wants Gagik's daughter, but the son of the Kurdish ruler of Vostan, who sees her walking at Aght'amar.)

They went and stayed a year there. / The girl sent word to king Gagik, / Saying, "I cannot abide here. / Bring a boat at night and take me away." / When he took her away, the girl said, / "A horse will take me to Aght'amar, to get to Artel [Arer]." / When she went, she became big with child. / Three or four years she stayed concealed there. / There she bore two boys, twins [jemek]. / One's name was Sanasar; the other's, Baghdasar. / The boys grew daily bigger. / Ten years passed. / The boys said to each other, / "We can't stay here. What will we do here! / We can't stay on this island, in this sea. / Let's go to another frontier, another land." / They got up and went to a foreign place. / The boys said, "We won't go on to other villages, / Let's build our home here." / They set their hands to it and built themselves a home. / They brought giant [chöch-chöch] stones and built.

10. 51, pp. 835–840. Recited by Yeghiazar Hakobyan of Gavash and transcribed by Harut'yun Avch'yan in 1909.

There was and there was not an Armenian king. / He had a daughter. / That king's daughter was very pretty [khorot]. / The eyes of the king of Persia [Ajmx, genitive of Ajam] / Fell on the daughter of the king of the East [Arevikts]. / The king of Persia was very powerful: / He sent word to the king of the East, / Saying, "Give your daughter to my son." / Twice more he sent word, / Saying, "Give your daughter to my son." / The other replied, "I am Armenian. You are Persian. / I will not give up my daughter." / The Persian king said, / "If you don't give your daughter to my son, I'll flay the lot of you." / When the girl heard this, she thought to herself, and said: / "On account of me they will kill all these people. / Their boys will be left orphans [het'im, from Arabic yatim] and will curse you. / Then they'll carry me off by force . . ."

(The girl marries the Persian king's son.)

They stayed in the palace half a year, / Then sent an answer [jwab, from Arabic jawab]: / "Are we prisoners here! / You don't let us leave the house." / The king said, "They're right, let them go outside and take a walk." / The gatekeepers allowed

them to go outside and walk around. / The king's daughter had never seen what the sea was. / They strolled through the Royal garden [Khas bakhch'], from Persian Khass bakhcheh], / She emerged and beheld the Blue sea [Kapot tsou, from Armenian Kaputan, a name of Lake Van]. / She did not see the sea's edge: she went up to it, / Stood on a rocky place, looked around, / And saw the sea had no limit. / She was dismayed, sat down, and said, / "Oh, if only there were a little water, I'd drink." / She walked around some more, but saw no water in the rocks. / She looked towards the sea and saw a great rock [choch' k'ar] standing by the sea shore, / A white fountain [svtak alhpai] pouring from the rock, / The water of it covering all four sides [inor ch'ors pallor pmir er]. / So that a man without taking his clothes [khalav] off / Could not get to that spring and drink its water. / She took off her clothes and went over to the spring, drank the water, came away. / Returned and dwelt in her palace. / The priest was chanting the Housm in accordance with the Armenian custom [khayi onenk'i pen]. / Performing the mass and conferring sanctity on the girl. / The year was completed and the girl's belly swelled. / Her mother-in-law's answer reached the king: / "Your bride is pregnant." / The king went, sat in council [divan], summoned his vizier, and said, / "What do you say to such a thing!" / The vizier replied, "Live long, O king. / Take the priest and put him at the side of your bride. / Who knows, maybe the priest is doing that thing." / The king said, "Vizier, then what do we do?" / The vizier replied, "Then we kill both of them." / They ordered the executioner, "Go and behead both of them." / The executioner went to the bride's palace and said, / "The king has ordered me to slit your throat." / The bride replied, "Your king is unjust: / To cut the throat of a pregnant woman is two murders [kat'el] . . ."

(The twins are born.)

One day they went again to the sea shore to walk around. / An old man came straight up to them and said, / "Sanasar, come, I'll take you to an island in the sea, / And there I'll give you the Lightning Saber, / K'urku Jalali, the Mother-of-Pearl Saddle [Zin u Satafin], the Menacing Mace [Gurzn i Gorozin]." / Sanasar said to his brother, "Baghdasar, / You stay here. I'll go. / If I drown in the sea, / You will remain here alive [sagh]." / Baghdasar said, "Brother, you stay here and I'll go." / The old man said, "You stay here and / Let Sanasar come back to you. / He's strong: he'll bring the Menacing Mace." / The old man took Sanasar and went to the island in the sea. / There the old man showed him K'urku Jalali, / The Lightning Saber, the Pearly Saddle, and the Menacing Mace. / Sanasar said, "Grandfather, / From where we came to the island / No trace is left. We didn't drown in the water. / But from here, with these heavy things, / How can we go and not drown?" / The old man said, "You mount the horse, / Take those weapons, take my hand, / Shut your eyes tight, call upon God, / And I'll bring you out." / The old man brought him out, to his brother.

11. S1, pp. 875–877. Recited by Grigor P'okhan Yeghizaryan of Gavash and transcribed by Senek'erim Ter-Hakobyan in 1916.

(The text refers to the “pit” [Armenian *p'os*] of Gavash. This may be connected to the legend that there was a deep [*khor*] storehouse or cowshed [*gom*] in the village of Khorgom, West Armenian, Khorkom, east of Vostan/Gavash toward the city of Van. Khorkom's famous son is the American-Armenian abstract expressionist painter Arshile Gorky.)

Once upon a time there was idolatry in the pit of Gavash. / There were also worshippers of God in Aght'amar and Khavu valley [*Khavu tsor*—Kurdish *Havazor*, from Armenian *Hayots' dzor*, “Valley of the Armenians”]. / Now they are few. Kingship was in the idolaters' hands. / When the idolaters walked amongst the worshippers of God, / There was a priest at Aght'amar. / That priest's daughter was very pretty [*khoroṭ*]. / When they saw that girl they sent to the king: / “The priest at Aght'amar has a very pretty daughter.” / The king replied to the people of Aght'amar, / “Bring her, your heart's own, your daughter, give her to me. / If you don't, I'll slaughter your entire nation”

(She marries him.)

The king's seat was in the plain of Nor Gegh. / It was where he fought and where his place of prayer [*Aghot'kategh*] was. / That was a place of temples to idols [*krapashnots*]. / They celebrated the wedding for seven or eight days: / The bishop had his tent with his niece: it / Was pitched an acre away from the king's. / They were both under the same tent. / The royal decree was thus: / “For forty days the king will not come at his wife's side.” / Thirty-nine days later, / The bishop made a request of the king, and said: / “Command tomorrow that I take my niece / To go to Hili for a walk [*ser*] over the springs. / I'll walk around, come back, and go to my place.” / The king said, “It is a command for you: / Take your niece, / Go and walk around, return.” / He took his niece and they went to Hili. / When they came, they prayed at the Mother of God of the Forty Altars [*K'arsun Khoran Astvatsatsin*]. / As soon as they had prayed, they hastened away [*prtsan*], / Left the church, went over onto Hili. / There the bishop moved a stone away / And let water come out from under the stone. / The bishop took a cup at his breast, held it before the water, / The cup filled to the brim. / He said, “Girl, take this water and drink.” / He put the cup before her, filled it once more, / But it wasn't as full as the first time: / There was a little less, and it was a little murky. / He gave that, too, to her—and she drank. / He put back the stone, turned away and returned with his niece. / The bishop brought her deliberately / To the king's tent and through the door. / When it was the fortieth day / They came and sat under the tent. / The bishop when he had showed / his niece everything, / Got up and with the king's permission went to his place. / That evening the king was to go

in to his wife. / She sent a letter to the king, saying: / “In the moment I entered the doorway of your tent, / Whether it was your love, or fear of you, I became pregnant. / So you cannot come to me for nine months. / If you believe, / From the time I entered your tent-door / Reckon the time for the child to be born. / If I'm off by even half an hour either way, then cut off my head.” / The king did not go in to her. / He thought, “What sort of thing is this? / Stop, let me look and figure out whether this is a lie or the truth.” / When nine months were up, she gave birth to twin boys. / They took the news to the king: / “You have twin boys.” / The king had a wise man. He brought him in secretly and asked, / “Reckon from such-and-such a day and hour till now. / Have I made a mistake?” / “No, it's neither more nor less.” / The king was agreeable. / The girl sent answer to her uncle that he should come. / Her uncle arose, came. / Secretly, he baptized both boys. / He named one Sanasar; the other, Baghdasar. / Four or five days he stayed there, / Took his leave, and went away.

12. S1, pp. 1091–1092. Recited by Hovan Zohrabyan of Kachet' and transcribed by Karapet Melik'-Ohanjanyan in 1934.

(Kachet' is a variant of the name of the village of Kasht, in Moks, which is famous for its brave heroes, whose intrepid recklessness came to be taken for foolishness. The latter quality became proverbial for Kashtet's and, as a result, the *kat'naghbiur* “milky fountain” that nourished their heroism came to be regarded instead as destructive of people's wits and was sealed. See J. R. Russell, “Introduction,” in *Karapet Sital, An Armenian Epic: The Heroes of Kasht (Kashti k'ajer)*, trans. J. R. Russell (Ann Arbor: Caravan Books Anatolian and Caucasian Series, 2000).)

Gagik was the king: he sat in K'armanachegh', opposite Aght'amar. There he reigned over Gävash, Khavi Tsör [Hayots' dzor, *vide supra*], Shatakh [the principal town of Moks], Moks, Sparkert, Khizan, Karkarr, and Karchvan. He had a summer palace [*amaranots*] of his own. Its name was called Hili. It had three hundred fragrant meadows. The Milky spring [*Kat'nov hakhpür*], too, was there. In the village there was also a building, a house of idols [*krk'atun*]. It was a tall building with no signs [*nshanner*—crosses?] above it. There was only, they say, an A or an S.²⁸ In front of the door were forty small cells, which had been at one time the places of the idols; the big idol was put inside the monastery [*vank', sic!*]. That is king Gagik's summer palace.²⁹

28. In Armenian, both letters A and S have the basic shape of an English capital U; so perhaps the reciter means a Muslim crescent, or, more remotely, a Zoroastrian symbol such as the twin horns on the domes of the Karkoy fire-temple—and the Sasanians, too, used the crescent before the invention of Islam.

29. One recalls that the medieval Armenian historian Movses Khorenats'i described the fortified complex of bath, temple, or tomb,

King Gagik's daughter was there, too. / She went to stroll around the Milky spring. / She went there, drank water. / It's said that her pregnancy was received from that spring. / This is how the girl deceived her father. / Then when her father disbelieved, everybody abused the girl. / The girl summoned a doctor [hak'im] and had him examine her. / The doctors said, "It isn't from a man." / But her father still didn't believe it. / The girl took a man from amongst the servants, / Fled, and went to the lands of Sasun. / There she lived for herself. / The girl gave birth to two boys: / One Sanasar, one Bagdasar. / They got big there, they became handsome [khonor] men / And strong champions [p'ālivan, from Persian pahlavan, lit., "Parthian"], very strong. / They built their home there, too, / And founded a fine fortress as well. / They finished building the fortress . . .

13. Aram Chantalanyan, *Avandaputem* (Traditional Narratives) (Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1969), pp. 313–314 (no. 774.xvi, from *Erevan Matenadaran MS 9861*, fol. 19b–21b).

(This aretological tale, in late-classical Armenian with Turkish and Persian loan-words, intersects at numerous points with the epic tradition. The text mentions the pilgrims' boat being blown in a storm away from opposite the city of Archesh [Urartean Argishtihina, Greek Arzes, Turkish Erchiş], which is on the northeastern shore of Lake Van. But they were presumably on their way from their home, Agh'tamar Island, to the port of Gavash/Vostan on the southern shore, a short distance away, from which they would have traveled the few miles overland to Narekavank'. Archesh, then, is far off course; but perhaps it entered the story because the medieval town, whelmed in the rising waters, is beneath Lake Van off Ororan between Plur and Plurmak. The modern town is 6 km northeast. The ruins excited the imagination of storytellers who wove tales of dragons and submerged palaces—in this tale and in the epic.)

There was a man named Andreas from Agh'tamar. His wife was barren and they had no child. So he took his wife and went to the tomb of Grigor Narekats'i; they asked the saint to grant them a son. And God by the intercession of St. Gregory

gave them a son and they rejoiced greatly, baptizing him with the name Grigor. When the boy was seven years old, his father and mother wanted to take the boy to the saint's grave. They boarded a boat and were in the midst of the sea on the Saturday of Vardavar [the Feast of the Transfiguration]. And by the impulse of the Evil one, a wind arose and took the boat from the seas opposite Archesh to opposite Karakashish [yArchshu dem / Gharak'ashishu yargew]. And the boy fell into the sea. His father and mother lamented so fiercely that their eyes became blind. And they debarked on dry land and searched everywhere, but they did not find the body of their son. So, departing with laments and bitter tears, they returned to their home. They stayed so till Vardavar of the following year. The villagers said to Andreas: "Your son fell into the sea and died. You've gone blind with crying. Come, let us go to the grave of the saint, that he give light to your eyes." They arrived at the water mill of the monastery. The other folks went ahead, to kiss the saint's grave. And, opening the gates of the tomb, they beheld the child Grigor seated on the tomb, drenched in water, and they were astonished. So they turned back in joy and related the good tidings to the boy's parents: "Your child is alive and on top of the saint's tomb." But they did not believe it, till they came up to their son themselves. When they saw him, they said to the son they saw, "Tell us what happened to you." And he replied, "When I fell into the water, a monster [aylakerp mi: lit., "xenomorph"] seized me and wished to drown me in the sea. Then Grigor Narekats'i appeared with a staff [gawazan: lit., "ox-prod," the term used for a bishop's crozier] in his hand and abjured [sustats': denominative verb from Old Iranian sasti- "pronouncement"] the monstrous demon [diwin, dative of dew; cf. Middle Persian dew, Avestan daeva-, etc.] and freed me from its hands. He took me, descended to the sea bottom, struck the ground with his staff and cast his mantle [p'ālon] over the staff like a tent [z-vran]. The water was like an arch [z-kamar] above me. And he made the sign of the cross as a seal [khach'akn'ebts'] in four directions and all became luminous. And I rested as though in a palace of light [i hangstan ibrew luseghen darpasi: the word for palace here, darpas, is the same as in the narratives of Sanasar's submarine adventure]. And he said, "Stay here while I go and fulfill the requests of pilgrims." And on Monday he returned and brought me two holy wafers [nshkhark']: I ate them and grew strong. And thus, every Saturday he brought me two holy wafers. But today he said to me, "Lo! Your father and mother are coming to my tomb on pilgrimage. I'll take you and give you to them." And he took me up and drew me out of the sea; suddenly I saw myself upon his tomb. And he gave me the napkin [Turkish aghlukht] of his hands as a sign: "By this your parent's eyes be restored to light." And when they kissed the holy napkin [olastamkn: here, the classical Armenian word is used of the holy napkin that retained Christ's visage], their eyes were illuminated. And those who saw and heard were all astonished and amazed and gave glory to God and to the holy doctor Narekats'i.

and palace at Gamii as the "summer palace" of the pre-Christian Armenian Anasid king Trilat (Tridates): There is a Greek inscription of Tolid I (first century A.D.) there. If there is a grain of truth to this strange description, the building might have been a Zoroastrian bagin (magical shrine) containing small statues of the thirty-three yazatas and seven Amesha Spentas, totaling forty though, it must be admitted, forty is the all-purpose number of the Near East, with a large statue of the supreme Creator God, Ahura Mazda (Aramard) in the main hall. A building at Parthian Anasid Nisa contained numerous niches with painted cult statues, and Armenian Anasid kings made pilgrimages to that home city of their divinized ancestors.

14. St. Gregory of Narek (Grigor Narekats'i), *Book of Lamentation* (Armenian *Matean oghbergut'ean*), ch. 82 (M= edition of P. Khach'atryan, A. Ghazinyan, Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1985).

(In the manuscripts, this chapter usually bears a title indicating it is addressed to the Apostles [Armenian *Arrak'elots'*]; however from the imagery of salvation from a dragon [*vishap*] in the depths it is clear how this prayer might have contributed to the legend about St. Gregory saving a drowning child. In most editions the text is printed as prose; I have followed here the strophic divisions of the M edition: sub-chapter, page, and line numbers refer also to that edition.)

(I) (p. 576) Beneficent Lord God, king of many gifts, / redoubt of life, image of light, place of repose wide in conception; / who was incarnated for the sake of me, a sinner, / you have shaped things past recounting, prepared miracles, / till you accomplished even that which was told, by your divinity through which all is replete. / Now, for the sake of the holy Apostle / appointed by ordination by your celestially formed hands, / and anointed by your Holy Spirit, / whose meet praise as best I can, / (line 10) for your glory, Lord of all, I have served in another meditation,³⁰ / have mercy on me, too, by the loving memory of their election. / Prepare for me through them a path of departure into desired bliss.³¹ / May there be audible to me in sweet welcoming into life the sound of their kind shepherdling. / May I have a part in the certainty of salvation of celebrated hope / (p. 577) with the guides into life, the first graces of my own honor³²— / of the glorified of the orders³³—of the rational Watchers,³⁴ / Evangelists of the

heights, glorious princes, / resplendent in a crown ablaze with light, / for the adornment of the inalienable power of the grace of the shining ones / (line 20) who are perfected by the oil of joy of the light of the Lord. / (II) With the disciples of your great command, / exalted, of God the Christ, / and through the act of martyrdom of those chosen for your witness, / who in their mortal and grief-stricken bodies, / with limbs imperiled and full-burdened, / in terrestrially confined and earth-compacted nature / warred against all the elements of substantial existence / and were crowned, raised up, and spiritually brought to life, / ascending valorously [*ariabar*] from the earth, as the prophet declares,³⁵ / (30) true witnesses to the ultimate tribulation of death, / seers in this world of the intelligible invisible things and of things hidden, / and of undoubted good things made visible through hope. / Disciples of the Apostles and sharers of the tribulations of the same, / made equal to them in deeds, / in perfected and undiminishing fullness, / dance in the feasting of beatitude unbounded by space: / By their pleasing and acceptable prayers, / with the praise of their supplications offered in blood, dedicated in labor, with sweat redolent of frankincense, / receive me, renewed together with them, / (40) my portion recorded in you with them, in certain salvation. / (III) With those daubed in blood by the play of fire and the sword, / the ascetics, holy fathers, hermits, / and those who follow you, Son of God, / in invincible bravery [*k'ajut'eamb*] and sincere chastity,³⁶ / fighting valiantly [*ariapes*] against the tyranny of my haughty, savage flesh, / (p. 578) by the same they vanquished incorporeal Belial, / and on the field of perpetual war, the arena of this life, / without recoiling from the weight of the burden, / from the broad-billowing breakers of the sea of this world,³⁷ / (50)

30. M, in note 4, suggests this refers to his Encomium to the apostles (*Nerboghean govesti, asats'eal i hamawren gunds arrak'elots' n . . .*).

31. In "path of departure" [Armenian, *shavigh elits'*], the first word is a loan from Aramaic (cf. Hebrew *Shavil* and Arabic *sabil* [as in the metaphorical Qur'anic expression *fi sabil Allah*, "In the Way of God"]). *Elits'* is genitive plural of *elk'*, "Exodus": The term means in the context of the Narek the departure of the soul from the body at death and its upward transit to the next world. Thus Narekats'i invokes straightaway the image of shepherds on a mountainside: an everyday scene for any Armenian. But, as will be seen below, the association for the Armenian reader with the biblical connotation of safe passage across the sea bottom is apposite also. Narekats'i uses it as a figure; the pious believers of the Van area evidently took it literally when, using folk and epic motifs, they constructed legends about the saint.

32. That is, the apostles who were the first men accorded the gracious honor of our Lord's high priesthood: Gregory is himself a bishop.

33. This refers to the angelic orders defined by Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite.

34. Armenian *getots'* (of rivers), found in many editions, is certainly erroneous. One should read, rather, *"ditats"*, genitive plural of *det*, "(angelic) Watcher." The latter would both translate Greek *egregoros* (for Aramaic *'irin* [*qadishin*], "holy Watchers"), a vigilant angel, and be a hidden pun thereby on Gregory's own name. See also note 5 in M.

35. M, note 7: a reference to Samuel or Elijah, cf. I Kings 28.13–14 and 4 Kings 2.11.

36. Though *ari* (brave) manly at several points in the text and *k'aj* (brave) here are entirely compatible with the Christian conception of the soldier martyr and ascetic warrior, champion against temptation (cf. the discussion of Martyropolis, *supra*), both words have deep resonances in the pre-Christian traditions that shaped in large part the Armenian heroic epic of *šasun*. Armenian *ari* echoes both *ayr* (man) and that much-abused epithet *arya-* (noble, Iranian, Aryan [!]); and it is a royal epithet in an epic fragment on the second-century B.C. King Artashes (Artaxias I, *apud* Movses Khorenats'i II.50: see J. R. Russell, *Bosphorus Nights: The Complete Lyric Poems of Bedros Tourian*, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 10 [Cambridge, Mass.: 2006], p. 149, on the continuing resonance of the passage in Armenian poetry). The word *k'aj* (brave), a constant epithet in heroic epic, refers in Armenian mythology also to a high-born race of mountain giants and similarly has retained its marked resonance down to our day (see *ibid.*, p. 64).

37. This phrase is typical in its intricacy of Narekats'i's poetics, and serves to draw the reader's attention dramatically to the introduction of the important theme of the sea introduced here and reiterated sporadically till the end of the prayer. In Armenian, it is *i laynatsaval tsp'anats' ashkharhis tsou*: The alliterative pattern here repeats the sound */ts/* thrice, the third after an allophonic intrusion that intensifies the resumptive resonance made possible by repetition of the spirant */v/*

riding the ark [*tapanakav*] of my body's solidity, / they made the souls in lightness fly [*t'rruts'eal*], / and reached the ship's haven [*navahangistn*] of life.³⁸ / And as the lovers of their celestial portion, / without thought for things behind, / they bound truly to their heads boldly / and in bright splendor the diadem of victory. / For the sake of their prayers in this world and dedicated supplications, / receive me also, a sinner from the midst of the guilty, with them. / (IV) And now, mingling my unclean words / (line 60) with the glorificatory, prayerful declarations of the blessed ones above inscribed, / who cry on my account for your favor, / I, too, with them, as one who offers bitter things in place of the sweet, / or a sharp nettle instead of smoothness, / ugliness in the place of comeliness, / and filth instead of the beauty of a pearl, / or soil instead of pure gold, / or yet worthless stones in place of shining silver, / negation in the place of truth, / or gritty sand instead of soft bread. / (70) Now heed, O powerful, capable, extolled one, / their praise on my behalf and mine with theirs in them, / for my salvation and your glory, / all-merciful, benevolent, blessed, / generous-minded, strong, unsearchable, / ineffable, certain, and uncreate.³⁹ / Thine are the gifts; thine, the graces. / You are beginning and cause of all that is good. / (V)(p. 579) You are not condemning, but liberating; / not the destroyer, but the discoverer; / (80) not the dealer of death, but the bringer to life; / not excluding, but ingathering; / not the betrayer, but the rescuer; / not the one who submerges [*enkgmhich*'], but the

one who lifts out [*veratsich*'];⁴⁰ / not throwing down, but raising up; / not cursing, but blessing; / not taking vengeance, but bestowing grace. / You are not the causer of wretchedness, but a comforter; / you do not refute, but inscribe; / you do not shake down, but sustain; / (90) not trip up, but assure; / you do not arrange the occasions of death, / but seek the means to life. / You are not moved to will destruction, / but to salvation in mercy. / You do not forget visitation, / nor cast away the good, / nor prohibit compassion; / nor bring sentence of oblivion, / but a writ of liberation. / (100) You are not hostile to generosity, / nor do you protest against grace, / nor abuse gifts, / nor condemn benefits freely bestowed, / nor shun munificence of mind, / nor abuse pardon, / nor accuse benevolence; / nor do you find dishonor in gentleness, / nor do you discount meekness: / to these are sent not sorrows, / (110) but sacrificial offerings in voice never stilled.⁴¹ / Lift away my sins, O powerful one, / loose my curses, O blessed one; / atone my debts, O merciful one; / (p. 580) erase my transgressions, O compassionate one; / let your finger come⁴² in visitation / and even here shall I be perfected. / What is easier for you, Lord, than these things, / and what is more important than them for me, the guilty one? / But, O providential one, cause breath again / (120) to breath renewal of the illumination of purifying grace / protecting my sinful spirit / and painting the portrait of my image that is created of you.⁴³ / (VI) Do not lead me, O merciful one, in an untimely hour, in too brief a time, / to

(*tsav . . . tsov*); and the /o/ and /u/ of the third element also mark it deeply from the previous vocalic predominance of /a/ (8x).

38. The ark (Armenian *tapan*) rested on the mountains of Ararat, so again Narekats'i has encoded multiple references to inundation, rescue, and ascent, making also the Armenian locus a prefiguration of the Israelite Exodus and thereby affirming not only the superiority of Christian Armenia as *versus Israel* to the Hebrews, but championing Armenian antiquity. The word *tapan* means also, as in the multiple usages of other Christian languages, a burial casket; so the metaphor of ascent of the soul from the body in the coffin is restated in the same figure of speech. *Navahangist* (lit., "ship's rest") reiterates the theme of Noah and Ararat; whilst *t'rruts'eal*, past participle of a causative verb of *t'rrch'im* (fly), will bear the multiple semantic values of sail, of enfranchised winged soul, and of the dove (of peace, of the Holy Spirit) flying out of Noah's cupped hands to return with the olive branch of good tidings.

39. The Armenian phrase *ancharr aneghts ev ansteghts* seems to encode also a kind of Trinitarian *charr* (speech) for Logos, *egh-* for Creation becoming, and *anegh* for God without beginning. The phrase also yields anagrammatically *a-st-va-ts*, "God." In ch. 3.1 of the *Matean*, Narekats'i acclaims the Lord as *hashtogh hogvots' hats*, "bread, sustainer of souls." Just as the phrase in this chapter is united by three apophatic negative prefixes in *an-*, the latter is marked by three in *h-*. It, too, encodes *ast-ov-ats*, "God," this time not anagrammatically but in acrophonic sequence; and the three substantives *Sustainer*, *Soul*, and *Bread* (cf. *Hic est corpus . . .*) again, and much more explicitly, symbolize the Trinity of Creator, Holy Spirit, and incarnate Son. Armenian *Astuts*, "God," is indeed probably to be derived from *has-tem* "create, sustain."

40. The two epithets evoke the image of a rescuer from drowning, which the folk legend transfers from the domain of God's metaphorical, salvific power to the local miracle of the saint himself; see also line 132 and n. 46.

41. *Och' k'amahis i hezut'eants' / och' arrak'in aysots'ik trjtmunk'*, / (110) *ayl anlrreli zohabanut'iunk'*. Line 108 is omitted from the Jerusalem St. James 1964 edition but restored in M. The change from first to third person suggests confusion in the manuscript tradition.

42. The Armenian has the figure *mato matn*; and one is to imagine the finger and hand of God as the emblem of visitation, as in Christian iconography from Armenia to the scene of the creation of Adam in the Sistine chapel!

43. Armenian *kendanagrea*, "make a portrait" (second person imperative) is a calque on Greek *zōgraphō*, lit., "write life." Here God is asked to breathe anew, restoring His own image, *k'oyinasteghts patker*. The latter word is a Parthian loan—cf. Pers. *paykar*—the former compound of Armenian *k'o* (thine) intensified by a possessive adjectival suffix—*yin* to which *steghts-* (create) is added, is a neologism typical of Narekats'i's need to bend language to his intricate conceptions. The Iranian word means both picture and eidolon: In the Sasanian inscription at Naqsh-e Rostam, its Greek equivalent is *prosōpon*, lit., "face" (on the Armenian use of *patker*, see J. R. Russell, "The Scepter of Tiridates," *Le Muséon* 114 [1–2, 2001], pp. 190–191, n. 11 [in *AIS* (note 3), pp. 1138–1139]). Here, then, the poet-mystic has multiplied the dimensions of *ut pictura poesis* into what one might call (allowing oneself a neologism) a kind of metekphrasis: Adam, the image of God, is reinscribed by God's moving finger (see the play on *matn* [finger] above) and fiery breath as a New Adam and reanimated image.

follow an imperfect [ankatar] road, short of hand [apadzernut'eamb], without provisions [ant'oshak].⁴⁴ / Do not proffer a cup of bitterness in the hour of thirst. / O compassionate one, do not close before me the success of my spiritual help, / nor let death's night chance upon me / like a sudden raid of hostile hordes.⁴⁵ / Let not the withering heat in a moment of unpreparedness dry and cut off my roots; / (130) nor let lunar assaults secretly harm. / Let not the ice of my sins grip me, / nor the rivers in spate of this life drown me.⁴⁶ / Let not rest bring death, / nor sleep advance my ruin, / nor yet slumber be my perdition, / nor somnolence work destruction. / Let not an unprepared end rush in, / nor the upward exhalation of my breath be seized and cast low. / (VII) You are Lord; you, compassionate; you, beneficent; / (140) you, generous of mind; you, all-powerful; / of every thing, you,

ineffable in your unapproachability, are capable: / to atone, save, revive, / enlighten, restore all new, / snatch back to life / from the fangs of devouring beasts / or dragons' teeth [i zhaneats' kerch'ats' gazanats' ew kam yatamants' vishapants' i keans korzel], / from the depths of abysses to lead into the light of gladness [i khorots' andndots' i loys berkrut'ean atsel], / out of drowning in the waves of sin [i heghdzmane tsp'anats' meg hats] / to erithrone [bazzmets'uts'anel] amidst the beatific righteous [ardars] in glory.⁴⁷ / Every spirit waits upon you in expectant hope, / (150) longing for your grace— / whether heavenly or earthly, / whether fallen in sin or upraised in righteousness, / whether lord or servant, / lady or maidservant. / And in your hand is the life breath of all. / And to you, with the Father and your Holy Spirit, / glory for ever and ever, / Amen.

44. The use in the strophe of three negative adjectives should at once capture the curiosity of the careful reader of the *Narek*. The road is that into the Otherworld, so "imperfect" (*ankatar*) has reference to those whose lives were "perfected" in martyrdom: *katarem* is the standard term for the death of a holy man. Narekats'i uses elsewhere the phrase *apadzern ant'oshakut'i*uns: The first term means "empty-handed," and probably refers metaphorically to one's own deeds. Armenian *t'oshak* (an Iranian loan), means, like Persian *tûsheh*, provisions for a journey. Thus, Sanâ'i wrote: *Sâqiyâ! may deh ke joz-e may na-shekand in zohd-e rang-âmîz-râ. / Din-e Zardoshtî ô râh-e qalandar chand chand tûsheh bâyard sâkhtan mar râh-e jân-âmîz-râ* (O wine-bearer! Give me wine, for without it one cannot escape this materialist asceticism. / One must make of Zoroastrianism and the Qalandari dervish way provision for the spiritual road). Professor Maria Subtelny of the University of Toronto notes that in Nezâmi's *Layla and Majnun*, the lovesick girl tells her mother she will be taking the pains of her love for Majnûn as provisions for the road (*râh-tûsheh*), that is, to the grave and beyond. Dr. Dalia Yasharpour, Harvard University, informs me that in Judaeo-Persian literature, too, *tûsheh* refers specifically to provision for the soul's journey after death to the Otherworld. In modern Armenian, *t'oshak* is not something one provides for oneself, though: It is a stipend or grant. So perhaps in the *Narek apadzern* implies what one has not taken oneself; but *ant'oshak* means that which one has not been given and refers specifically to grace. In any case, the *t'oshak* in classical Armenian usage is, as in the varieties of literary New Persian, provision specifically for the journey to the next world. Hâfez wrote that the mystics in the *bahr-e 'amiq* "deep sea" of the world *qerqeh gashtand ô na gashtand bâ âb âlûdeh* "were submerged and with water were not stained": compare this to Sanasar's safe submarine passage! As elsewhere in Armenian and Iranian tradition, the heroic quest—in this case, the submarine journey—may be regarded metaphorically as a mystical journey.

45. Armenian *aspatak*, with Iranian *asp* (horse) and *hen* (from Avestan *haēna-* [hostile army]), conjures a vivid picture of the sort of mounted semi-nomadic marauders who terrorized Armenian territory and made life continually perilous for the sedentary population. The next several lines pursue, indeed, similes of farming and cultivation.

46. Here Narekats'i deploys the arsenal of Armenian onomatopoeia and alliteration to evoke the image of drowning he has used earlier: *ughkh-k'* (river, brook) and *oghogh-ests'en* (whelm in third person aorist subjunctive).

47. Lines 139–148 create the picture of one drowning, seized by a *vishap* then saved, returned to the light of the sun, and seated in honor. It is all conceived as metaphor, with proximal reference to the tale of the prophet Jonah depicted in bas-relief at Aght'amar, near Arter and opposite Narekavank; and its deeper resonance is the *vishap*-lore of the Van area. But the lines surely contributed in their turn to the legend of Narekats'i's rescue of a drowning child; and, with the additional legend of Arter, to the versions of the Sasun epic that involve the saint's islet.

THE MEMORY PALACE OF ST. GRIGOR NAREKAC'I *

"A sense of unspeakable security is in me at this moment on account of your having understood the book... By what right do you drink from my flagon of life? And when I put it to my lips they are yours, not mine. I feel that the Godhead is broken up like the bread at the Supper, and that we are the pieces. Hence this infinite fraternity of feeling."¹

The pioneering work of the late Frances Yates, developed and refined by Mary Carruthers and an increasing number of other scholars, has shown how important a role the *ars memorativa*, the art of memory of Classical Antiquity, played in the intellectual and spiritual life, both of European mediaeval Christendom and of the Renaissance. I would like to explore its use in the work of St. Gregory of Narek, Arm. Grigor Narekac'i. Aristotle, though not the first Greek to employ mnemonic techniques, was the first who articulated the theory on which the art was to be founded: the presence of an image, *phantasma*, is necessary, he suggested, to the function of *mnēmē*, memory. Order and regularity then facilitate recollection, *anamnēsis*. Sensation and the more voluntary exercise of imagination (he calls the latter *phantasia aisthētikē*, evocation of a felt image, as it were) are linked to me-

memory; and he adds that memory seems to proceed from *topoi*, places.² Cicero describes anecdotally how the Greek poet Simonides employed the art of memory; and the Latin texts *Ad Herennium*, generally attributed to Cicero, and Quintillian's *De institutione oratoria*, following Aristotle's principles, teach the art systematically. It was a very practical skill. A Roman lawyer or politician did not deliver a speech from a written text: had he done so, his argument would have lost its force in the reception of his hearers. He orated from memory; and the technique suggested was to memorize one's planned speech while walking through the furnished rooms of a deserted house, associating the progression of ideas with the harmonious elements of the three-dimensional picture through which one moved. This was not the rote memorization that Erasmus and Montaigne, at the far end of the mediaeval period, were to deplore as an impediment to the exercise of an active intelligence: in the proper exercise of the art, linkages of active and flexible reasoning and feeling went together with precise recollection of the factual details and rhetorical armature—aesthetic fantasy indeed.

This exercise required of the practitioner a deliberate cast of mind, *intentio*, which Carruthers explains as a creative tension that makes the mind taut, prepared to engrave a new memory or to recover a stored one. This mental attitude is not value-free: it has certain

* Paper presented at the international symposium on the millennium of St. Grigor Narekac'i, Harvard University, 11 October 2003.

¹ Herman Melville, letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, upon receipt of a letter from the latter, to whom he had dedicated *Moby Dick*, praising the novel. Cited by HARDWICK 2000, p. 66.

² ROSSI 2000, p. 7.

moral overtones, reminding one of Jewish *Kavvanā* and Buddhist Mindfulness, and I will come to these presently – but there were purely practical considerations that made the art important, before its religious possibilities. I have already noted the social factor: an audience lost its respect for an orator reading from a written text, much as we might today disdain an actor who cannot remember his lines. (Americans long ago gave up expecting our politicians to be masters of rhetoric: most of our leaders these days cannot manage complex, coherent sentences in English.) There are other aspects as well that made memory important in ways one must make a conscious effort now to appreciate. There were in antiquity few inexpensive or durable recording media or means of transmission and dissemination of information, and the average human life span was very brief; so the work of acquisition of knowledge and its transmission from one generation to the next, without which the maintenance of civilization should have been impossible, required efforts of Herculean prowess. It is not surprising, then, either that classical mnemonics long persisted, or that the mediaeval culture that inherited the art was itself memorial in character; for the material condition of culture had not changed appreciably from antiquity. Christianity added to the practice of mnemonics an explicitly moral dimension that is not stressed by the ancients – not so much because morality was absent from their conception of life as that paganism was innocent of the dogmatism that imposes its morality explicitly and universally. The new forms of the art might have acquired this moral facet, then, from Athens; but the propensity to articulate it came forth with the Law from Jerusalem.

Ancient Judaism valued mnemonics: the faith was from early times as much an intellectual system of books and of learning requiring powers of acquisition as it was a spiritual discipline of faith and practice. The two purposes were not really separable, either. Memory, Hebrew *zikārōn*, is a moral imperative as well: the act of remembering Creation, the Exodus, the Covenant at Sinai, and other events is an

essential aspect of the celebration of all festivals, from the weekly Sabbath to the high holidays of the New Year. This memory infuses the believer with consciousness of the grace of God towards the cosmos, mankind, and His chosen people. The flux of history in the light of patterned religious memory is seen thus as the growth of a relationship, the refinement of the soul, and the strengthening of the ties of responsibility and care that bind the worshipper to his God and the members of the community to each other. Each ritual act also is made by memory to enter the numinous realm, *in illo tempore*: the ruinous, separating aspect of times is erased. We shall see presently how the Christian theory and practice of memory deal similarly with the burden of time passing.³

Though one ought to speak properly of Judaism in the present as a religion that has continued to grow over millennia, mostly without theological reference to its younger

³ In the thirty-third prose poem of *Le Spleen de Paris*, Charles Baudelaire prescribes oblivion, not memory, against the pain of time's passage: *Il faut être toujours ivre. Tout est là: c'est l'unique question. Pour ne pas sentir l'horrible fardeau de Temps qui brise vos épaules et vous penche vers la terre...* In the novel *To the Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf's heroine mends the terrible rent of the chapter "Time Passes" by completing a painting which seeks and recaptures the past, and which is also the perfection of a vision. The work of art freezes time, as religious sensibility strives to do. But carnal, realistic memory cannot perform this mental trick, and stares into the face only of the deleterious power of time – the only salvation from horror in such a case is then either compassion for the universal suffering intrinsic to the human state, or else the cold courage of the existentialist's acceptance (the former option, which has much in common with Buddhist philosophy, takes courage also). The memorious archaeology of looking up a lover of one's youth who has since aged and changed, is the kind of real and personal ritual recollection that stands in contrast to the mythological mnemonics of the Abrahamic religions: see, for instance, the novel by Mark Merlis, *Man about Town*, New York: Fourth Estate, 2003; and, on the level of literary history, Gilbert Adair, *The Real Tazio*, New York: Carroll and Graf, 2003.

siblings, Christianity and Islam, Israel became in the Christian cosmology a fixed substrate of vital relevance only to the past: Christians, creating for themselves the appellation of the New Israel in an act of appropriation, absorbed the morally tinged charge to remember of the Old, whilst categorizing the various events of the Old Testament as a fixed set of symbolic, almost code-like prefigurings upon which the parallel chain of events in the New Testament might be superimposed as perfections and fulfillments. These events concern the incarnation of God Himself and His self-sacrifice for us. The large themes of Divine love and care adumbrated by the Hebrew Bible in chronological progression, for the large universe first, for all mankind next, and then more specifically for Abraham and his legal progeny—Israel—continue in Christian symbolism to narrow, as it were, to the irreducibly specific point and emotional climax of the life of the single God-man. With Him, the focus widens again to the entire cosmos, the Covenant limited no longer to any particular nation. Armenian Christians have often perceived themselves as new Maccabees and a new Israel, not in a universal sense, but in a very special, national, particular way. I will return to this point below; for now it is important simply to stress that in Armenian writings the issue of memory is pulled in two directions: there is Armenian national memory, in which the history of St. Gregory the Illuminator, artificially elevated to the rank of an Apostle, the revelation of the Armenian script to St. Mesrop Maštoc', and the martyrdom of Sts. Lewond and Vardan and their companions, are equated with—and often elevated above—Old Testament (and, sometimes, even New Testament!) paradigms. The second is general, Biblical, Christian; and when employed with political purposes it represents the striving of the Armenians, often an embattled and isolated Christian island in an Iranian or Moslem sea, to gain recognition by others as a part of Christendom and of Western civilization. This aspect stresses Armenia's belonging, rather than its separateness.

There is also a third aspect of the treatment of memory, conditioned by the Iranian,

Zoroastrian cultural substrate in Armenia that includes stress upon the significance of religious memory. The Gospels themselves are called in Armenian *awetaran*, for which an etymology from Middle Iranian meaning "a collection of memorials" has been reasonably suggested by Prof. C. de Lamberterie. This would correspond, not only to a known—if somewhat rare—Greek designation of the Gospels, but also to the pre-Islamic Iranian practice of entitling epic narratives about legendary heroes of Zoroastrian sacred tradition as memorials, *ayādgār-ān* (with the same etymon, Phl. *ayād*, as seems to be reflected in an earlier form in the Armenian *awet-*). If the word *awetaran* waited long for this proposed etymology from Iranian,⁴ the common Armenian base *yuš*—"remember" (*yišel. yišatak*), at least, has long been recognized as a Middle Iranian loan. So Armenian tradition focusses doubly, from Iranian substrate and from Christian learning, on the aspect of memorial in Scripture. The Christian theologian is then charged to extract from the Gospels' four-fold narrative of a precious single life all its cosmic meaning, in all its divine symmetry. Associated to the *ars memorativa* of the orator now is

⁴ A problem of the suggestion, DE LAMBERTERIE 1996, is that the very common Arm. *awetik'* means "good tidings" and is semantically connected to the idea of memory only through the sense of a "happy reminder" or the like. It may be that this is a wholly secondary meaning, affected by the understanding of the Greek name of the Gospels, *Euangelion*. But if that is not the case, then one might propose, very hesitantly, a pre-Arsacid borrowing, with a devoicing in speech of the intervocalic -d-, from Iranian *ā- *vaēd-aya-*, "to proclaim forth", yielding Arm. *aweti(k)*, probably in the Achaemenian period—though the evidence for treatment of -d->-r- in Arm. certainly predates the loans from Middle Iranian. And in Clas. Arm. this putative form would rub shoulders, of course, with the religiously potent (and regularly formed) loan *nuēr* "consecration", cf. Av. *ni-vaēd-aya-* in Yasna 11.14. We encounter in Arm. the same form from different periods: cf. Arm. Spandaramet, "Dionysos", from NWMlr., vs. *sandarametk'*, "chthonic demons", from OP.; or *pašīpan*, "defender" from NWMlr., vs. *p'uštīpan*, "bodyguard", from MP.

a kind of subset of it, the homiletic craft, the *ars predicandi*, which pursued the “practical aims of rhetorical persuasion, and need to construct images able to provoke controllable emotions.”⁵ Forgetfulness, by contrast, is for Christians not just disadvantageous but morally perilous, and *lēthē* is the vile sleep that makes for perdition. The various philosophical cults characterized as Gnostic, to a greater or lesser degree Platonic in their disposition and intersecting more or less thoroughly with the diverse types of nascent Christianity or Iranian dualism, agreed that the tragedy that lies at the base of the human predicament is not so much primordial sin and its effects as ignorance of what happened to get us where we are—Wordsworth’s “a sleep and a forgetting”. Gnosis is a martial reconquest of usurped memory. Here one can compare the Christian ascetic and saint, whose vigilance and wakefulness—strivings not to sleep, not to forget—are so often evoked in athletic and military terms. St. Gregory of Narek knew well the Greek meaning and sense of his name, *grēgoros*, “awake, alert” (Arm. *art’un*, *hskot*: in Arm., accordingly, the *Zuart’unk’* are the watchful angels called in Aramaic *’Irīn*, Gk. *Egrēgoroi*): this understanding combines with the fact that it was also the Christian name bestowed upon the Arsacid prince who became the Illuminator of Armenia, to whom Narekac’i dedicated hymns, and who was for him so much the exemplar of the holy champion and priest, and theologian.

It is of passing interest that it is only in these and a very few other liturgical poems and orations that Narekac’i uses the terms “Armenia” and “Armenian” (*Hayastan*. *Hayk*, *Ask’anaz*, *T’orgom*, etc., the latter two being of course Biblical Ashkenaz—the Scythians—and Togarmah).⁶ There are oblique allusions in

his major work, the *Matean olbergut’ean*, “Book of Lamentation”, to the local lore of the region of Lake Van. He describes—a typical Armenian house. One prayer is patterned upon the form of a *gaylakap*, a folk spell against wolves. He mentions Ararat—but it is a Biblical mountain, as well as an Armenian one. The name of his people and country never appears there at all. The *Narek* has been praised as an Armenian *Divine Comedy*; its author, as an Armenian Dante, or even a Dostoyevsky. Such comparisons are so wide of the mark that they distort more than illuminate: Narekac’i’s language in the *Matean* (the *tals* can be more idiomatic) is as pure a *grabar* as his age allows; Dante departed from Latin to write *The Divine Comedy* in Italian, with much loving specificity about Italians. St. Gregory of Narek has none of this.⁷ His focus is inwardly personal and vastly cosmic: the world that we inhabit in between the two extremes is of interest to him only insofar as monastic establishments (*vank’*, *krawnastan*) or images useful to personal reflection and salvation are concerned. In the *Matean*, ch. 72.4, he declares: *Yawazanē koč’ec’ay Art’un, ew es i*

⁷ Prof. J.-P. Mahé has written judiciously of Narekac’i and Augustine. Comparisons may be made, but the danger is that people eager to praise the Armenian saint by comparing him to any world-famous Western classic will not be likewise judicious. So let it be said here that the differences between the Roman of Thagaste of the fourth century and the Armenian of the tenth are incommensurably greater than the similarities: Augustine’s *Confessions* are the first realistic autobiography in Christendom, the work of a man who lived pagan and classical life to the fullest and could be descriptive and candid and precise about the physical minutiae of his existence. Nobody till Montaigne did that again, or could do it, in the lands beneath the shadow of Cross or Crescent. If you read the *Matean*, you will never discover such things as the theft of pears by boys on a lark, the flapping of a curtain during a lesson on literature at school, or a youth’s embarrassment at his first erection when he is at the *thermae* with his pleased father. There is no house shared by eager young professionals, no garden, not even an angelic voice bidding the author “Take it and read.”

⁵ ROSSI 2000, p. 14.

⁶ An example is Narekac’i’s oration on the Cross of Aparan in Mokk’, the mountainous district south of Narek and the Van district, where the Armenians are called the progeny of Aškenaz (Gen. 10.3): see TASNAPEAN 1999, p. 10.

k'un mahu nñec', i p'rkut'ean awur Hskol yorjörjēc'ay, bayc' zgastut'eann ac's kap'uc'i. "I was called Awake at the baptismal font, and I fell asleep in death's slumber; on the day of salvation I was proclaimed Vigilant, but I shut my eyes fast against sobriety." The passage renders two terms, Gregory and *egrēgoros*, variously into Armenian; and the linkage of the underlying Greek words heightens the subtext: neither as a baptized man, Gregory, nor as a consecrated priest elevated to the company of the Illuminator, even to the angelic orders, *egrēgoros*, is the lamenting petitioner capable of that memory without which alertness is of no use. Memory within religious practice is so critical that it cannot be merely factual, but must have a determining moral content. What is it, in the *Narek*? It is in its way like that of the Gnostic: my failure is on the same scale as the primordial cosmic tragedy. They are one. The difference is that for the Gnostic, to hell with the cosmos; for the Christian, the cosmos is my personal responsibility and guilt. But neither has time for what is in between my microcosm and the universal macrocosm—the sounds of vendors in the morning on a street in fourth-century Alexandria, for the Gnostic, perhaps, or, for St. Gregory, the plowman and his oxen, just below the monastery hill in tenth-century Vaspurakan.⁸

In a recent monograph, *The Ethics of Memory*, the philosopher Avishai Margalit suggests that most specific remembrance is ethical and has to do with those near and dear

to us—what he calls "thick relations"—while less of our memory, both as to content and precision, is moral, and has to do with "thin relations"—that is, humanity in general, people we do not know. Margalit suggests the Christian project is to make all relations "thick", to make the sphere of meaningful and intense memory include every being.⁹ It would seem to be a romantic intention, more emotionally appealing than practicable; but it would appear that Narekac'i's method of effecting it is to telescope Biblical allusions and the varieties of actual imagery (his vices as swarms of vermin and bugs; his spiritual crisis, as a shipwreck) into himself and, by extension, into the imagination of the reader, the drama of damnation or salvation of this soul then becoming the entire concern of Heaven. In Ch. 3 he addresses his words to all classes and people at all times and in all countries. This implication is all there is of the middle between individual and universe: exclusion of any more specific mention of that middle—as Armenia, or whatever—makes all cosmic ties "thick"; detailed evocation of the middle would "thin" them. Mention of Armenia would make the *Matean* national, self-involved, exclusionary, defeating its purpose and ill serving the readers

⁸ The choice between foci of memory is similar to the ethical decision anyone committed to a great cause must make about the degree to which she will allow abstract principles to impinge on the importance she accords to the small things of her own home, to the local, even the national. This is the dilemma the philosopher Richard Rorty takes on in his famous essay, "Wild Orchids and Trotsky". Faust's great, world-denying macrocosmic effusions deny the local, and they are hypocrisy—he wants this world and its love. So the little demons cry in gentle mockery, *Weh, weh, du hast sie zerstört, die schöne Welt*. Reflections on Faust long ago, and on Rorty, later, owe much to conversations with my friend Robert Briscoe.

⁹ MARGALIT 2002. In the Preface, on p. viii, the author recalls his parents in Israel during World War II debating what life was to be like after the extinction of the European Jews. His mother thought it right to do nothing more with life save dwell on their memory, as the Armenians had been doing—she asserted—since their genocide a generation before. His father disagreed, asserting one must carry on in the future, even if that requires a certain amount of intentional forgetting. Margalit began to wonder after that conversation how much and in what contexts it is proper for people to remember. It is an interesting, if painful, jumping off point: for Jews and Armenians at the time of this writing, detailed memory of one's murdered people has become a sacral imperative. In a sense, Narekac'i enjoyed the luxury to ignore being Armenian in the *Matean*, and focus upon his soul: his Armenia was a given—vast, secure in its sophisticated culture, seemingly eternal, unshadowed by any horror approaching that of the twentieth century.

of Armenian. The morality of memory in the *Narek* precludes dwelling upon the actuality of the tenth century or the author's native land. That is how all relations become thick.¹⁰

For the patterning required by a memorative, homiletical art, it is the architectural and geometrical metaphors Cicero and Quintilian preferred, that still offered to Christians the most effective system of images; except that instead of a quiet villa off the Via Appia, with its rooms as paragraphs and chairs and tables as individual rhetorical points, the practitioners of the *ars predicandi* employed bigger structures: the hierarchically-ordered cosmos of Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite, with the hosts and circles of the angelic orders; the Garden of Eden, its four rivers, and the dimensions of the body of the primordial Adam (explored in the Hebrew *Ši'ur Qōmā*); the levels and measurements of the Ark of Noah (with the dimensions of Christ's body superimposed upon it); the holy Tabernacle and the tablets and other sacred objects it contained; the Temple of Solomon and its decorations, images, and furniture; Ezekiel's vision of the Divine Throne, with its divine figure, the four holy animals, and the divine Chariot (cf. the sophisticated Jewish mysticism of the *Merkavā*); and Christ Himself, His Cross, and His tomb. Paul's metaphor is the Christian *locus classicus*: he is a master builder, and man is the Temple of God, in which his spirit dwells (I Cor. 3.10-17). Carruthers comments that architectural patterns, thus employed, then become "dispositive heuristics"—devices for discovering further mean-

ings.¹¹ That is, the images have their own intrinsic complexity and can be understood as more-than one-on-one representations of the ideas they represent, leading the suitably prepared imager to envisage further symmetries and deeper symbolisms. The letter killeth, as it were, but the picture giveth life. In a way, it is alive itself. One speaks of the suitably prepared examiner and memorizer, since it is quite possible to possess an astonishingly sophisticated capacity to memorize a chain of data of any length, employing an array of synaesthetic mechanisms whereby a sound becomes a light, color, taste, tactile experience or object, distributed along a given imagined space—all without ever once having any of those elements lead to a second level of elaboration of reflection. Such is the case of the famous patient, known to us only as S., of the Soviet psychiatrist Alexander Romanovich Luria. According to the latter's case histories, compiled over decades, this man could memorize a list of nonsense syllables of almost any length, distributing the sequence of associated synaesthetic phenomena along familiar Moscow streets in the guise of various things, colors, and sounds, and then retrieve them many years later, in order and with perfect exactitude. It was a monstrously enlarged rote of the sort Erasmus might abominate, without that free play of thought whereby man raises his mind from the mechanical to the artistic.¹²

Twelfth-century Europe provides several striking examples of the use of architectural symbolism in tracts of mnemonic-homiletic

¹⁰ In recent years, Armenian literature and journalism have often been absorbed in a narcissistic omphaloskepsis, pondering the identity and fate of Armenia and Armenians, to the exclusion of other topics; but before modern times, Armenian writers tended more to write about human concerns, just doing so in a particular language and from the midst of a particular culture. So one may recall that in authentic Armenian homes, if there were books, they were, first the Gospel, the Psalter, and the *Narek*—none of which focusses on an Armenian theme.

¹¹ CARRUTHERS 2000, p. 18.

¹² See LURIA 1968. What is most striking about his famous study is its deep humanism and compassion, which remind one of the great American neurologist and writer, Oliver Sacks. The question arises, What makes the book so heartbreaking, why is Luria's capacity for pity so apposite? It is perhaps because the capacity of S. might have become art, had he possessed the greater freedom to enter those mental Moscow streets and dream and play. Instead the talent, monstrously, possessed him—so one sees a human being from whom the good of the intelligence has been cruelly torn.

type. Hugh of St. Victor's *De arca Noe mystica* provides detailed instructions for the mental construction of a model of the tripartite Ark of Noah, which is itself likened to Tabernacle and Temple. The schema includes lists of Old Testament figures, Biblical books, the stations of the Israelites in the desert, the angelic orders, the Tree of Paradise, the four directions of the compass (which the letters of Adam's name spell out in Greek; so he is here the Primal Man), ladders of ascent, and Christ Himself at the center. The exercise has been likened to the Indian and later Tibetan Buddhist practice of visualizing a *mandala*, a circle with gates at the four cardinal points and many other details, to which it is strikingly similar. The psychiatrist C.G. Jung found that patients drew such complex mandalas without prior training or knowledge and derived therapeutic benefit from them. Characteristically he sought an explanation in the theory of archetypes; but one might reasonably argue that the circle as a symbol of perfection (or a halo) is sensibly ingrained in European imagination; as are, of course, the various quaternities of directions and the Cross. The store of geometric figures available to human meditation is generally rather limited. Another brother of Hugh's monastery prepared a similar mnemonic treatise in which the object of mnemonic visualization is the divine Throne in the vision of the prophet Ezekiel; and Alan of Lille focussed upon one of the Seraphim in a work which employs a mnemonic based upon the six wings of the heavenly being to list the stages of penance. Alan was a poet; so the terms in his lists are also chosen so as to be alliterative in sound, allowing an aesthetic and emotional affect to facilitate further the process of memorization.¹³

We can observe some similarities in the great monument of Armenian spirituality, the *Matean olbergut'ean* ("Book of Lamentation") of the tenth-century mystical poet and theologian, St. Gregory of Narek, and in some other,

shorter works of his. It has long been recognized that the overall structure of the *Matean* corresponds to the three parts of a church—porch, nave, and altar—and, simultaneously, to the three stages of the Divine Liturgy; so that the worshipper employing the prayers of the book proceeds in his imagination spatially, temporally, and imaginatively through the perfecting stages of the Christian mystery. Since this progress is an ascent, one is reminded also of the three levels of the Ark of Noah; and of earth, the middle air of the sky (Arm. *an̄ṛpet*), and heaven. Litanies of alliterative images superimposed upon each other produce the emotional, cathartic abreaction of tears sought by Christian mystics, and in Armenian tradition particularly known through the writings of St. Ephrem Syrus; whilst the author refers obliquely or by chapter and verse to Biblical passages and characters. It is possible either to pass over these strings of references or thoroughly to research each; and if one takes the latter option, it quickly becomes clear that the meanings of the Biblical texts, or of the Scriptural images evoked, comment upon each other, creating a second level of complexity, of a textual, rather than pictorial, "dispositive heuristics". It is thus possible to employ most of the *Matean* as a book of prayer alone, or as a theological work as well: Gregory at the outset declares that his work is intended for all classes and stations of believers in the world. The qualification "most" is necessary, because the great theological meditations on the Nicene Creed and on the Holy Chrism in the culminating third of the book are perhaps less accessible than shorter chapters to the untrained.¹⁴

¹⁴ For discussion of these themes, see RUSSELL 1996-1997. The long chapters, especially no. 75, on the Creed, differ from other prayers in the Book sufficiently for one to suggest that Narekac'i did not so much compose the whole in later life as arrange, and edit diverse meditations composed over the years, adding within them the occasional mention of "this book" (*aysr mateni*, etc.) to pull the chapters together, much as a scholar now might make a book of studies written at different times, inserting cross references in the course of

¹³ CARRUTHERS & ZIOLKOWSKI 2002, pp. 42-47, 50, 69, 84.

Memory and architectural metaphor frequently go together in the *Matean*: Narekac'i speaks of his book as a *(māh)arjan*, literally, "(death) monument"—to a resident of New England this evokes the rather dismal image of a thin, small tablet of slate emblazoned with a skull and crossbones or winged hourglass; but in Armenia the object is more often a lofty stele with scenes in relief of Biblical and local sacred history, or else the noble *xač'k'ar*, a Cross-stone. The latter is often a cosmogram: the Cross, blossoming as a Tree of Life, surmounts the cosmic symbols of a stepped mountain and a disk inscribed with radiating spirals. And in any case the term *maharjan* in Arm. lost early its exclusive association with death, coming to mean any towering monument or even decoration.

If, however, we consider Narekac'i's use of *maharjan* in its literal sense, the association with death raises some interesting aspects that are relevant to this exploration of his use of memory. A number of mediaeval European sarcophagi are constructed as *simulacra* (the same word employed for images in the *ars memorativa*) of houses, sometimes with scenes in bas relief separated by arcades—enabling the viewer to proceed from one scene to the next as though progressing through a house used for the mnemonic art. The Armenian monumental steles have separate scenes in bas relief, divided vertically, of sacred history; and there are a number of tombs, belonging to a school that flourished, notably, in the regions of Zangezur and Arc'ax, with horizontal scenes of the life of the departed. The imagery of these is sometimes very archaic, suggesting a longer tradition than the relatively late date of the ones studied might otherwise imply.¹⁵ The tomb of a saint might be screened, in the manner of the Catholic *fenestella confes-*

sionis—and this raises the association, frequent in the *Matean*, of recollection with *xostovanut' iwn*, confession. The Subvenite hymn of the Catholic funeral service asks angels and saints to raise (*suscipere*) the soul: the verb is the same the Romans used for a father raising a newborn child from the ground to acknowledge it.¹⁶ In the Armenian case, Narekac'i prays thus to be raised up at death: *et' ē nkateal dimec' ic' i ver yamenagraw ulin soskali, hreštak k'o xalahut' ean k'alc' rut' eamb inj patahesc' ē. C'oyc' inj, Tēr, i yelic' n awur šnč' oys arjakman, mak' rut' ean ogi lusov ambarjeal i yerknaworac' n erjankac' pargewawk' siroy k'oy ekeal haseal*, "If I direct my gaze upwards onto the all-seizing and frightful path, may your angel of peace meet me in sweetness. Show me, O Lord, on the day of departure, the release of my breath, a spirit of purity arisen in light from amongst the blessed heavenly ones, coming and arriving with the gifts of your love" (*Matean*, 2.2). The common Armenian belief is that the angel Gabriel, armed, with the written decree of death, comes and removes the soul, which is in the form of a swaddled baby (cf. the Latin association with a newborn child). The epithet *amenagraw* is used by Narekac'i in Ch. 8.1 of *Tartarus*; and this characterization of Hell, literally the hollow place under the earth, into which all is taken, is probably of common Indo-European antiquity, though the Arm. adjective includes a Mlr. loan, from *grab*—"seize" (cf. NP. *gereftan*). The old Armenian ballad of prince Aslan and Gabriel, the angel of death, is a local treatment of the mythologem of Alcestis; and in Greek both her name ("seizing") and that of her husband, Admetus ("indomitable"), are good epithets for Hades (as indeed is the name of Eurydice, lit. "of wide-spreading justice", in the related mythological complex of Orpheus).¹⁷ Narekac'i's use of the epithet thus introduces a subtle contradiction, or perhaps conflation of two

her editing. For why else would it have been necessary for Narekac'i's brother to work on the Book with him? Gregory perhaps read from a previous text, making oral insertions his brother duly took down as he recopied.

¹⁵ See RUSSELL 2001.

¹⁶ See VALDEZ DEL ALAMO 2000, esp. pp. 4, 22-23, 46-53.

¹⁷ See RUSSELL 2002, esp. p. 170 and n. 27.

contradictory realities: when he looks up to heaven, he sees a path that will lead sinners down to hell. It is possible here too to imagine the archaic conception of the night sky as a dark, inverted world: how else, indeed, can the angel, the light spirit rise (*ambainam>ambarjeal*) to descend to Gregory to take his soul at the “release of the breath” (literally *nir-vāna*!)? The word *arjakman*, gen. sg. of *arjakumn*, from MĠr. *harz*—“release” (cf. also the Arm. loan *apaharzan*, “divorce”), in the second strophe may encode *arjan*, “monument”, to which it is probably etymologically related as well; and the visual aspect is stressed by the preceding imper. 2 sg. *c'oyc'*, “show!” It is true Gregory wishes his soul to see the angel; but there is another implied beholder—the reader—of the truly monumental scene. The image of the grave monument for Narekac'i is thus one of memory for the beholder, and of the reminding of future events for him—and this memory-in-reverse is apposite, since the Cross of the grave-stone becomes, literally, the Gate (Arm. *drunk'*, see below) into the other-world that reverses and inverts this one. “The things of this world must be looked at in reverse, to be seen the right way round.”¹⁸

The *Matean* itself begins, appropriately, with a preface, or Theses (*Drut'iwnk'*), or Doors (*Drunk'*, as the title is also frequently given in MSS.), into which the image of the Cross is verbally encoded, the literal or symbolic attributes of Christ's body and the Cross upon which He is splayed mentioned exactly at the points on the page where they might be, had one drawn a picture: a textual *xac'k'ar* and *maharjan*.¹⁹ And the Cross, with its complex symbolism and centrality²⁰ to Armenian Chris-

tianity, is not only the gate of passage, outward into the otherworld and inward into the heart at prayer from which the words of the Narek emanate. It becomes also an object of memorious contemplation throughout the book: in Ch. 90, for instance, Narekac'i prays, *Vasn p'aytid awrhnut'ean kenac'*, *yorum prkec'ar Astuacđ anəmbineli, yišatakaw beweiuč'd, orov i gorci mahun macuc'ar arařič'd erkni ew erkri, areambd tērunakanaw, orov zvišapn mec kart'iw aceal orsac'ar... elic'in ays amenayn pargewk' šnorhac'*, “Let all these gifts of grace come for the sake of your tree of the blessing of life, upon which you, unencompassable God, were tied down, by the memory of the nails by which you, Creator of heaven and earth, were fastened in the work of death, by your dominical blood, by which you fashioned a hook and hunted the great dragon...” In the passage Christ-bleeding on the Cross becomes bait on a hook to snare the sea-monster in whose hellish maw the dead languish. Narekac'i has the reader use the nails to remember the Biblical text, where God challenges Job to catch Leviathan with a hook. That memory links one to another watery scene: that of the Baptism, where Christ in the Jordan treads Leviathan underfoot.²¹

In Ch. 28, Narekac'i enumerates the sufferings of Christ on the *ařtarak* “tower” of the Cross: by the *yišatak*, recollection, of each Satan is to suffer pain and be driven out of the *řinuacoy xoran*, the edifice of the tabernacle of God's dwelling—Ew *yiřesc'e zařuřin haruacn anbžřkakan orov mahac'aw dimamat'ut'iwnic' iwnic' viřapin*, “And may [the devil] remember the incurable blow, by which the resistance of the dragon's poisons died.” Here is a mental picture of the Cross as the towering tree of life

¹⁸ Balthasar Gracian, cited by Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Who killed Daniel Pearl?* Hoboken, NJ: Melville, 2003, p. 11.

¹⁹ See RUSSELL 2000-2001, esp. pp. 32-33.

²⁰ The Armenian veneration of the Cross was so extreme, by comparison to the reverence accorded the Holy Sign by other, neighboring Christian communities, that it was condemned as akin to idolatry by the Syrian divine of Melitene, Dionysius Bar Salibi: see J.R. Russell, “The Armenians, the

Holy Cross, and Dionysius Bar Salibi,” Symposium on the 1700th Anniversary of Armenian Christianity, St. Vartan Cathedral, NYC, Dec. 2001 (in publication, *St. Nersess Theological Journal*).

²¹ On portrayals of a *viřapn-monster* in the Jordan in Arm. MSS miniatures of the Baptism of Christ, see RUSSELL 1998. On the Armenian version of the passage in Job and its interpretation, see RUSSELL 1996.

and the center—Jerusalem—of the tabernacle of the edifice of the cosmos. It employs the conceit of impressing Biblical realities upon one through the reversal of images: the blow that killed Christ (whose right hand in the verbal icon of the *Drut'iwnk'* is labelled "healing")—what could be more "incurable"—was in fact the cure, specifically the antidote to the dragon's poison,²² which is of course death itself. But the reversal has an aim beyond that of instruction of believing men: it is Satan himself, in this passage who is to undertake the exercise of memory, from cosmic edifice to tabernacle to Cross to wounds. And now the expulsion of the archdemon from the imagined building at the start of the string of images makes sense: it is a reversal of the expulsion from Eden, of which he had been the cause. And the human reader, following Satan's act of memory, is accordingly to regard the *xoran*, the Tabernacle, as the Church: an Eden reentered and a world restored. None of this is particularly original: the progress of restorative time and the remedy of the vices of the fall of man through mystical ascent, all portrayed symbolically, is standard Dionysian theology.²³ It is the *koinē* of Christian mysticism generally. St. Gregory, with his poetic and linguistic intricacy and intellectual mastery, expresses these verities nobly. It was not originality he strove for.

Let us return to the metaphor discussed earlier, of *maharjan*, of monument and death: in his meditation on the Chrism, Narekac'i inverts time (and, thus, frustrates death), making Jacob's prototype an object present in the memory of the future: *Zarjann iwleal kaṛoyc' npataki c'oyc's apaṛneac'n yiṣataki*: "He constructed the monument, anointing it, his aim a demonstration for the memory of those to come" (Buenos Aires ed., p. 252, section 5). Jacob foreshadows the *Narek* itself, whose

author prays: *...arasc'es zawranal krkin yačaxut'eamb burman xostovanut'ean aysr mateni i bazums azdeal, hamasp'iwir, amenatarac, ew ašxarhalir tann tesakaw, ašt awrinaki hamematut'ean noc'ayn yiṣataki*. " ... make me become strong by the frequent repetition of the aroma of confession of this book, having an influence upon many, in the form of a house that spreads all over, extends everywhere, and fills the world, according to the example, by comparison, of their own memory" (Ch. 33.1). Narekac'i's book becomes a house of all the nations and a universal memorial, extending spatially and temporally, pervaded by the sweet savor of incense that serves as the synaesthetic representation of the soul engaged in the work of perfection within. The smell of incense should remind one of the first chapter of the *Narek*, in which the author introduces the complex image of burnt offering and of incense in a censer, whose several parts adumbrate the structure of the book as a staged progression through the actions of the Divine Liturgy, the theme of ascent, and the contradictory senses of burning and refinement the soul is to undergo.²⁴

A further conceit of reversal of direction introduces the important theme of crying at prayer that, as was mentioned earlier, pervades the *Matean*: it is tears falling, not smoke rising, that will incline God, one hopes, to lift the soul. (Cf. Ch. 4.3, where Narekac'i cites Isaiah, *zi zolormut'iw n kamim, ew oč' patarag*, "for I will mercy, and not a sacrifice", and adds, *aha barjrac'ir verstin xkeal aysr yiṣatakaw*, "Therefore ascend now, offered incense anew, through the memorial of this.") The image, common enough in its context to be gracefully harmonious rather than awk-

²² The association of the dragon with poison can have entirely Christian associations; but etymologically the word *viṣap* itself, an Iranian loan, possibly is **viš-āpa-*, "poisonous water (creature)".

²³ See for instance, ZINN 1975.

²⁴ The Armenian *burvač*, censer, has a bowl which contains the coal and incense, and a perforated lid, often made in the shape of the dome of a church. The two parts are connected to each other and suspended by three chains (NERSOYAN 1950, p. 246). The church is censured before a ritual (ORMANIAN, pp. 47–48); so the metaphor has also a temporal symbolism. See also CENSING 1991.

wardly outlandish—as a more artificial word-picture might have been—is fertile, a true *ais-thetikē phantasia*, itself inspiring further consideration and remembrance of liturgical symbolism.²⁵ Narekac'i often calls his work a *xostovanut' iwn*, "confession"; and it is worth noting that St. Nersēs Šnorhali ("the Graceful"), the twelfth-century poet and patriarch whose compositions may be viewed as a continuation—and, stylistically, a simplification—of the tradition of Narek in the changed circumstances of Cilician Armenian culture, is rightly best remembered for his great credal poem, beginning precisely with the words *Ha-watov xostovanim*, "In faith I confess...". Keeping in mind that "confession" is a marker of the Narek, we note the request of Grigor in Ch. 72.1 that his brethren of the clergy accept his *awandut' iwn xostovanut' ean*, "bequest of confession" *i šinuac p'rkut' ean hogwoc'*, "into the edifice of the salvation of souls" a complex architectonic image incorporating memory and memorial (it is a bequest) and evoking both the Church itself as a heavenly Temple not built by hands and its corpus of literature. But they are to receive the offering of the book also into themselves, since they are themselves the Temple of the Lord: in the second chapter of the *Narek* we read of the Scriptural inner room into which one should retreat for prayer, this room standing for the solitude of the monk and the inwardness of the heart at once (on which the Armenian version of the *Commentary* on Matthew of St. John Chrysostom discourses:

²⁵ The image comes naturally to the makers of mnemonic Christian emblemata at the far end of Europe, in space, and of the mediaeval period, in time: the late-16th-cent. English *Basilikon Doron* of Henry Peacham, an emblem book, has as one of its pictures a domed well and a bucket on a rope. The Latin motto *Ascendo ut descendat*, "I rise so that it [i.e., grace] may descend," is elucidated by a further epigram, translated: "While you may see a fountain raised out of Parian marble, here an urn signifies prayers that burn for Christ. Let sighs rise, and grace will descend from heaven. In vain, let Arabian incense [try to] move God." All Narek's verbal mnemonic symbol is here, in an explicitly drawn one. See YOUNG 1998, p. 5.

Narekac'i probably read the translation).²⁶ Indeed, every chapter of the *Narek* begins with the title, "Speech with God from the depths of the heart(s)." From the image of the heart as the inner room within every man Narekac'i moves gradually to the concept of the special and sacred being who is entirely esoteric, the *nerk'in mard*, the "inner man", who becomes visible in the forms of the saints.²⁷ In Ch. 71.1 he calls the saints, thus, *andams K'ristosi*, "limbs of Christ", *ibrew zawt' ewans Hogwoyn Srboy* "as it were, inns of the Holy Spirit", whose *kerparans* "(bodily) forms" and *yišataks* "memories" are to be invoked. (Compare Ch. 5, where the postlapsarian human

²⁶ *Matean*, Ch. 2; and cf. CHRYSOSTOM 1849, p. 249: "Enter your room. Now they will say, How is this? Is it not necessary to pray in church? It is indeed so, but in everyplace with such will, since God searches one's thoughts. For if you enter your room and close also its doors, it is still possible to display oneself praying to people, and then closing the doors avails naught. See how precisely he qualifies it here: For they will appear, he says, to people. For this is the correctitude he wishes first to establish: before shutting the doors, first close those of one's thoughts, so that one may reject entirely the diversion of vainglory. It is well everywhere to distance oneself from that vice, especially at prayer." The passage not only illuminates Narekac'i's allusion to the Gospel, but also focuses upon the architectonic metaphor, adding allegorical doors to it—and this at the gateway and moment of preparation for prayer, of the *Matean* itself!

²⁷ See T'AMRAZIAN 1998. In Ch. 46 of the *Matean*, Gregory envisions head as a lamp upon a candlestick and speaks of the body's 360 parts: this is a symbolic and idealized type, with the perfect number that of the perfect year (the numbers 365 and 366 are also common in Armenian as expressions of entirety—the total number of diseases in the world, etc.). One recalls that the ancient Iranian world—mountain Tērag has 360 windows, which are the days through which the Sun shines over the year. Narekac'i's idealized vision of Adam has him, thus, as a pillar at the world's center (with the four letters of his name interpreted early as symbolic of the Greek words for the directions of the compass; the quaternity itself is expressive of the four elements and of the Cross). On eyes and windows, see the passage of Ch. 12 cited here.

visage is yet that damaged and distorted sign, *nšanak alartac'eal*, that sees in a glass darkly and is itself obscured from its pristine original nature.)

The closing section of Ch. 12, so explicitly vivid in its imagery that it is employed by the Armenian Church and the lay faithful as a prayer for protection of the home at night, speaks both of the actual house and of the body itself as a house, forcing the reader imaginatively to connect macro—and micro—cosm, enabling him to remind himself through the living interplay of the images that both are mutually reinforcing symbols recalling spiritual realities. In the passage, the parts of the house receive, as one would expect, metaphorical meanings, as for instance: *Amp'op'eal parurea zpatuhan tesut'eanc' zgayakanac's imastic' anzarhureli zetelmamb i cp'akan xiovut'eanc', kenc'alakan zbalmanac', anrjak-an erazoc', xawlakanac' c'noric', yiatakaw k'o yusoyd, anvnaseli paštpaneal*. "Surround and enclose the window of the visions afforded by my senses of intelligible things, by placing them, defended from harm by the memory of your hope, beyond the terror of troubles' agitation, the cares of everyday life, dreams in slumber, and senseless fantasies."²⁸ The window²⁹ of a house should thus remind the reciter of the meditation of one's eyes; and their vision of temporal things is then to remind one of the vision of imaginal things: the chains of images of reveries and daydreams to which the anxieties and concerns of life give birth, as

well as the dream-images that come in sleep. The mindful, associative memory of window as eye as inner eye of thought receives its specific moral power through the associated operation of memory of the hope of salvation that comes from the Scriptures.

The twelfth chapter of the *Narek* discussed above follows Paul and evokes a mass of Biblical imagery behind him, in calling the metaphorical house also a *tačar*, meaning both a Christian sanctuary and the prototypical Jerusalem Temple. Having noted above the importance of the metaphor of sacred architecture in the theology of Christian mysticism, and its use for mnemonic purposes within the *ars predicandi*, we may consider it now in two hymns composed by Narekac'i, with a prefatory comment. The ninety-five prayers of the *Book of Lamentation*, whether employed privately by a celebrant of the Divine Liturgy for purposes of internal purification and illumination, chanted in the context of the liturgy itself, or used in the devotions of lay people, are in essence penitential. Intense remorse and guilt pervade every chapter; and if tears do not well from the worshipper's eyes at some point in his recitation, he is accursed, obtuse, or insincere. However this work does not stand alone as the sole expression of Narekac'i's theology or mysticism: many of the hymns he composed for festivals of the Church are ecstatic and joyful, evoking the wonder of the chariot of Ezekiel's vision, the beauty of the Tabernacle, and the serene joy of the Nativity:³⁰ far from bemoaning alienation, they celebrate the glory and luminosity of the divine presence. In this respect, his mysticism belongs to the same stream as that of Vardan of Ani, whose commentary on Ezekiel's vision was published by Mnac'akanyan.³¹ The frequent portrayal of St. Gregory as a lachrymose, tortured soul merely is surely as misleading as the facile comparison to Dante. Let us consider here two hymns attributed to Narekac'i that employ images

²⁸ See RUSSELL 1994 on Ch. 12 of the *Narek* and folk prayers for protection of the home at night in general; and now also LA PORTA 2001-2002, esp. pp. 189-190.

²⁹ The word used is *patuhan*, literally, a hole let into a wall. This becomes the common Western Arm. for "window". In the same passage Narekac'i uses also *lusanc'oyc'*, literally a passage for light (cf. Mod. E. Arm. *lusamut*, window, lit. "light-entrance"), making it plain that the latter is the smoke-hole in the ceiling of the traditional Armenian *glxatun*, where four pillars around the hearth support a conical dome of squinch construction, with a smoke-hole on top.

³⁰ See Narekac'i's "Song of the Nativity" (*Tač Chndean*), for instance, in RUSSELL 1987.

³¹ See MNAC'AKANYAN 1971.

familiar from the *Matean*, presented in familiar configurations, yet suffused, not by penitence, but by the sense of triumph and glory, ecstasy even. Both are dedicated to the Church; and that physical and supernatural reality binds the successive architectural metaphors together. The theology is that of Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite—divine thrones, hierarchies, extravagant and verbose evocations of luminescence. The Armenian version of Dionysius would have been easily available to Narekac'i: there is no indication that he relied upon the Greek original.³² The translations that follow are based upon the text published by K'yoškeryan: the first is attested in a sole manuscript.³³

HOMILY³⁴ OF THE CHURCH
AND THE ARK OF THE LORD,
OF GREGORY OF NAREK.

We who are all gathered into the holy, universal, and Apostolic church,
Sing in it, we in the earthly circle in glorification. with many choruses.

In spiritual multitudes, by miraculous birth
Conjoined to the rings of the races aglow like the sunlit sky.

(5) We bless the coming into you,
Most holy Trinity, we do beseech.

You who are upraised in the arches of the
watchtower of the four-faced cherubim
And receive proskynesis by all the circles and
the races wondrous in aspect,
Three-fold reality,

³² See THOMSON 1987.

³³ K'YOŠKERYAN 1981, pp. 184–188. I have followed her versification, though Abraham Terian (remarks at the Narek Conference, 11 Oct. 2003) is certainly right in his observation that Narekac'i was writing metric prose, not blank-verse.

³⁴ Arm. *k'aroz*, essentially a message, from Greek *kerygma*, via Syriac *karozā*. This has become the designation of a genre of Armenian hymnography, so my rendering is somewhat arbitrary.

(10) You willed through the holy Apostles to
establish this rock,
City undefeated, by miracles performed at will,
Four-fold, in the midst of the cosmos:

You made it resplendent upon foundations that
scatter rays

Commingled with heat and dazzling with light,
(15) And you ordained this noble queen into
being, splendidly adorned and glorious in
comeliness,

Daughter of the heavenly Zion,
From whose midst the cohorts in many voices
that are in her

Acclaim loud their superiors in heaven.
We bless...

Tabernacle built by the one without beginning,
universal, holy,
Who wast founded in the cosmos on this day,
holy Church,

In example of the paradise made by the Creator,
lovely in appearance,
Planted in Eden, place of delight,

(25) Which the Seraphim and Cherubim, by
the command of the Uncreate,
Surrounded, guarding the ways to the tree of
knowledge.

Opened are the joys of the great and strongly-
hidden paradise,

And we, with boldness aglow in joy, in the
earthly circle,

Joined to the ring of the Seraphim aglow like
the sunlit sky,

(30) Bless...

Ineffable tabernacle, in this wondrously bright
illumination

Thou wast established in the midst of the cosmos
this day, holy Church,

Exemplar of the high-domed Ark

(35) Which the patriarch Noah, by the command
of the Creator,

Founded of unputrefying wood

And built, the Ark for the salvation of the
many throngs of animals,

To rescue in life those who sought refuge

From the sweeping billows of the waves of the
waters of wrath.

(40) Today, brought into being by Him who
creates the sunlit sky,
Instead of the Ark there was revealed to us
holy Zion—
To us, the nation of rational sheep,
Stair of miracles aglow with light. Ranks
united in glorification,
We bless...

Tabernacle aglow like the sunlit sky, torch set
ablaze with the wondrous beams of the so-
lar orb,
This day, holy Church, in the midst of the
cosmos:
Exemplar of the banquet-tent of Abraham the
patriarch
Seated at the threshold of heaven's gates,
Seeing into heaven and into earth:
From there the Lord appeared with *egrēgoroi*
twain,
Came, attained the shady tree,
Repaying his loved ones the recompense of
good—
At which Abraham came running,
(55) Nursing calves and three loaves
He proffered in sacrificial offering to the Lord
God.
This day, itself, holy Zion, comes, God, unto
thee:
Heaven-like place of the sinners' atonement,
Suckling thy children at the waters of repose,
(60) From which the generations of the font
And the principalities in Seraphim abounding,
of the wonders on high
Are joined together in the circle.
We bless...

(65) Four-cornered temple, surpassingly won-
drous at its dawning,
Ablaze with interpenetrating light,
Holy Church, this day in the midst of the cos-
mos,
Art exemplar of the Ark that Moses made
Amongst the congregation of Israel's host,
(70) Placing within the incense-burner with
gold pillars shining all around,
Which exhaled the perfume of frankincense
within;

The golden vessel full of manna;
With the stone tablets of the Commandments.
And the flowering staff therein
(75) Today by the hand of Melchizedek's
priest
Appears in you always, instead of the tablets
that the Lord inscribed.
The Table, shining like the sun's orb, upraiser
of the offering sweet to savor,
Is transferred and established in thee, holy
Zion, mother church,
In which the ranks of earthborn living crea-
tures
(80) And the hosts of the lofty, rich in Sera-
phim, are joined together in the circle.
We bless...

Temple of four torches
Illuminated in the midst of the cosmos by mi-
raculous, supernal rays, holy church,
(85) Example of the wondrous globes and halls
light-bedecked and censed, of molten gold,
Which Solomon the wise
Taking cedar wood and juniper
Shaped into the Temple, glowing with gold.
All dazzling in appearance, with candelabra of
seven lamps,
(90) And wonders lovely roundabout, in the
shape of lilies made,
The gilded Seraphim:
And he establishes them in God's house.
We bless...

(95) Stronghold for the fleeing, domicile and
home,
City of refuge and house of atonement,
We beseech the heavenly king, who in unsun-
dered unity within thee dwells,
To grant us peace: heavenly, spiritual, and
intelligible,
Protecting us now
(100) From them that war against us: visible
and invisible opposing powers—
And at the dawning of the glory of great power
on the day that will have no night,
In the company of those raised, holy, in light,
may we be glad in unconditional rejoicing.

Now may you remember and have mercy on
the departed,
In hope of resurrection, we pray.
(105) And moreover
Grant us exhortation to love and good deeds,
we pray.
And let us dedicate ourselves and each other
To the omnipotent Lord God, we pray.

By the intercession of the all-blessed lady
Theotokos
(110) And forever Virgin, Mary;

By the petitions of the great prophet, John the
Prodomos;
By the prayers of the sharer of Thy Cross and
torments,
Stephen, Thy Protomartyr;
By the requests of Thy confessor
(115) St. Gregory, faithful archpriest;
By the general plea of them who love Thee,
Apostles and Prophets:
And have mercy on us now, O Lord our God,
In accord with your great mercy.

The final list of invocations and intercessions seems to me most likely Narekac'i's, though abbreviated from similar lists elsewhere; and the rest is still more probably his own composition, since many of the same words, in a somewhat different order but still forming a hierarchical progression of pictures together, can be found, for example, in Ch. 29.1 of the *Matean*: *patsparan* (*hzawr*), *duin* (*barjrut'ean tarakuseloys*), *sanduxk'* (*er-anut'ean elkeloys*) [instead of *astican*], *čana-parh* (*šawlac'*), *t'agawor(nerot)*—powerful stronghold; gate of loftiness for me in my waverings; stairs of blessedness for me, the wretched; way of roads, forgiving king. The hymn combines Dionysian imagery of the heavenly orders and of light with evocations of the great and powerful buildings, both physical and imagined, that were the hallmark of mystical vision, even power, of old, and which still have a sense of mystery and wonder: Noah's Ark, Abraham's tent and the visit of the three—angels, the Ark of the Covenant, the Temple of Solomon. All these symbols occur in other

hymns of his, too.³⁵ Each is a forerunner of the Church; so Narekac'i wherever possible stresses quaternities. Each is a sign of the reconciliation of all earthly creatures with all the denizens of heaven; and Narekac'i uses the circle or ring to express this *plērōma*. The circle may imply also the sense of the dance, which seems to me justified by the more explicit image of the dance in other, shorter songs of the saint (the *tal* of the Nativity, for instance), and by the celebratory character of the hymn. Cross and circle: mandala, spiritual wholeness and perfection. The luxuriantly alliterative compound adjectives for light, *arp'iap'ayl* and the like, that Armenian is so good at—and at which Narekac'i especially excelled—are intended to induce a sense of ecstasy as well; whilst the facts of the descriptions and their Biblical allusions challenge and the intellect. The three orders of perception and being line 98, *erknayin*, *hogewor*, and *imanali*—heavenly, spiritual, and intelligible—are thus engaged simultaneously: the most favorable state for operation of the *artes memorativa et predicandi*.

Here is a similar, longer hymn to the Church, this one more amply attested in several MSS.³⁶

HOMILY OF THE CHURCH, SAID BY GRIGOR NAREKAC'I.

Desirable treasure³⁷ of great good, found and concealed:

Pleroma without deficiency, bringer of all; and
you yourself are within the entirety—
Which not even highest heaven could bear,

³⁵ E.g., K'YOŠKERYAN 1981, p. 165, lines 41–45, lines 50–53.

³⁶ See the ed. of K'YOŠKERYAN 1981, pp=162–172.

³⁷ Arm. *ganj*, a Mlr. loan, “treasure”, means here the long form of a spiritual song, of which the more abbreviated and lyrical type is the *tal*.

Your atopic canopy³⁸ is the unattainable aether.

(5) You were shown defined, the non-intermediate space³⁹ of the races of fiery nature

beneath you.

Image unquantifiable of providential loving care,

On the throne of glory the king of the heights, above and beyond the mind,

Might you receive now supplications of prayers compounded with incense

In this consecrated place, holy Church, we pray.

(10) Splendid feast and intimate summons, Delectable voice, unencompassable,

Which on the light wings of the windy air⁴⁰

By surest helmsmanship, enthroned in lordly fashion,

You have cast forth your throne in mystic parables of the completion of the outcome of good tidings.⁴¹

³⁸ Arm. *xoran*, a loan from the Parthian for a banquetting tent, is intensely polyvalent, so any single alien equivalent must render it pallid: for it is at once the celestial *čahār-tāq* dome, revealed in light of the Illuminator's vision, the similarly-constructed stone dome above the high altar in an Armenian church, as well as the supra-celestial palace of the heavenly bridegroom of the *unio mystica*.

³⁹ Var. *ananjpet*, "without intermediate space". I prefer this reading, since the heavenly beings do not dwell in that separate, dividing space that keeps this world from heaven and subject to demons. See also Narekac'i's use of *ananjpet* in line 130 of this hymn.

⁴⁰ Arm. *or i t'ews t'et'ews hotmayin awdov*: this onomatopoeic evocation of the wings of the Seraphim raising aloft the divine Throne recalls also Narekac'i's invented compound to describe the same vision, *t'ewatrohat'ew*. "wing beating wing" (see RUSSELL 1994(a), p. 138. In the present case, note also the alliteration of the round o-sound of the howling whirlwind in the last two words of the strophe.

⁴¹ This strophe would seem to suggest that the tetramorphic scheme of the Throne vision embraces the four directions of the created universe, the four

You who guide the determined manner to its perfection,

Regarding the place of your dwelling,

Eternally sky and always in our souls:

A certain one, throne; the other, footstool—⁴²

Place of elemental light, of all the races.

(20) Might you...

Maker of wisdom, creator without mistake,

Fashioner in fitting construction of all,⁴³

Who was pleased to be first the inhabitant of this form of the matter miraculously adorned,

First made with hands, constructed before, and then, the one enthroned.⁴⁴

You have stretched forth the heavens, and there, the heavenly ones:

You established Eden, and, thereafter, Adam;

The structure of the ark, and in it, those who lived;

The Tabernacle of the primordial hospitality of Abraham,

(30) Anointed stele⁴⁵ and house of God,

The ladder of our ascent and the trace of your descent

And the tent of Aaron's service;

The testament of the book, the judge of the

elements of which it is compounded, the four symbolic letters of Adam's name, the harmonization of Adam, the elements, and all the world in the Cross, and the Cross also of the Parousia and the end.

⁴² That is, the Church is of both heaven and earth, while heaven is God's throne; man, His footstool, cf. Ps. 104.

⁴³ Though the line may do no more than praise the Creator, if one considers that Narekac'i both preached against heresy and himself weathered an accusation of it, it may be that the statement is a refutation also of the idea, common to Marcionites and Manichaeans, of an imperfect Demiurge and of a material Creation flawed *ab initio*.

⁴⁴ Since the Ancient of Days who sits upon the Throne is anthropomorphic, the two strophes may suggest that God the transcendent, in Whose nature Christ is pre-eternally present, is first the dweller (*bnakn*) in the throne's abstract shape, then incarnating as the human form enthroned (*zbazmealn*) upon it.

⁴⁵ This is the pillar of Beth El, in Genesis.

speakers of high Gerizim, [place] of election.⁴⁶

Light-bearing Temple of the great Solomon,
Mountain of the Lord and house of God,
Sign raised aloft to distant peoples,
Trumpet call summoning the world:
Your ineffable mystery, according to its seers.
Might you...

Tower erected in excellent beauty,
Indestructible⁴⁷ pillar of iron and strong bul-
work made of brass,
Tower of light, cast of gold,
Island surrounded by fortress-like breakers,
According to Ezekiel's second vision:
Come with a new summoning out of Tyre,⁴⁸
In search of wisdom coming out of Sheba,
From Canaan's races of alien seed,⁴⁹
Hasening eagerly from Babylon
(50) Wounded to the quick for love of the
Bridegroom.

⁴⁶ In Deuteronomy, Mt. Gerizim at Shechem (modern "Nablus", from the late Greek name of the place, Neapolis) is a place of blessing; Mt. Ebal, of curses, for the Israelites entering the Land promised by God to His Chosen People.

⁴⁷ Arm. *ankorcaneli*: K'yoškeryan prefers the reading *ankarceli*, "unthinkable", which makes nearly as little sense as the other variant, *ankarcreli*. "non-hardening" (which even the most bleary-eyed copyist could scarcely have found a desirable quality for an iron pillar—unthinkable!).

⁴⁸ Ezekiel 26 is a prophecy of the doom of Phoenician Tyre, then Sidon. In the *Matean*, whose primary tone is of introspective contrition rather than of exultation in the Church victorious, Grigor uses the image but decries his own sins and iniquities as worse than those of Tyre and Sidon.

⁴⁹ The Queen of Sheba, whose nation, according to the reckoning of Genesis, were of the race of Canaan, from the progeny of Ham, came to learn wisdom of Solomon. He shamed her ignorance by sitting on a throne on a floor of glass over water: she was afraid to advance. The passage is related to the things of marble in the divine *Hēkkālōt* that seem to the unworthy be water, in the *Himmelsreise* of R. 'Aqivā in Tr. Hagigā, which reappear in the transitional, visionary chapter 33 of the *Matean* as the *loyn macuac* of the "final veil".

Gate hewn of cedar planks,
Stones of crystal with rubies,
Orbs sun-inscribed on steles⁵⁰ of silver,
Living city built of God,
(55) By the impulse of the Spirit; by Jesus,
spoken:
Mountain of fatness, with holiness slathered,
Might you...

Rejoice, O queen, glorious bride,⁵¹
(60) Woman of great wonder diademmed:
Rejoicing in many children whilst retaining
your virginity,
As you were traced there at the beginning,
Now in this new time you are clothed in splen-
did being shining with gold:
In the manner of the call of Hagar,
(65) Serving woman taken from Sinai to Salem
As the Father's first-born came Himself,
He takes you in place of the rejected race of
Jacob,
Making your foundations the worshipful as-
semblies of the Apostles,
Beautifying you with illumination by the stars'
light,
(70) Making you splendid in a veil of dazzling
fire.
Clean in womb and without vice in birth
Whence you bring forth in labor God's heirs,
This is the very example to hand of hopeful
expectation
That verily found its peace.
(75) Might you...

Lord of light, mighty king, celestial bride-
groom,
In ineffable mystery at the festive gathering
encircling
Ordained unchanging canons for you:
(80) And example in diverse particulars of the
forms
Of the same scheme of all existence,

⁵⁰ Arm. *maharjanawk*'.

⁵¹ Arm. *dšxoy*, by which is meant the Church: the image is repeated, and evolved in detail, in the Narek ch. 75.1, 8; where she is also *iskuhi*, "female Being", Gk. *ousā*.

In myriad kinds for the universal Church's construction.

The statures of diverse races are-humbled in a single assembly,

House and place and hidden chamber

(85) That is a remedy from the burning heat,
the rock of aid to us traced into bodies by the Spirit.

You who make God familiar to mankind,
Hope for the atonement of the condemned for all races gathered of like name,
The bold emerging first,
The band of perfected souls.
(90) Might you...

Dwelling-place of the Father's wisdom,
Built upon the pillars of the seven stars,
In which the blessed One is offered in sacrifice on the altar of will for the taste of bread—

(95) On the palanquin of the holy table—
Manna of life and celestial Lamb,
Who removes sin from the living and those gone to sleep:

He Himself is all, and the sacrifice in all is greater than Abel's—

He gathers in His economy the dispersed
(100) In un-compelled arrival to the embrace at His bosom,

Summoning with His hand in sweet love, to the unapproachable fortress.

He is refuge to the fleeing, in the high palace-hall borne by Spirit

Where He inscribed in wonder the Disciples,
And where the enthroned elders in authority will be ranged in power,

(105) Rejoicing in honor of this, your day,
Who turn in the circles of the pure:
Our lord Patriarch [name].

With bishops, elders and deacons,
Teachers of the schools and all servants of the Church,

(110) Our king with his progeny,
And those who are rulers and princes under arms at his command,

Blessed by all with your own sacred love.
Remember now and have mercy upon the souls of the departed,

We pray, in hope of resurrection.

(115) And also we ask there be granted us
Exhortation to love and to good works.

We ask for those rejected by you to be gathered in again

By the intercession of the one who sits with you.

[Var.] The Holy Mother of God found the precious jewel, the pearl

(120) By ineffable energy in the sea of this world—

Daughter of light, mother of Zion,

Faith's foundation not built by hands, true eidolon,

By whose name in this type you were anointed and sealed.

Bridal-chamber of the sole incarnated God from you,

(125) Accept your intercession for the reconciliation of us, the condemned,

The scion of immortal life, the Forerunner of the calling of the Saints

And crown of Martyrs, with the Apostles and Prophets

And him who is our Illuminator,

With the ascetic hermits who are God's heirs,

(130) Those born into adoption by your holy font, with membership in spiritual kinship unseparated by space,⁵²

⁵² Arm. ...*surb awazanawd anan'fpet hogetoh-mut'eamb*. This complex image relies upon the symbolism of water: the *awazani*, "font", contains Iranian *āb*, "water". One is totally immersed in it, so indeed there is no hiatus or space, *an'fpet*, which means literally "domain without water" (the air that separates the world from the upper waters of Heaven). This space-realm is also that of the evil spirits of the air; so it separates the world from God in more than a spatial way. Baptism is release from this lesser dominion above us and membership in a spiritual clan (*tohm*) by an adoption which is, as Narekac'i stresses, entire and as immediate as sonship by birth. So one recalls that the word *tohm* is a loan from Iranian, where it means "progeny, semen". The ancients regarded the father's watery seed alone as parentage, the womb being merely a place where it grew. But the Church, the *harsnaran*, is more than this earthly motherhood: above, it is she who has found the pearl of great price, the divine semen-drop, in the midst of a different kind of liquid—the dark and vexed world-ocean of oblivion

In which again you will behold the renewal of
the small
Into the wideness of enlargement of glory in
uncontainable expansion,
Mother with children pure,
Marriage-crowned with the covenant in that
celestial chamber
(135) On the day of your awful appearance,
great God.
And our Lord God have mercy upon us,
As befits your great compassion.

The study of the art of memory invites one to consider a possible solution to a problem of the image of St. Gregory of Narek within Armenian tradition: the aura of heresy, even sorcery, that clings to this holiest of Armenian divines. The theological density of the *Matean* makes it, *inter alia*, a massive Scriptural mnemonic, on the scope of Raymond Lull's schemata for the acquisition of universal knowledge. Narekac'i's use of the Throne Vision and related material links him to those seen to have gained access to direct knowledge of divine mysteries veiled from the unworthy and uninitiated. One may note here that at the mention of Lull we touch upon the *ars notoria*, a slightly disreputable relative of the *ars memorativa*. Practitioners of the former often created their systems of symbols with the purpose of facilitating, not pious learning, but the all-encompassing and therefore necessarily amoral knowledge of universal reality. The *ars notoria* then became a tool of occultists seeking power by acquiring intelligence beyond man's proper ken altogether. This aspect may help to explain why the vast, potent, eloquent *Matean* in Armenian popular religion came to be regarded as a magical book: the belief was that to master one's fate, one must trace a circle, stand within, and recite forty chapters of the Narek in a row (folkloric shorthand for "a lot") without stopping or heeding the demons who will gather just beyond the charmed pe-

rimeter and try to distract one from the task; for if one yields to them, one is damned.⁵³ There is a ballad, too, in which two inquisitors from Sis come, rather anachronistically, to investigate Narekac'i for heresy. He makes fire burn in water, resurrects from the dead a skewer of roasted pigeons, and curses a dying man, telling him the earth will not accept his corpse. It doesn't; later the revenant repents and the saint lifts the curse. Armenian folk prayers, many of which really qualify as magical spells, often include a Cross and Seraphic choir, or the Throne Vision of Ezekiel itself.⁵⁴ Such symbols of power, of which the latter was regarded already in Jewish tradition with an ambiguous unease, are common in Gregory's writings, too, as we have seen. His own prayers find their way into talismanic scrolls, Arm. *hmayil*, a few centuries after his death. The usual explanation for the tradition is that Narekac'i was considered a *cayt'*—that is, a Chaldean, a sympathizer with the Byzantine Church. But that explanation, while not at all beyond the realm of possibility, when one considers the wild excesses of fantasy that the least suspicion of heresy might provoke, still seems scarcely sufficient to justify his reputation, which is that of a magician. No other Armenian saint shares it. I think the image comes from the sheer prodigiousness of the *Matean*, the vastness and depth of his knowledge, his familiarity with the angelic world.

So we have observed the great work of a penitent, a visionary, a prodigious intellectual and master of the art of teaching and of memory, an ecstatic poet, of such spirit and gifts that to tradition he was not merely a saint: in a culture where the small books containing the story of the conversion of the magician Cyprian of Antioch are still bestsellers—and yes, Dr. Faustus seems to come from Gregory's vicinity—it is perhaps inevitable that Gregory is seen also as a magician. I think the idea that great sages were instructed by supernatural beings contributed strongly to the aura of awe

and perdition, and has brought it forth. (On this symbolism of the quest for the Pearl and the sea, see RUSSELL 2001-2002.)

⁵³ RUSSELL 1981, p. xiii.

⁵⁴ See RUSSELL 1998, p. 153.

with which tradition surrounded them. In the Talmudic period and probably earlier (since earlier Greek magical texts which bear the marks of Jewish influence offer their testimony), Jewish sages adjured an angel they sometimes called *Sar ha-Torah*, Master of the Law, to come and assist them in the labor of learning and memorizing. This being bore also the name Yofiel, which appears to combine the Hebrew word for beauty with the customary divine suffix. He is at all events always described as brightly shining, young, and handsome: in some texts he is the brilliant archangel Metatron. In the high and late Middle Ages (with even swift Metatron perhaps too busy to attend to a growing clientele), rabbis are often visited by peternatural but less beautiful *magidim*, angelic narrators of information.

Something similar happens in Armenia. In the seventh century, the Armenian scientist Anania of Širak fell asleep one morning in a chapel at Trebizond (he had come to the seaport to study the profane sciences with a Greek, Teukhikos), and had a vision of the Sun descending as a radiant, beautiful youth: he asked whether there were inhabitants of the Antipodes. The boy informed him that there were not, and quoted God (from the book of Job) to the effect that waves crash on uninhabited shores. The citation from Scripture seems a mild rebuke to Anania for his inquisitive audacity, and it also suggests that the creature was either an angel or a piously Christian planetary being. No matter: Teukhikos strongly advised Anania not to discuss his experience, as though, one thinks, a stigma of sorcery attached to it. He had a point, for Anania was to gain an uncanny reputation in posterity: the *Vec' hazareak*, a mathematical table he compiled based on the eschatologically important number 6000, later gave its name to the most dreaded manual of Armenian magic. Over half a millennium later, Kostandin of Erzinka describes in an unusual lyric poem such a vision of a sun-like, angelic youth: this one gave him his poetic gift. He goes on to lament the hatred, fear, and envy his talent provoked amongst monastics. Ominously, that poem is unfinished. In the eighteenth century,

the great bard of Tiflis, Sayat' Nova, records that St. John the Prodromos came to him in an initiatory dream and taught him to play musical instruments. (This was standard practice: Moslem *'āsiqs* ["lovers", i.e., minstrels] in training waited for a vision of Khidr: for Armenians, *Surb Karapet* is the patron, not only of poets and musicians, but of tightrope walkers and entertainers generally.) Sayat' Nova's dream-vision, which he records in his own hand, proudly, in his divan, was considered proper and necessary, and he got into quite another sort of trouble later in life—he had an affair with the queen of Georgia, after which the penitential prayers of St. Gregory came to his help and consolation: before his death, Sayat' Nova copied the *Narek* at Sanahin monastery, to whose precincts the *ashugh* had been confined.⁵⁵

The most famous short hymn, or *tał*, of Narekac'i is the Song of the Resurrection, which describes an ox-drawn cart, upon which stands a throne. These mystical images, of God's throne and *merkava*,⁵⁶ are drawn from Habbakuk, Ezekiel, and Isaiah, and they haunt even mediaeval Armenian doodlers in model-books;⁵⁷ and in the concluding stanzas the poet

⁵⁵ For a translation of Kostandin's poem and references to the visions of Anania and others, see RUSSELL 2001-2002.

⁵⁶ See RUSSELL 1997.

⁵⁷ See SCHELLER 1995, Appendix cat. no. A4, "Armenian workshop in Constantinople, 16th century" (Venice, Mekhitharist MS. 1434), fig. 260, fol. 44r—a cart; and fol. 46r—the Throne. The other drawings include scenes from Jonah (esp. fig. 261, fol. 45r), a text popular in Armenia also, esp. in the Van area: aspects seem localized to the lake, on the Alt'amar-reliefs. There is also a tenebrous *vayri mard*, "wild man" (fig. 263, fol. 30r). Fig. 264, fol. 39r has a nicely-drawn Chinese dragon and a few lines of fake Persian. Interest in mystical things seems often to be related to interest in the exotic and the outré generally: one may recall that the only thing Anania of Širak asked of his angel was whether there were creatures in the Antipodes. Not a very pious question, and more the sort of thing an avid reader of the Alexander Romance

explains their Christian metaphorical meaning. But the cart is still, till its charioteer makes its oxen move. This is a powerful, radiant youth described by Narekac'i as *xartišagel*, having beautiful blond tresses: in the explanatory stanza, he is revealed as *Surb Karapet*, St. John the Prodromos. The epithet *xarteaš* belongs to the hymn preserved by Movsēs Xorenac'i on the birth of the old Zoroastrian divinity Vahagn (Avestan Vərəθraivna), who had reluctantly surrendered his shrine at Aštišat, near Muš—perhaps two hard days on horseback from Narek—and his attributes to *Surb Karapet* in the fourth century. But perhaps it is for Narekac'i foremost in the tradition that the ancient solar *angelus interpres* is specifically St. John, and, presumably, Gregory's teacher. Now, Prof. Abraham Terian once advanced what I will call the principle that "Sacred events either take place first and best in Armenia or else repeat themselves there better than they were the first time around elsewhere in the Bible and the world." We can see it at work in Koriwn's *Life of Maštoc*, where the saint who invents the Armenian script produces heavenly letters better than those Daniel saw, and brings them on a tablet more propitious than those that Moses bore down the slopes of mount Sinai to an ungrateful mob. I've applied it in a study of the story of St. Gregory the Illuminator and its iconography: Armenia's patron saint spends a longer time in his pit, and with more dragons, than did Jesus

Christ in Hell before His Resurrection.⁶⁸ But the song continues and the cart is moving. What is its itinerary? The divine Throne on its wheeled Chariot, descending first out of heaven, creaks down the right flank of *Ararat*, and only thereafter proceeds, from Armenia, that is, to the other holy mountain—Zion—at Jerusalem. The theophanic vision of Throne and Chariot thus comes to the mystic hymnologist St. Gregory, as it were, and to Armenia, even before it is vouchsafed to the prophet Ezekiel. (And presumably Grigor Narekac'i has also in mind the vision of Christ by his namesake, Gregory the Illuminator, in Valaršapat, at the foot of Ararat—hence the present name of the town, Ejmiacin, the place where God's sole-begotten Son descended.) Such usurpation by a sacred mountain of the Armenian highland of a lofty Biblical *locus classicus* has a parallel, though not, chronologically, a precedent, in a mediaeval Armenian prayer which combines lines of the Pater noster and Psalm 133. The latter evokes the dew from heaven that falls on Mt. Hermon, in Israel, and the oil of the flowers that grow there is used to anoint the high priests, sons of Aaron, at the holy Temple. In the Armenian poem, this dew comes to the Armenian mountain Sukawēt first, where Alano-Armenian disciples of St. Thaddeus—the Oskeank' and Suk'iaseank'—were martyred; and from their

might have wanted to know. I have discussed Armenian Wild Men in RUSSELL 2003; and the question of transmission of Chinese, Mongol, and Islamic material is addressed by Priscilla Souček in an art. in the vol. containing Russell 1998 and in my article "Frik: The Bridge of Poetry," forthcoming in R. Hovannisian, ed., *Proceedings of the UCLA Conference on Cilicia*. Arthur Machen, in his story "The White People", suggests saints desire to know what once man properly knew before the Fall, and are patient in learning it; whilst the evil (and here include magicians and heretics) try, impatiently, to know what the angels do—and what was never intended for us and is therefore unnatural. It is, of course, a fine line to cross, and one that is correspondingly hard to draw when observing another.

⁶⁸ This is an article (forthcoming in R. Hovannisian, ed., *Proceedings of the Conference on Kars and Ani*, UCLA, Nov. 2001) on the Church of the Holy Apostles erected at Kars by king Abas Bagratuni. One of the figures in bas relief on the drum has snakes on either side of him. I have argued—not for the first time, but offering the nuance of the Iranian substrate and some supporting data from similar figures in mediaeval Christian art—that this is St. Gregory the Illuminator, who, as Prof. Terian has noted brilliantly at the 2003 Narek Conference at Harvard, is celebrated as both Apostle and martyr, though he was born centuries after the former and did not die like the latter. The ingenuity of his elevation in status testifies to the active operation of the "better than" principle—and complements as well the literal elevation of his image on the church building.

blood grows the magic *hamasp'iwr* flower of Armenian mythology, a native complement to Hermon's blossoms and a nod to the particular composition of the Armenian *miwrōn*, "chrism", which, indeed, Narekac'i praises in the long 93rd chapter of the *Matean*. The mountain's name is itself theophoric: and Avestan Saoka (> Arm. *Soyk) happens to be precisely the divinity through whom, according to the Zoroastrian Pahlavi *Bundahišn*, heavenly blessings are channelled down to earth. Though the prayer is in late middle Armenian, and cannot therefore formally be a precursor to St. Gregory

of Narek's own hymn, it contains material unquestionably anterior to him, from both pre-Christian past and the legendry of the Apostolic tradition.⁸⁹ And Narekac'i's present example of the usurped *locus classicus* is, albeit in encoded form, a proud *exegi monumentum*; and it reminds one that, however absorbed was Narekac'i in the art of remembering the intimate and the cosmic, that he was an Armenian, of the race of golden-haired Vahagn and of king Artawazd imprisoned in Ararat and of the Illuminator who saw the temple of light at Ararat's base, he did not forget.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Censing= *Xnkarkut'ean ulec'oyc'*, Jerusalem: St. James', 1991.

Chrysostom= S. Yovhannēs Oskeberan, *I meknut'enē Matt'ēi čar XIX*, in *K'aluacoyk' i t'argman'ut'eanc' naxneac' handerj yoyñ bna-graw*, Vienna: Monastery of the Order of S. Astuacacin [Theotokos], 1849.

Mary Carruthers and Jan Ziolkowski, eds., *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.

Charles de Lamberterie, "Le nom de l'Évangile en arménien," *Il Caucaso: Cerniera fra culture dal Mediterraneo alla Persia (secoli IV-XI)*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo XLIII, Spoleto, 1996, pp. 779-830.

Elizabeth Hardwick, *Herman Melville*, New York: Viking, 2000.

A. Kyoškeryan, ed., Grigor Narekac'i, *Taler ev ganjer*, Erevan: Academy of Sciences

of the Armenian SSR, 1981.

S. La Porta, "Sorcerers, Witches, and Weasels: Grigor Tat'ewac'i's Definitions of the Magical Arts," *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes* 28, 2001-2002, pp. 171-213.

A.R. Luria, *The Mind of a Mnemonist: A Little Book about a Vast Memory*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968.

Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.

A.Š. Mnac'akanyan, ed., Vardan Anec'i, *Anec'i Vardana Vardapeti ergel i kaš...* (*Vasñ kaiac' astuacut'eann nerbot*), Banber Matenadaran 10, 1971, pp. 276-294.

Abp. Tiran Nersoyan, *Pataragamatoyc' Hayastaneac' Ašakelakan Surb Ekelec'woy*, New York, 1950.

M. Ormanian, *A Dictionary of the Armenian Church*, New York: St. Vartan Press, n.d.

Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

James R. Russell, intro., Grigor Narekats'i, *Matean oghbergut'ean* (Facsimile repr.

of the 1948 Buenos Aires ed.), Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1981.

James R. Russell, "A Mystic's Christmas in Armenia," *Armenian Review*, Summer 1987, Vol. 40, No. 2-158, pp. 1-13.

James R. Russell, "Grace from Van: A Micro-Historiola," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 7, 1994, pp. 35-45.

James R. Russell, "Gregory Narekatsi," in J. Greppin, ed., *Studies in Classical Armenian Literature*, Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1994(a), pp. 128-151.

James R. Russell, "Armenian *šrawšak*," *Annual of Armenian Linguistics*, 1996.

James R. Russell, "Armenian Spirituality: Liturgical Mysticism and Chapter 33 of the Book of Lamentation of St. Grigor Narekac'i," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 26, 1996-1997, pp. 427-439.

James R. Russell, "The Four Elements and the Cross in Armenian Spirituality, with an Excursus on the Descent in Merkavah Mysticism," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 4 (1997), no. 4, pp. 357-379.

James R. Russell, "Scythians and Avesta in an Armenian Vernacular Paternoster, and a Zok Paternoster," *Le Muséon* 110.1-2, 1997(a), pp. 91-114.

James R. Russell, "Truth is what the eye can see: Armenian manuscripts and Armenian spirituality," in T.F. Mathews and R.S. Wieck, eds., *Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Art, Religion, and Society*, New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1998, pp. 147-162.

James R. Russell, "Bedros Tourian's Cruciform Prayer and its Antecedents," *Journal of Armenian Studies*, Belnont, MA, Vol. VI, No.2, Winter-Spring 2000-2001, pp. 27-45.

James R. Russell, "The Scepter of Tiri-dates," *Le Muséon* 114.1-2, 2001, pp. 187-215.

James R. Russell, "The Epic of the Pearl," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 28, 2001-2002, pp. 29-100.

James R. Russell, "An Epic for the Borderlands: Zariadris of Sophene, Aslan the Rebel, Digenes Akrites, and the Mythologem of Alcestis in Armenia," in R. Hovannisian, ed., *Armenian Tsopk/Kharper*, UCLA Armenian History and Culture Series, Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces 3, Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2002, pp. 147-183.

James R. Russell, "The Praise of Porridge," *Le Muséon* 116.1-2, 2003, pp. 137-179.

Robert W. Scheller, *Exemplum: Model-Book Drawings and the Practice of Artistic Transmission in the Middle Ages (ca. 900-ca. 1450)*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995.

Hrač'ya T'amrazyan, "Banastelcakan arvesti xndirnerə Grigor Narekac'u stelcagorcut'yan mej," *Aštanak* 2, Erevan, 1998, pp. 114-133.

T'amar Tasnapetean (Dasnabedian), ed., S. Banean, tr., Grigor Narekac'i, *Patmut'iwn kensatu xač'in*, Beirut, 1999.

Robert Thomson, *The Armenian Version of the works attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite*, CSCO vol. 488 (text), 489 (translation), Louvain: Peeters, 1987.

Elizabeth Valdez del Alamo and Carol Stamatis Prendergast, eds., *Memory and the Medieval Tomb*, Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000.

Alan R. Young, ed., *The English Emblem Tradition*, 5: Henry Peacham's Manuscript Emblem Books, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.

Grover A. Zinn, "De Gradibus Ascensionum: The Stages of Contemplative Ascent in Two Treatises on Noah's Ark by Hugh of St. Victor," *Studies in Medieval Culture* 5, 1975, pp. 61-70.

THE SCIENCE OF PARTING: ELIADE, IRANIAN SHAMANISM, AND THE VIEW FROM TOMIS

James R. RUSSELL

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

Я изучил науку расставанья
–Осип Манделъштам, «Tristia»

Mircea Eliade created from a heterogeneous and rich dossier the study of Shamanism as a focused discipline: his scholarly studies and metaphysical or mystical novellas reflect aspects of particular shamanistic narratives in pre-Islamic Iranian religion, in a manner that illuminates also Eliade's important concerns as a Romanian, and his existential situation as an exile. All these concerns are related to each other, historically and as relevant features of the phenomenology of shamanism itself.

In shamanism the function of a priestly practitioner of religious ritual intersects with that of the protagonist of a heroic epic or character in a folktale. The shaman, who is recognized as the holder of a cultic office, generally wears a garment necessary to his activity that is considered an animate appendage to his being. He recites poems, sometimes cosmological, sometimes of his own composition or elaboration, which narrate his deeds. These usually consist of an out-of-body spiritual descent or flight into an otherworld where, with the assistance of animal or other spirits – or by compelling them – he acquires esoteric knowledge or effects the cure of a disease. Then he returns. The shaman is, even if the holder of a hereditary office, often an alienated individual, even a member of an outcast class. The process of initiation involves a traumatically violent symbolic dismemberment. He is thus a loner; and his activity is more action – the accomplishing of a quest – than the passive prayer one might otherwise associate with the religious. This lone questing hero overcomes figures out puzzles, overcomes obstacles, and vanquishes an adversary, like the main character in an epic or folktale; but he steps into the mythological plot without being fictionalized, as it were, himself. And he bests the dragon, not with a sword, but by means of his magical incantations. Shamanism is the main aspect of religious practice

Romanian Association for the History of Religions
Member of EASR & IAHR
www.rahr.ro

Institute for the History of Religions
Romanian Academy, Bucharest
www.ihr-acad.ro

of some traditions; in Zoroastrian and Manichaean Iran it was one of several.

The Sasanian high priest Kartir's shamanistic quests through the worlds of the afterlife drew upon the ancient precedents of Jāmāspa, some aspects of the *Ayōdgār ī Zarērān*, and particularly the *Ardā Virāz nāmāg*; his multiple, illustrated inscriptions of them accomplished the propagandistic purpose of official magic, of religious advertisement. This suggests that the Zoroastrian establishment was reacting to a serious challenge in a similar vein. This was posed, not by Christianity – his successor Ādurbād ī Amahraspandān's vernacular credo *Nām stāyishn* and the Pahlavi catechism *Čīdag andarz ī pōryōtkeshān* were to be the answer to the Nicene Creed – but by Manichaeism. The famous episode of Mānī's elevation of king Mihrshāh can be seen as shamanistic, and the vision of the Manichaean heaven and hell described in the hymn cycles *Angad rōšnān* and *Huyōdagmān* were impressive enough to be depicted on funerary bas-reliefs in China centuries after the Apostle of Light's own *parinirvāṇa*.

Two narratives from the Iranian sphere that have the hallmarks of cosmological and quest tales subjected secondarily to shamanistic recasting and religious use invite consideration. The first would belong to a Zoroastrian milieu. In "The Devil and God: Prehistory of the Romanian Folk Cosmogony," the third chapter of *Zalmoxis*, Eliade studied a myth in which God asks a lone bird associated with the power of evil to fetch soil from the sea bottom so He may create the Earth. The myth suggests that God was not capable of creating the world Himself and required the assistance of either Satanael or an intermediary. Eliade cites the well-known Armenian and Manichaean allusions to a Zoroastrian myth about the demon Mahmī, who supposedly taught Ohrmazd to create light; and he duly points out the probable Iranian provenance of the dualistic motif in the legend. He supports a diffusionist hypothesis, deriving the mythologem from a primordial model in Central Asia; but supposes also that the Iranized pattern reinforced a myth already existent in the Thracio-Dacian milieu; it survived the Christianization of the early Romanians because it provided a folk-cosmological explanation of the question of evil. Eliade claimed that the myth itself is not attested in a Zoroastrian text; however it seems possible that the *Bundahishn* contains a Zoroastrian and fully dualistic refraction of it: Ohrmazd invited Ahreman to assist him in making the world. The evil spirit refused, and then invaded it in the form of a serpent, puncturing the cosmic egg *at the sea bottom* and then rushing up into the floating disk of the earth, which fled from him and thereby formed the mountains. This myth of the *ēbgad*, or incursion, of the evil one answers for the Zoroastrians the question *Unde malum?* whilst differently distributing the elements of the myth Eliade has

analyzed. The cosmology of the *Bundahišn* would seem to have co-opted and altered a myth that in its original form compromises the creative powers of Ahura Mazda.

The myth in its original form is attested in Turco-Mongol tradition, where the creator god is called by the name Kurbystan – most likely a loan from Iranian *urmayzdan*-, “belonging to Ahura Mazda” – and his evil adversary is Erlik Khan. There is also, apparently, a shamanistic variant which recreates the cosmological setting but changes the purpose and events, and replaces one of the characters. In a Mongolian ritual song recorded by Heissig, it is a shaman who approaches the axial tree of the world on whose branches the Garuḍa perches – this is the powerful ancient Indian bird who is associated with the *nāgas*. By his magical prowess the shaman acquires the assistance of the bird. Armenian magicians of the mediaeval period used to employ in a ritual for healing a sick client the text of a talismanic scroll, in whose earliest version three angels approach an uncanny, wingless eagle (Armenian *artsiv*, a very early Iranian loan) capable of vanquishing serpents (the word used is another Iranian loan, *vishap*, a kind of submarine dragon) – seated on a branchless tree in the middle of the universe. The ritual was believed to be most effective on a Friday, especially Good Friday. I have argued that this mythological theme was borrowed in the oldest of the Russian ballads called *byliny*: that of Il’ya Muromets and the Nightingale-Robber (*Илья Муромец и Соловей-разбойник*). In the latter, the folk hero travels on Easter Sunday with preternatural speed to the court of prince Vladimir at Kiev, having vowed not to shed blood when overcoming obstacles in his path. This seems but a distant echo of the shamanic or magical refraction of the myth, where the practitioner employs his spells and cunning, for in the event Il’ya does slay the mighty and uncanny Nightingale-robber, who is perched on two trees. One need not adhere strictly to a diffusionist method to accept that the Armenian Christian magical spell has its origin in a shamanistic elaboration of the myth of the bird in the primordial ocean. The ultimate source would have been Central Asia; the path of transmission, most likely, would have traversed Iran. Thus the mythologem that the Zoroastrian divines recast would have persisted independently in the context of Iranian folk shamanism, where the Garuda would have been an *arəzifya*-; and the *nāgas*, *vīshāpas*.¹

¹ See on the transmission of Iranian dualistic mythology into the cultures of Slavic-speaking peoples and their Finno-Ugrian compatriots J. R. RUSSELL, “The Rime of the Book of the Dove (*Stikh o Golubinoi knige*): From Zoroastrian cosmology and Armenian heresiography to the Russian novel,” in Christine ALLISON, Anke JOISTEN-PRUSCHKE, and Antje WENDTLAND, eds., *From Daena to*

The second narrative to be considered has affinities to one of Eliade's marvelous mystical novellas. *Pelerina* (1975), translated as "The Cape", has in Romanian the specific overtone of the vestment of the *peregrinus*. The pilgrim is Zevedei, whose fifteen years of political activity were followed by fifteen of imprisonment: a kind of latter-day ordeal of shamanistic enlightenment equivalent to the lifetime of Christ and thus also indicative of a movement from physical genesis through the apogenesis of death into spiritual rebirth. (In "Youth Without Youth", Eliade's character, an elderly scholar, is struck by lightning and restored to youth: here the motif of shamanic dismemberment is even more explicit. Eliade's frequent chronologies of Christmas and Easter in reverse order also indicate the theme of apogenesis.) Zevedei's garb – a cape bearing the traces of pre-Communist epaulettes – attracts the unwelcome attention of the Securitate, who implicate him in the dissemination of issues of *Scînteia* back-dated three years (to 1966, a significant date for Eliade), in which the venerable Party slogan has been subversively rephrased as "Dreamers of the world, unite!" Christ's "poor in spirit" are encoded into the text; and "providence" replaces the word "provenance". These references are taken by the narrator to refer to Parsifal's quest for the chalice of the holy grail. Zevedei's cape marks him as a questing stranger, a pilgrim from another age. The cape, taking the shape of his true form, defines also his essential belonging to a different, better dispensation.

The overall structure of the story, and its strange details, remind one of a short Syriac poem embedded in the *Acts of Thomas* called the Hymn of the Pearl or the Hymn of the Soul. The milieu is geographically and socially that of Arsacid Parthia, and a number of key terms are Middle Iranian; and in the absence of a provenance, some students of the work have sought authorship in the providentially imperfectly documented Bardaisan of Edessa. In brief, the king of the East sends his son to recover the pearl that is held captive by a dragon in the sea of Egypt. The prince departs, but at the inn (Syriac *ešpeza*, from Parthian *ispinz*) in Egypt he is drugged and falls asleep, despite the counsel of a noble youth (*āzār*) from his homeland. A letter in the form of an eagle from his father reminds him of his quest and summons him to fight, that he may be inscribed in the Book of Heroes. The prince then employs magical incantations (the verb employed is a derivative of Persian

Din: Religion, Kultur und Sprache in der iranischen Welt, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009, pp. 141-208 (*Festschrift Prof. Dr. Philip Kreyenbroek*). On the Nightingale-Robber and the Armenian material see J.R. RUSSELL, "Solov'i, solov'i," *St. Nersess Theological Review* 10 (2005), pp. 77-139 (published in Russian in *Rossiia XXI*, 2006, 4, Moscow, pp. 156-197.)

magush) to vanquish the dragon, recovers the pearl, and returns home to the royal court of kind and *vaspuhrān*; at the gates of the East his robe comes to him. Some twenty of the poem's hundred-odd lines are devoted to a description of the latter. It is the prince's true eidolon and bears the visage of the king of kings. It glitters with gems, the motions of gnosis stir upon it, and the robe sings to him, rejoicing in their reunion.

The poem's elements and structure are those of the traditional heroic epic in which a young warrior ventures forth on a quest, suffers perils and reversals, overcomes them, and slays a dragon. The Iranian trappings are cues to the audience to expect a familiar entertainment – but the preacher of the Gnostic, probably Manichaean, message of the Hymn achieves the effect of surprise by playing on that very expectation to deliver a radically different meaning. The prince does not slay the dragon with a sword; he puts a spell on him. Far from becoming an adult by affirming his place as a warrior in the world, he frees himself from the mire of a cosmos of lies and departs from it, donning the robe that is a reflection of his true self and an emblem of his rejection of physical life. The dragon's subjects are unable to drug him. Now the shamanistic song also employs this morphology of the heroic poem, in which the shaman as hero undertakes his otherworld journey in the manner of a quest, while substituting, as we have seen, magical operations for warfare. So the *Hymn of the Pearl* seems to be a heroic poem reconfigured as a Manichaean sermon; and the Manichaeans, like the Zoroastrians, retained some vestiges of shamanism which they employed – as the rivalry of Mānī and Kartīr suggests – for propagandistic purposes.

In Eliade's story, Bucharest under the Communists is the dragon's inn; the police, the monster's accomplices; and propaganda is the potation that stupefies. But Zevedei, attired in the pilgrim's cape of his true self and alien origin, defeats the dragon by magian formulas – the subversion of the clichés of *Scînteia*. There are other possible traces in Eliade's work of Manichaeism in general and the Syriac hymn in particular: in "Nineteen Roses", for instance, the hero discovers he has a son whom he does not know, who is aware his father tried once to stage a play on Orpheus' descent into the underworld. This enigmatic yet close relationship recalls the Manichaean spirit twin; and in the same story Niculina wears a special, exotic dress while reciting a *Syrian* spell. Why did Eliade, a gifted prose writer, focus so intently on these particular topics; and why is he so cryptic – why do they require decoding? As to the latter question, Eliade writes in his autobiography: "It seemed to me that this dialectics of hierophanies constituted – though camouflaged – the exemplary model of every human existence." That is, divinity is immanent, but it conceals itself. The purpose of the educational process of this life is to discover it through spiritual and intellectual striving and

insight. Subtlety and inference, to the point of using sheer wordplay as a defensive weapon, are a strategy of dealing with totalitarianism most recently – and more traditionally belong to the *Miorita* complex that Eliade defined and studied in Romanian culture. “Literature I can write only in Romanian, the language in which I dream,” Eliade once declared: of all forms of expression the dream is the most secretive of all, the most veiled in symbols: indeed, Iranian *rûz*, “secret”, is borrowed into Armenian as *eraz*, “dream”. Dreams are hyper-mioritic, as it were; and equally they are the vehicle, often, of religious vision, including shamanistic initiation. But why did Eliade evince, in his treatment of shamanistic phenomena, a particular interest in their expression in the pre-Islamic culture of Iran?

Herodotus and subsequent writers present the Zalmoxis cult as a religion whose founder was a shaman-philosopher-hero-king whose cosmological, eschatological, and moral doctrines were sufficiently profound as to serve the Romanized Dacians of the third century of the Christian era as a *præparatio evangelica*: the Gospel of redemption and rebirth easily embraced the *getas ious athanatizontas*. There is, as one might expect of any traditional culture, a strong pagan substratum in Romanian folk belief – possession by *Sânziana* (i.e., Sancta Diana, the Thracio-Dacian Bendis whom we meet in the first book of the *Republic* of Plato), and the shamanistic *călușari*, are the most relevant when one considers the shamanistic aspect of the Zalmoxis cult. Zalmoxis was specifically hailed as a religious figure parallel and akin to Zarathustra at the time of the Dacian revival in Romanian scholarship. The Iranian prophet, one need scarcely be reminded, had since the Renaissance gradually acquired the status of a hero figure of an extra-Biblical *prisca theologia*. At first this fictionalized Zoroaster was employed to undermine the dogma of the Catholic Church; as European local nationalisms gained strength, the Iranian prophet became the paragon of an Aryan ethos intended to overcome the slave mentality tendentiously ascribed to the Christian faith in general and to its Jewish origins in particular.

The Daco-Thracians, whom Ovid regarded as kin in every way to the Sarmatians and Scythians of the Black Sea littoral, might then be blood relatives of the Iranian prophet. In the course of forging an Iranian cultural kinship or patrimony for his Dacian ancestors that might at the same time bestow the charisma of antique precedent upon the cultic brotherhood of the Legionaries of the Archangel Michael, Eliade accepted uncritically the scholarship of his friend, the Iranist Stig Wikander. The latter's chief contribution was a hypothetical construction of Iranian *Männerbünde* whose young initiates were hooligans (a key word in Romanian literature from Eliade in the 1930's down to Norman Manea's memoirs) who swilled *soma* and acted with the amoral abandon of

werewolves. Wikander and Eliade accepted as *realia* of the institution the vulpine totem of the province of Hyrcania and the ostensibly vulpine symbolism of an Iranian war banner. By adopting the incautious misreading of an Old Persian epithet as *haumavarka* instead of *haumavarga*, Eliade was able to characterize the Dacians' Saka neighbors as ambrosia-imbibing lycanthropes; so that when on firmer ground he observed that the Dacian ethnonym itself contains an old word for "wolf", he could present a chain of kinship from Avesta to Saka to Dacian that is tenuous at best. The concept of an occult band of young, berserk males found a ready application under fascism; but in the Zoroastrian texts these *mairyas* are considered inimical to the message of the Prophet *ab initio*. It is impossible to square Männerbund with Mazdaism: the fictionalized Zarathustra of Nietzsche was beyond good and evil; but the singular message of the Zarathustra of the Avestan canon is that good and evil are so existentially different as to preclude the possibility of such transcendence.

Norman Manea has asserted that it would be vulgar to assess Eliade's scholarship through the prism of his politics; but Adriana Berger, in her study of the latter, has demonstrated how the refraction of learning through politics creates distortion that impairs scholarship. Chronology is an important factor in Eliade's mystic stories: particular years and festivals seem to exist outside of the flow of the time-space continuum, and this reminds one of the way a shaman can in his trance transcend linear time by entering suspended animation, a ritual death, and acting in the unmoving, primordial present of the Otherworld. It is telling, then, that one such fixed time to which Eliade returns several times in his prose is the year 1938, when Codreanu's supporters were violently suppressed by king Carol II's government and Eliade himself spent several months in detention. This was for him a traumatic and transforming turning point: though he was to serve in the foreign ministry under the Iron Guardist Antonescu régime that had overthrown the monarchy, 1938 was the point at which the prewar world ended and the prospect of exile became clear. One must not presume to stand in judgement of Eliade, though. He did not take part in the sanguinary, Männerbundist initiatory rites of the Legionaries, and in later years claimed to have been repelled by the extreme violence of the Iron Guard's pogroms in 1941. Perhaps he was: it can be argued that not everyone made the gradual transition from the virulent social anti-Semitism of the 1930's to the eliminationist violence of the Holocaust. That does not make the picture less tragic. The Romanian Jewish author Joseph Hechter, who wrote under the *nom de plume* of Mihail Sebastian, leaves no doubt in his diaries of the 1930's that his dear friend Mircea shared anti-Semitic prejudices common throughout Europe at the time and felt right-wing nationalism best served

Romania in her precarious position. For his part, Eliade avoided meeting Sebastian during a wartime mission home to Bucharest: he knew this would hurt Sebastian; but believed such a meeting would have endangered the latter.

Romania for world culture must evoke the *Tristia* of Ovid. It was an island of Latinity in the Balkans; a bastion of Orthodoxy in the chains of Ottoman oppression; and many of its most creative minds have endured the pain of flight. *Ya izuchil nauku rastavan'ya*, "I've mastered the science of parting," wrote Mandelstam in his own *Tristia*; and when one considers the legend of Zarathustra's grievous departure from his people and his wandering, and the sojourn of Zalmoxis in the household of Pythagoras and his loneliness even after his *nostos* amongst his own, then the biographies of the shaman-visionaries Eliade studied may be seen as studies in exile. The shaman himself, for all the social sanctioning that validates his practice, generally exhibits the neurotic traits of an individual alienated by different markers, often deviant sexuality, from the community. His very practice is a departure, whether a *psychanodia* or *descensus ad inferos*. But for it to be successful, he has to return with the goods, as it were, a successful Orpheus – or Odysseus (whose wanderings also included a visit to Hades). "Every exile is a Ulysses traveling toward Ithaca [...] toward the center," Eliade wrote; and in his scholarship and *belles lettres* he accomplished an imaginal return to the land from which he had fled into exile. Ovid plaintively asks in *Tristia ex Ponto*, *Quod mihi vobiscum est infelix cura, libelli?* For Eliade, books were the means of regaining lost Tomis: he had learnt the science of parting.

In the work of Eliade's disciple, the late Ioan Culianu, the questions of shamanism, and of exile, are refracted through a different prism. Where Eliade accepted an essentially diffusionist model of shamanism, one which reinforced, whether by deliberation or fortuity, an ideologically driven concept of Romanian ethnogenesis and cultural identity, Culianu considered the phenomenon an expression of a cast of religious imagination liable independently to originate in human cultures. In the Iranian case, Culianu tended to reject the diffusionist idea of a Zoroastrian source of contiguous dualistic systems, such as that encountered in Manichaeism. Culianu wrote in depth on one of the most perceptive students of Manichaeism, Hans Jonas, who analyzes the Hymn of the Pearl in his important book, *The Gnostic Religion*. The Romanian exile scholar in Chicago must have felt an affinity for the German refugee of an earlier generation: Jonas had been a pupil of Martin Heidegger, but he rejected the latter's fascism and the philosophical stances consonant with it. In particular, Jonas rejected Heidegger's idea of the "destinings" of Being – Christianity consists, Jonas argued, precisely in deliverance

from destiny and fate. The essential action of conscious being is not the experience of some heroic ecstatic moment, but the exercise of concern, which is the first principle of freedom. Freedom has as its concomitants love and pity, which must take place in the context of concerned involvement with others, rather than the transcendence of good and evil in heroic isolation or social absorption in some mass will to power.

Both Eliade and Culianu seem to have considered magical operations real in effect, but their thinking on this issue diverges, as well. For the former, shamanism and magic work because there is a spirit world. For the latter, they work because they create a mode of thinking which acts as a self-fulfilling prophecy in the human apperception of external reality; and they fire their symbolism with the energy of desire, co-opting in particular the components of eroticism. One can thus trace the image of Zarathustra from the *prisca theologia* of Ficino, Pico, and Bruno down to the Aryan model, as noted above; or, along the lines of Culianu's work, one can analyze the same forms of Renaissance magic and find their descendants in the seductive techniques of Fascist propaganda (in this regard, Borges' story "Tlön, Uqbar, and Orbis Tertius" served as an inspiration for Culianu's prose) and capitalist advertising. Culianu, like his fellow exiles Andrei Codrescu and Norman Manea, learnt a different science of parting, whose trajectory, as Manea put it, is not of nation and bloodline and force, but from the tragic experience of the labor camp of Transnistria to Trans-*tristia* – to a cosmopolitan embrace of the existential exilic state. He quotes Joyce, "I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church, and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defense the only arms I allow myself to use: silence, exile, and cunning." The genuine Zarathustra, who left his clan and turned against his ancestral religion, and then composed the sustained, intricate poetic revelation of the *Gāthās*, might have spoken much this way himself. And in the end Professor Mircea Eliade, the great scholar and artist whose virtual free Romania was cunningly encrypted and boldly argued in exile, might have inscribed the words of Stephen Daedalus on his escutcheon too, alongside the proud declaration in the language of his dreams. *Visători din toate țările, uniți-vă!*

THE BELLS: FROM POE TO SARDARAPAT

JAMES R. RUSSELL

Was it a dark and stormy night? No, but at least it was on a crisp and sere one, in autumn, and the scene is an old wooden house shaded by huge, gaunt trees. The nervous, overweight boy from the big city was uncomfortable with his four suburban cousins, with their healthy, athletic roughhousing and clean, wholesome, all-American good looks: their parents had not circumcised them and had rejected the antique language, the prophetic faith, and the tribal old-new land. But in the living room the Franklin stove crackled, all was bright and warm, and his aunt and uncle had put on a newly pressed record, “All The News That’s Fit to Sing” (Elektra Records, 1964)—a topical irony, since *The New York Times* boasted then, and still does, that it offers all the news fit to print. In that little, bright room in the ghoulish-woodland of suburban Philadelphia the boy heard for the first time Phil Ochs’ song “The Bells”, with its intricate guitar work and gorgeous melody. The music seemed part of the happy scene in every way the boy already knew he most definitely was not, yet he loved the music.¹

For something else entirely was at work as the song wove its enchantment. Ochs’ setting of Edgar Allan Poe’s poem suggested to him that music and words could be extremely close, closer than he had thought, not melody and lyric as two together but the *same thing*—and the subject of the poem, the bells, and the densely alliterative poem itself leapt across the boundary between sound and sense, between the apparently arbitrary semantics of the language we use and the sounds we employ to express meaning. And that is the sixty-four-dollar question, isn’t it? Is there anything more than an arbitrary relationship between signifier and signified? We receive the universe as information; and evaluate, relay, experience much of that information through a linguistic medium. The very diversity of languages would indicate that the relationship of names to things is indeed arbitrary, at least most of the time. Only most of the time, that is, since one can introduce into the issue two other factors: the idea of music and the musicality of language, and a specific category of words, the onomatopoeic ones—the ones that mimic a non-

¹ This article began with my graduate course at Harvard in the Fall term of 2011 on modern Armenian romantic and revolutionary poetry attended by two brilliant students, Ainsley Morse and Christian Millian, then a presentation to the Boston area Armenologists’ round table at my office, and a lecture at the invitation of Barbara Merquerian to the Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown, MA, in December 2011. I am grateful to these students and colleagues who listened, reacted, and suggested. The shortcomings of the study are all my own.

linguistic sound in nature associated with a named object or act. So, a bell rings. An English-speaking child hears **ding-dong**, and Poe hears tintinnabulation. A Russian's *kolokol'chiki* go **dzin'-dzin'**. In Hebrew a ringing bell *me-tsaltsél*, and a the *ghoghanj* of a clanging Armenian *zang* can be **dzendzgha**-voiced, or a child can sing *De, znga znga im zangak* "Hey, go ding-dong, my bell!" What if a word really were related to what it describes? Coleridge once mused, Were a man to dream of Paradise and then wake, holding a flower from there, yes, and what then? What then? This essay will probe some of the "What then."

At eleven I did not think all that out quite the way I've put it here, but I felt it, which is an essential first step if you take a poem seriously; and the grail of philology glimmered on the horizon, that line in the distance that melts away as one questing poet, or scholar, or madman approaches it. As time passed, and one learnt more of Poe and Ochs, there was a vindication of sorts, besides; for one discovered over time that Poe himself was no paragon of conventional virtue. And he was fascinated by the Near East and by my ancestral and sacral language, Hebrew. He was neither cheerful nor wholesome: he was as hung up a person as ever lived in the whole wide universe. I found out that his musical interpreter, Philip David Ochs (December 19, 1940–April 9, 1976), was a Jew whose youth in the Midwest was marred by anti-Semitism. He wasn't cheerful or wholesome either, and his fate was somewhat like that of Poe, whose poem he set to music in that unforgettable song. Ochs became a drunkard, believed he was possessed by somebody else's soul and that he himself had died, and then he hanged himself. My assimilationist relatives perhaps constructed their lives the way they did because they recoiled from what Salo Baron has called the lachrymose paradigm of Jewish history. My uncle had been in an army unit that liberated a Nazi death camp, and I believe he wished to camouflage his children, to protect them from anti-Semitism. But their sterile picture of a homogeneous American identity was conceived also, I think, in a self-loathing that makes life a lie. Armenians can also have an unhealthy obsession with the Genocide, as though that were all there was to the nation's history— though the issue of denial makes that giant episode unfinished business. There is no worldwide and ineradicable hatred of Armenians comparable to anti-Semitism, though; and that is perhaps why even with a cognate lachrymose paradigm there is no self-hatred. I remember my cousins now simply as graceful; their parents, as decent though chilled by life; and for their music, like Joseph Brodsky in his retrospective poem at forty, I will give nothing but thanks. Yet "The Bells" has Armenian echoes, and these will indeed be an alarum, plunged into the terror and murder of the Genocide, of the awful reality of being human that poets face head on, that I try to escape, that you try to escape, from which there is no escape.

I have heard the bells of Poe echo again, in a poem by the Western Armenian Rupen Sevag, with the tolling grim; and the poet's fate, hideous. And then I heard them in the verses of two Eastern Armenian poets: Yeghishe Ch'arents' and Paruyr Sevak—one murdered by the police at forty, the other killed when he was scarcely older, in a suspicious road accident. It seems that it is dangerous to be a good poet, dangerous to be a visionary, dangerous to hear bells. It seems that society often exacts a price from such people.² A scholar is also a person and as he grows older he can shed some of his armor and tell about the motives for what he has chosen to study, though his candor cannot compromise his practice of his art, the integrity of his method. He does this partly out of respect for the decent opinion of mankind. But paradoxically he may do it partly out of indifference to that opinion, as well. Because as Colin Wilson put it, "age has one advantage; it teaches one that the opinions of other people are not really very important; death is so much more real."³ So my project here is to suggest that at certain points, poets find a door between dimensions through which signifier and signified walk and shake hands. I want to assert that their doing so has a moral content: it is the exercise of a divine gift that may bring down the wrathful envy and enmity of their fellows, but it is work on behalf of the Platonic virtues, the good, the true, the beautiful. The beauty of the mainstream of culture belongs as much to the misfits and outcasts who made it and who are its guardians even now, as to the world they have given it to. And among us, those who cannot keep the bells from ringing in our heads and who have not the good sense to be silent, to stop creating and to stop protesting, are the drunkards and the drugged, the perverts and the mad, and the Jews and the Armenians. Everybody, that is, in Federico Garcia Lorca's bacchanal.

² One recalls this interchange in the movie "Easy Rider" (1969) between Jack Nicholson and Dennis Hopper:

George Hanson: They're not scared of you. They're scared of what you represent to 'em.

Billy: Hey, man. All we represent to them, man, is somebody who needs a haircut.

George Hanson: Oh, no. What you represent to them is freedom.

Billy: What the hell is wrong with freedom? That's what it's all about.

George Hanson: Oh, yeah, that's right. That's what it's all about, all right. But talkin' about it and bein' it, that's two different things. I mean, it's real hard to be free when you are bought and sold in the marketplace. Of course, don't ever tell anybody that they're not free, 'cause then they're gonna get real busy killin' and maimin' to prove to you that they are. Oh, yeah, they're gonna talk to you, and talk to you, and talk to you about individual freedom. But they see a free individual, it's gonna scare 'em.

Billy: Well, it don't make 'em runnin' scared.

George Hanson: No, it makes 'em dangerous.

³ Colin Wilson, "The Return of the Lloigor," in H.P. Lovecraft and divers hands, *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos* (Sauk City, WI: Arkham House, 1990), p. 359 (originally published in *Tales of the Cthulhu Mythos*, 1969).

1. EARLY CHIMES: POE

The diary of Mary Louise Shew, friend and benefactor of the American writer Edgar Allan Poe (January 19, 1809–October 7, 1849), contains an account of the genesis of his last, great poem “The Bells” in May 1848. The two were sitting in a conservatory overlooking a garden. Poe complained that he had to write a poem, but lacked inspiration. The sound of church bells filled the air, but they merely irritated his frayed nerves. He said, “I dislike the noise of bells tonight, I cannot write, I have no subject, I am exhausted.” Shew then wrote down a line and passed it to him: “The bells, the little, silver bells.” Poe composed a stanza, then lapsing into a nearly comatose state. She wrote again: “The heavy iron bells”—and at this he jotted down two more stanzas, which he attributed to her. He had to be put to bed, and a doctor was summoned. Poe was nearly insane, and physically close to death. But he survived to finish the poem begun that day, as well as “Annabel Lee,”⁴ in 1849; he died later that year, at forty.⁵ “The Bells” was printed posthumously in *Sartain’s Magazine*.⁶ On his last night on earth Poe was found in the street in Baltimore, in somebody else’s clothes, raving, calling out the name “Reynolds.” The latter is the name of the explorer whose project of an expedition to the Antarctic had given Poe the idea for his novella of Antarctic exploration, supernatural weirdness, and doom, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. The last line of this work portrays a maelstrom, a cataract, and a bottomless chasm out of which a giant shrouded human figure rises, white as snow—perhaps Poe experienced some similar, dire vision in his last moments, but the ending of *Pym* is more the synopsis of a cosmology than merely a shocking finale. (In the last months of his life Yeghishe Ch’arents’ was to write—nearly a century later—a poem he titled “Ulalume,” after Poe. It is translated in the Appendix here, and describes immersion in the vortices of an inner sea.)

The America of the first half of the 19th century was entranced by the metaphysical, by the mysteries and arts and languages of Ancient Egypt and the Near East—this was before the Civil War left in its wake the hard, cold, materialistic practicality that became the hallmark of the nation’s culture for some time to come.⁷ So the narrative of the antebellum *Pym* is replete with

⁴ This is the credal ballad of Humbert Humbert in Nabokov’s *Lolita*, with its kingdom by the sea for which lonely characters in other of his novels also long.

⁵ Wolf Mankowitz, *The Extraordinary Mr. Poe* (New York: Summit Books, 1978), pp. 215, 242.

⁶ See Plate 1.

⁷ Greil Marcus addresses the cultural issue generally in chapter four, “The Old, Weird America,” of his *Invisible Republic: Bob Dylan’s Basement Tapes* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1997); Louis Menand’s *The Metaphysical Club: A Story of Ideas in America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001) stresses the wartime divide; and John T. Irwin, *American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance* (New

relics of the Ancient Near East: the explorers discover in the Antarctic the Hebrew word *tsalmawet* “valley of death” of the 23rd Psalm inscribed in Ethiopic letters; and the birds of the southern wastes cry *Tekeli-li!* recalling the cryptic Aramaic words of doom on the wall in the book of Daniel: *Mene mene tekel upharsin*, “You have been weighed and found wanting!” It is important here to note that Poe relies upon the cryptic aspect of these words to bear his message, not their lexical, formal meaning: that is, what matters is their *sound*. The idea that a terrible whirlpool at the end of the earth plunges into a subterranean Otherworld inhabited by superior and not necessarily friendly beings has been the stuff of fantastic, mystical theories for two centuries: Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s novel *The Coming Race* has these beings from below, with their ultimate weapon, a force called by the invented word *vril*, poised to emerge, invade, and subjugate the sunlit realms of this planet.⁸ Poe’s *Pym* has a precursor with a Near Eastern connection of direct interest to us: it follows closely Coleridge’s *Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, a long narrative poem about a doomed Antarctic expedition, in which the surviving sailor—accursed for his horrible, unmotivated murder of an albatross—is pursued by a spirit the poet imagined after reading the medieval account of the exorcism at Constantinople of an Armenian-speaking demon.⁹

Cultural contacts are not unidirectional arrows, and sometimes indeed circle back to their remote sources rather like whirlpools: so in 1857, an abridged Western Armenian version of *Pym*, based upon the French of Baudelaire, was published by the Vienna Mekhitarists. They labored for a sophisticated and eclectic readership interested in the Romantics and in tales of adventure and of moral edification. For the same year saw a translation into Armenian of George Gordon Lord Byron’s *The Prisoner of Chillon* by Movsēs Zohrapēan of Arc’ax at Shemakhi,¹⁰ and the last Classical Armenian edition, at Tiflis (then the cultural capital of the Eastern Armenians), of the

Haven: Yale University Press, 1980), addresses the specific feature of aegyptomania. This writer’s unpublished lecture series “The Near East in the Mind of America” (National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Belmont, MA, 2002) also explored the interests of such American Renaissance thinkers as Emerson and Thoreau in Armenia and Iran.

⁸ Jeffrey J. Kripal, *Mutants and Mystics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), pp. 34–36. Kripal points out that Herman Melville got from Poe’s account of a great white whale, Mocha Dick his idea for Moby Dick. That oceanic prose work, which in *Bend Sinister* Vladimir Nabokov insightfully calls a poem, is also replete with references to the ancient Near East.

⁹ See James R. Russell, “A Scholium on Coleridge and an Armenian Demon,” *JSAS* 10 (1998, 1999 [2000]), pp. 63–71.

¹⁰ H. [=Fr.] Ep’rem.V. Č’agrĭcean, trans., [no author], *Nandugedc’i Art’ur Kordon Bimin pataharnērē* (The incidents of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket) (Vienna: Mxit’areanc’ tparan, 1857): see the descriptions in Gevorg V. Abgaryan, ed., *Hay girk’ 1851–1900 t’vakannerin* (The Armenian Book in the Years 1851–1900). *Hay grk’i matenagitut’yun* (Bibliology of the Armenian Book) (Erevan: Girk’, 1999), pp. 44–45, nos. 555, 562.

nearly millennium-old miscellany “The History of the City of Bronze”, with its legend of a metropolis of death in the distant wastes inhabited by automata—a tale with a certain kinship to Coleridge and Poe, after all.¹¹ It was a moment in Armenian history of rapid innovation and progress, in the context of an ancient and unbroken cultural heritage—a point in its literature at which a modern adventure story could rub shoulders with an ancient travel narrative without the sense of dissonance or discontinuity.

Though Poe was slow to be appreciated in his native America, not least because his life and work both offended the standards of Victorian propriety, the French poet Charles Baudelaire recognized his genius and appreciated his unusual art instantly. And it was from the latter’s essay and translations into French that Western Armenian writers, many of them studying at European universities and settling in Constantinople, quickly learnt of the American visionary. English was not then the international language of culture and commerce that it has since become, and Poe’s readership, by virtue of his language, would then have been limited and provincial; so Baudelaire’s discovery was doubly fortunate. Pre-Revolutionary Eastern Armenians also studied in Europe and Russia, and read Poe in French or in the Russian translations of the Symbolist poet Konstantin Dmitrievich Bal’mont. The latter was born near Vladimir on 15 June 1867, fled Russia after the Revolution, and died in exile in Nazi-occupied Paris on 23 December 1942.¹² Poe’s bells, now *Kolokola*, were to clang and thunder in Russian music, too, long before Phil Ochs could ring them on the poet’s familiar soil. Sergei Vasilievich Rakhmaninov, who was born at Semyonovo, near Great Novgorod, on 1 April 1873, composed his choral symphony “The Bells” in 1913, using Bal’mont’s translation. He emigrated from Russia a few months after the October Revolution of 1917, composing very little thereafter. The symphony was published in 1920.¹³ Rakhmaninov, like Bal’mont, died in

¹¹ The tale seems to be based on the Mahayana Buddhist *Saddharmapundarikasutra* (“Lotus Sutra of the Good Law”), which may have originated in Iranian Central Asia. The tale was transmitted to Armenia and written down *ca.* AD 1000, with many subsequent revisions and recensions. The intermediary stages would have been Manichaean and Muslim. The Lotus Sutra seems to have been receptive to Western didactic story-telling, too; for it re-interprets the parable of the Prodigal Son of Christian scripture. See James R. Russell, “The Cross and the Lotus: The Armenian Mediaeval Miscellany *The City of Bronze*,” Soudavar Memorial Lecture, Univ. of London, 1 Feb. 2008, published in Vesta Curtis and Sarah Stewart, eds., *The Rise of Islam. The Idea of Iran*, vol. 4 (London: I.B. Tauris, 2009), pp. 71–81; and James R. Russell, “The Tale of the Bronze City in Armenian,” in Thomas Samuelian and Michael Stone, eds., *Medieval Armenian Culture*. University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 6 (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1984), pp. 250–261.

¹² See Joan Delaney Grossman, *Edgar Allan Poe in Russia: A Study in Legend and Literary Influence* (Würzburg: Jal Verlag, 1973); Russian trans. Maria A. Shereshevskaya, *Edgar Allan Po v Rossii* (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii Proekt, 1998).

¹³ The focus on bells themselves in the choral symphony was new; but the use of bells in Russian music was not. One recalls just two famous examples: the coronation scene in

exile, and only a year after the poet, on 28 March 1943 in California. Now let us look at the poem itself.

The Bells

Edgar Allan Poe

I

Hear the sledges with the bells-
Silver bells!
What a world of merriment their melody foretells!
How they tinkle, tinkle, tinkle,
In the icy air of night!
While the stars that oversprinkle
All the heavens, seem to twinkle
With a crystalline delight;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells-
From the jingling and the tinkling of the bells.

II

Hear the mellow wedding bells,
Golden bells!
What a world of happiness their harmony foretells!
Through the balmy air of night
How they ring out their delight!
From the molten-golden notes,
And in tune,
What a liquid ditty floats
To the turtle-dove that listens, while she gloats
On the moon!
Oh, from out the sounding cells,

Modest Musorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov*, and the *1812 Overture* of Pyotr Il'ich Tchaikovsky. There is a long and rich tradition of bell ringing in Russia: fine bells are cast at Novgorod, and legend has it that the faithful can hear the bells of sunken Kitezh ringing. There is in Armenia a similar legend about sunken Arčeš (present day Erciş) on the north shore of Lake Van; see James R. Russell, "The Shrine Beneath the Waves," *RES* 51 (Spring 2007), pp. 136-156; Russian trans. "Svyatilishche pod volnami," *Rossiia XXI* (2007.4), pp. 156-196.

What a gush of euphony voluminously wells!
 How it swells!
 How it dwells
 On the Future! how it tells
 Of the rapture that impels
 To the swinging and the ringing
 Of the bells, bells, bells,
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells,
 Bells, bells, bells-
 To the rhyming and the chiming of the bells!

III

Hear the loud alarum bells-
 Brazen bells!
 What a tale of terror, now, their turbulency tells!
 In the startled ear of night
 How they scream out their affright!
 Too much horrified to speak,
 They can only shriek, shriek,
 Out of tune,
 In a clamorous appealing to the mercy of the fire,
 In a mad expostulation with the deaf and frantic fire,
 Leaping higher, higher, higher,
 With a desperate desire,
 And a resolute endeavor,
 Now- now to sit or never,
 By the side of the pale-faced moon.
 Oh, the bells, bells, bells!
 What a tale their terror tells
 Of Despair!
 How they clang, and clash, and roar!
 What a horror they outpour
 On the bosom of the palpitating air!
 Yet the ear it fully knows,
 By the twanging,
 And the clanging,
 How the danger ebbs and flows:
 Yet the ear distinctly tells,
 In the jangling,
 And the wrangling,
 How the danger sinks and swells,
 By the sinking or the swelling in the anger of the bells-
 Of the bells-

Bells, bells, bells-
In the clamor and the clangor of the bells!

IV

Hear the tolling of the bells-
Iron Bells!
What a world of solemn thought their monody compels!
In the silence of the night,
How we shiver with affright
At the melancholy menace of their tone!
For every sound that floats
From the rust within their throats
Is a groan.
And the people- ah, the people-
They that dwell up in the steeple,
All Alone
And who, tolling, tolling, tolling,
In that muffled monotone,
Feel a glory in so rolling
On the human heart a stone-
They are neither man nor woman-
They are neither brute nor human-
They are Ghouls:
And their king it is who tolls;
And he rolls, rolls, rolls,
Rolls
A paean from the bells!
And his merry bosom swells
With the paean of the bells!
And he dances, and he yells;
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the paean of the bells-
Of the bells:
Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the throbbing of the bells-
Of the bells, bells, bells-
To the sobbing of the bells;
Keeping time, time, time,
As he knells, knells, knells,

In a happy Runic rhyme,
 To the rolling of the bells-
 Of the bells, bells, bells:
 To the tolling of the bells,
 Of the bells, bells, bells, bells-
 Bells, bells, bells-
 To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.

The structure of the poem is simple. There are four parts, with four kinds of bells: silver, gold, bronze, and iron. Somewhat differently arranged, these are the epochs of the world, an old Greek idea from an older Near Eastern one, a metaphor of time decaying from its pristine golden age to the harsh iron final epoch of blood and violence. So in a way the poem traces obliquely the history of the world, from Eden to Apocalypse. One expects an occult cosmology with ancient roots from Poe. But “The Bells” does not end in a maelstrom of disaster at all—and as we have seen, Poe is only too happy to have an iron age ring down the curtain. Instead, the poem rings, rolls, clangs, tinkles, in a luxury of repetitive alliterations, the pleasure of pure sound, and concludes with a *happy* Runic rhyme. I think this coda is meant, not thematically, but *musically*, as a recapitulation of the opening theme, and what we have just read or heard are the movements of a symphony. Now, music has often been called a language, but one in which one cannot make a statement susceptible to translation. Poe seems to have forced his language into the procrustean semantic limitations, then, of music—the poem does not actually say anything, by the standards of poetic speech. The translatable aspect of the poem really doesn’t matter, and can be reduced to this: the silver bells are happy, the golden ones are passionate, the bronze ones are frightened, and the iron ones are sad. Now these feelings are not *thoughts* for which words are needed, though we can of course verbalize them as we wish—they are primary, animal *emotions* that are pre-linguistic and can be physically expressed without benefit of language at all. Bells are used in fact to chime at weddings, to sound alarms, to toll at funerals: with their metallic tongues, they are the musical instruments that come most closely to making actual linguistic statements, albeit ones that, as I have suggested, we do not require language for. That is a very enticing idea all by itself, considering its implications for the signifier-signified problem. But it was particularly attractive to the Symbolists, an artistic movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They sought in words, music, and painting to explore just such regions of the senses where the semantic and the phonetic, the human and the natural worlds, elusively and ineluctably meet, in regions of colors in between those of the spectrum, at times in between night and day, in places hinted at, at the edge of one’s field of vision. So the tower of “The Bells” properly rose over the imaginal temple of Bal’mont and the other heirs of Baudelaire

2. THE ALARUM: SEVAG, TERYAN, AND CH'ARENTS'

Rupen Sevag (né Chilingirian)¹⁴ was born at Silivri near Constantinople in 1885; after graduating from the Berberian school in the capital he went to Lausanne to study medicine. Following the revolution of 1908 he and his friends founded the newspaper *Surhandak* ("The Courier"); he worked also for the newspaper *Azatomart* ("Freedom Struggle") of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, the *Dašnak'ut'iun*. This trajectory of remarkable social and geographical mobility is not unusual for talented Western Armenian artists and intellectuals in the decades before the Genocide. Sevag is a fine lyric poet, his Armenian limpid and flowing; his sentiments, gentle and noble. This poem, with an almost liturgical refrain recalling the Beatitudes, expresses a simple joy in the beauty of nature that one finds particularly in the lyrics of Sevag's contemporary, Misak' Medzarents' (1886-1908). And in two verses—lines 5-6—Sevag seems to have decided to evoke the evanescence of the ship on the sea by eschewing as best he could the hard and heavy affricates in which Armenian abounds, striving for a liquid vocalism marked by two hiatuses (marked in bold type): *G'anēana navan herraga,/ Lijan yeraz m'ē, ga u ch'āga*.

NIGHTFALL

Night has fallen, cloudless, infinite.
What subtle name to its ten thousand crystals
May I give this holy space of dream?
O! the beatitude of living.

The far-off ship into nonexistence recedes.
The lake is a dream, it is and it isn't.
And the watery whisper is its sole witness,
O! beatitude of whispering.

Above, a thousand stars, a thousand lights below:
Souls stirring half in shadow,
Rock and stream and plant converse:
O! beatitude of earthly things.

¹⁴ A note on transliteration: I have transliterated here Modern Western and Eastern Armenian here as their respective speakers pronounce those dialects, and have done so in both cases in a simplified form to enable readers who are not specialists in the language to have a sense of its sound—a paramount consideration with the kind of poetry considered here. So, for two different poets, one from Constantinople and the other from Erevan, sharing the same *nom de plume*, one writes Sevag (Western) and Sevak (Eastern). For Classical Armenian, and in the citation of bibliographic references, I have employed the standard Hübschmann-Meillet system of transcription.

And the chapel, limpid, rings,
Here below the hoary trees
In this sweetness' plenitude,
O! its petrified beatitude.¹⁵

Like many Armenian students abroad, he was lonely and lovelorn, and adopted a tragic, romantic persona, fancying himself in several poems a suffering knight:¹⁶

THE KNIGHT'S SONG

See! He has saddled his gray:
The golden saddle astride,
Proud and silent goes the knight.
But tell ye, Whither does he ride?

His proud mount like a young lass prances;
The dawn is a parliament of flowers.
Invisible, the choir of a thousand birds is chanting—
But say ye, Whither does the knight go?

¹⁵ The Western Armenian text, from Alek'sandr T'op'č'yan, ed., Ruben Sevak, *Erker* (Works) (Erevan: Sovetakan groh, 1985), p. 155:

KISHERN ICHAV

*Kishern ichav anamb, anhun,
Pyur pyureghe inch' nurp bahun,
Akh! abrelu yerchangut 'yun...*

*G'aneana navn herraga:
Lijn yeraz m'e, ga u ch'ga,
Churi shshunchn e log vega,
Shshnchelu yerchangut 'yun.*

*Vern hazar asdgh, varn hazar luy,
Gisasdverin mech hokehuyz
Ge khosagts'in k'ar, vedag, puys:
Akh! ireru yerchangut 'yun...*

*U ge tsayne madurnn hsdag:
Sa dzeruni dzarrerun dag,
Ays k'aghts'rut'yan mech povantag
K'aranalu yerchangut 'yun!...*

¹⁶ Arm. text in T'op'č'yan, *Erker*, p. 132.

Where are the handsome soldiers all?
 Does our awesome warrior ride to war?
 No. He is wounded to his very soul.
 Tell ye, Whither does the knight go?

Now he has gained the rocky crest.
 He shields his face with iron gauntlet:
 Impassioned down his horse is plunging.
 The noble knight is going to his death.

Very moving, with shades perhaps of Poe's "Eldorado." But Sevag, a handsome and pleasant man, did not have to pine very long. He was married to a beautiful young woman and gave up his narcissistic reveries. Events in the outer world, too, swept aside the romantic pose of self-pity. The Adana massacres of 1909, coming less than a year after the Ottoman revolution, shocked Armenians who had believed, perhaps naïvely, in the reformist promise of multicultural brotherhood. The grieving, angry poems of Sevag's *Karmir girk'ə* ("The Red Book") can be compared to Siamant'o's similarly-titled cycle *Karmir lurer barekamēs* ("Red News from My Friend");¹⁷ and his poem *Verjīn hayerə* ("The Last Armenians") of that year was darkly prophetic. It would seem others felt intimations of catastrophe, for in the Summer of 1913 the Eastern Armenian Symbolist poet Vahan Teryan (1885-1920) was to write, "Could I really be the last poet,/ Last singer of my land?/ Is it death, perhaps, or sleep/ That has encompassed you, shining Nairi?" (*Mit'e verjīn poētn em yes/ Verjīn yergich 'n im yerkrī:/ Mahn e ardyok', t'e ninjə k'ez/ Patel, paytsarr Nairi?*)¹⁸

After obtaining his medical degree, Sevag returned to Constantinople in May 1914 with his young German wife Helene (née Apell) and their son Levon. When war broke out in August of that year he was conscripted as a military doctor and served in the Ottoman army at Çanakkale (i.e., Gallipoli, site of the bloodiest battle of the war). On 24 April 1915 many of his friends were among the 250-odd Armenian leaders and intellectuals arrested in the capital, as the wheels of the Genocide began to turn. Sevag expected arrest daily, but perhaps his utility in the war effort was responsible for the delay. He was detained only on 22 June of that year and was deported to Çankiri, where several of his literary colleagues arrested earlier had been concentrated. There he continued to practice medicine, while his wife sought German diplomatic

¹⁷ Peter Balakian and Nevart Yaghlian, trs., *Bloody News from My Friend: Poems by Siamanto*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1996, with a superb introduction by the poet and scholar Prof. Peter Balakian, is the only volume in English that does justice to the poetry of this period of catastrophe.

¹⁸ Vach'e Partizuni, ed., Vahan Teryan, *Erkerižolovacu* (Collected Works) (Erevan: Haypethrat, 1960), vol. 1, p. 235. Nairi is here a poetic name for Armenia that Ch'arents' was to adopt; see below.

intervention for his release. In his last telegram he wrote to her that he was being sent to Ayaş together with the poet Daniel Varuzhan. It would seem that even after a short sojourn in his remote place of exile his diligence and kindness as a physician had won him the devotion of his many Muslim patients, one of whom warned him that a trap had been laid and he must convert to Islam and marry the man's daughter to escape death. Sevag brushed the warning aside, and told the good-hearted Turk that he was already a family man. Perhaps he was unable to comprehend how the government could want to kill a person not only harmless, but so obviously useful.

That same day the Armenian prisoners were taken away, and a Kurdish band led by the local operatives of the ruling Committee of Union and Progress party ambushed the deportees on the road: they tortured and mutilated them before killing them all. On 2 September the Turkish authorities, who had received official notification of Sevag's death on 30 August, requested that the Germans remove Helene to Germany. She refused to budge, but when on 11 September she learnt of his murder, she left with her family for Switzerland within hours. Turkey's wartime ally Germany rejected her further protests, abandoning the elaborate charade of treating the premeditated murder as a tragic incident of wartime chaos, and in the end she wrote this to the rulers of her native country: "If you love God, use every ounce of energy to confront the lying accusations being made [against the Armenians by the Turks]. Try to save whatever you can save by employing the most definite resolve. If you do not make use of every possibility in your power, the blood of innocent women, children, the sick and the elderly will ascend to the heavens and damn Germany." Helene then applied to the Armenian Bureau in Lausanne, requesting Armenian citizenship. She died at the end of 1967 without ever teaching her two children a single word of German. Levon passed away in 2005; Shamiram, who was born at Constantinople just before her father's arrest, was still alive in 2009 when the great scholar and historian Prof. Taner Akçam interviewed her.¹⁹

Sevag had written two poems about the massacres of Armenians in which he employed the image of bells. "Bells, bells!" (*Zankagner, zankagner!*) has been anthologized several times; but "The Alarm Bells" (*Ahazangerā*) was published posthumously in the journal *Šant'* (1918.2, p. 18), and was first anthologized only in 1985. Here are both poems.²⁰

¹⁹ See Taner Akçam, "The Chilingirian Murder: A Case Study from the 1915 Roundup of Armenian Intellectuals," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 25.1 (Spring 2011), pp. 127-143. I am indebted for this reference to Marc Mamigonian, Academic Director of NAASR, Belmont, MA.

²⁰ The Western Armenian text, T'op'č'yan, *Erker*, pp. 106-108:

ZANKAGNER, ZANKAGNER!

Zangakner, pari, pari zankagner!

BELLS, BELLS!

Bells, kind bells!

What thing has stopped your tolling tongues?

*Inch' pan gaset's'uts' tser kuzhgan lezun,
Khosk' yellel g'uze aryune vazun...
Ge lrrek', pari, pari zankagner?*

*Arteok' tser mist'ik' hakakn aruyre,
Ur geghev badets' aghot'k'i p'oshin,
Yev ur g'erazer khungi kolorshin,
Heghagardz ts'aven: anzor, ge lrre?*

*Voch'! Tser taravor hokin bghntsi
Vor shad, shad hajakh deser e Parin
Haght'evadz Ch'aren— ayzhm ir parparrin
U ir Asdudzuyn vra ge gasgadzi...*

*Art, ur ek' ch'k'nagh khosdumner khach'in,
Yeghpayrut'yan zur parparrner, ur ek'?
Gerag ge p'skhe hoghn amenurek'...
Kedern aryunov, tiagov g'urrch'in...*

*U g'iyna ayn vor ge dznge vakhov,
Zi t'urn aveli artar e Khach'en:
Zi gyank'n anonts' e miayn vor k'ach en:
Anonts' vor g'abrin urishin mahov.*

*Vorovhedeu terr herru e orn ayn,
Yerp kayln u karnug sirov aradzin...
T'e abril g'uze karre noradzin:
Bedk' e agrrav sre lrrelyayn.*

*Lurr ek', zankagner, Asdvadzn e merrer.
Kuyzh dvek' vaghvan: ir hasge merrav.
Kuyzh dvek' Hayun: zi azke merrav.
Zankagner, dzerug, pari zankagner...*

*Inch'bes g'uzei tserin baranin
Gakhvil u ts'nts'el yergat' pazugov.
Anonk' vor ingan pyurov, k'ove k'ov,
Tser ghoghanchin hed, lalu bedk' unin...*

*Hokiis hazar, khul ghoghanchnerov
Korrats'ek', zanker, u gadaghoren
Kahavizhets'ek' tser yergat' t'arren,
Urge miayn lal kids'ak' tarerov...*

O, ghoghanchets'ek', Asdvadzn e merrer!..

The blood, flowing, wants to cry out!
Why, good bells, are you still?

Could your mystic breath exhaled by bronze
Encrusted with the dust of prayer
Where the smoke of incense slept,
Struck strengthless by this sudden pain be stilled?

No! Your age-old, bronze-forged soul
That again and again has beheld Good
By Evil vanquished, now doubts
Its voice, and doubts its God as well.

Where are you then, sweet promises of the Cross?
Where have you gone, O vain fraternal talk?
Everywhere the earth is vomiting blood.
The rivers are swollen with corpses and gore...

And whoever bends his knee in fear, but falls:
For the drawn sword is truer than the Cross,
Since life is for the brave alone,
For those who live by another's death.

For the day is yet far off
When wolf and lamb together graze in love.
If the newborn lamb wishes to survive
He must sharpen in secret his fangs.

You are silent, O bells: God is dead.
Toll for the morrow: its harvest is dead.
Toll for the Armenian: his nation is dead.
Bells, aged, kind bells...

How I wanted from your rope
To hang and shake you with an iron arm:
The fallen tens of thousands, row on row,
Need your tolling for their howl.

My soul's thousand hollow peals
Thunder forth, O bells, and savage

Plunge down from your nest of iron
Where for ages you know only how to sob,
And let your clangor well the death of God.

Lausanne, 2 June 1909.

THE ALARM BELLS

Night of blood, the scenes and recollections!...
Again this night, this night of torments,
Bursting from within my sick soul's walls,
Clangs the tolling bell's dark song.

They are the bells of alarm, whose wild
And awful black and brazen sobs
Of catastrophe and of death's dire tidings
Thunder anew within my fevered skull.

Ringling, lamentation, bitter cries,
Shrieks and curses, and a mad exulting,
And from the midst of the demented groaning
Sounds the depthless terror's bell.

From the reddened plains, red with corpses strewn,
Can you not tell— the deceitful
Packs of dogs all sated on our flesh, their
Horrid snarling as night falls?

Can you not see, O so very far away,
On the horizon all scarlet in the conflagration
The lordly, godly, dominating
Domes that rise, decreeing death?

My eyes again see only red:
The last deep sighs heaved from breasts,
Heaped together, the dead and the dying,
And the cawing of the teeming pitch-black crows.

They ring out the alarm: in gloom, I listen.
They ring out the alarm whose unspeakable tale is without an end.
And out of my sickened soul's walls, penned
This night, they swell and burst and ring again.²¹

²¹ Western Armenian text in T'op'č'yan 1985, pp. 169-170:

In the first poem, Sevag's bells toll for the victims of a real, not an imagined, apocalypse, and his language is starkly descriptive rather than musical. Yet his imagery and message are phantasmagoric, a blasphemous inversion of the Christian past. It is not the meek, but the violent, that are to inherit the earth. For the lion to lay down with the lamb, the latter must grow fangs. The bell's tongue is like a gallows where the poet wants to hang and swing, and the last peal will be the sound of the bell falling from its collapsing tower. In the second poem, the bells toll maddeningly within the poet's fevered brain, the sound itself summoning a strongly chromatic landscape of nightmare: the bells drive the poet insane. The use of tolling bells to symbolize historical disaster was not unique to Armenian poetry in the period. The modern Hebrew poet Shaul Tchernichovsky (1875-1943), a contemporary

AHAZANKERE

*Aryuni kidzer, badgerner, husher!...
Noren ays kisher,— danjank'i kisher—
Hivant hokiis baderun mechen
Ghoghanchi khavar yerker ge hnch'en.*

*Ahazankern en, ur irents' vayri
U ahegh u mut' lalyunn aruyri
Vor egherrnoren, mahakuzhoren,
Dentod kangis dag ge korran noren.*

*Ghoghanche... Voghpi, aghekhharsh lalu,
Jich'i, anedzk'i,— vayrak alelu—
U harrach'neru mechen khelahegh
Sarsap'i anhun ghoghanchn e ahegh.*

*Tiadzadzg garmir, garmir tashderen,
Tuk' ch'ek' imanar davajanoren
Mezmov hap'rats'adz shan vohmagneru
Verchaluyisin tem vornume ahargu...*

*U ch'ek' denser, akh! herrve herru
Hrtehov garmir horizonneru
Vera dirapar, u asdvadzapar
Ishkhogh kmpet'nere mahaparrap?*

*Garmir ge desnen ach'k'ers noren...
Verchin harrach'ner gurdzk'eru khoren,
Merrel, hokevark', guyd guyd, k'ov k'ovi
Grrrrrats'ogh sev khumper akrravi...*

*Ahazankern en, g'ungntrem drdum,
Ahazankere, anpav, anbadum,
Vor hivant hokvuys baderun mechen
Noren ays kisher g'urrin, ge hnch'en...*

of Sevag and native of the Russian Empire, wrote a similar poem, though from a different point of view. In Tsarist Russia, church bells summoned mobs to pogroms against the Jewish communities at Easter time, so in his *Ha-pa'amonim (balada)* ("The Bells (a ballad)),²² *El ra'am pa'amonim—qol gore le-dam*, "To the thunder of bells a voice calls out for blood," *Bom-bom! Bom-bom! Bom-bom!* Ukrainian *haidamaks*—willing brigands enlisted by the authorities like the marauding Kurds who terrorized Armenians—storm the town, rape, plunder, defile the synagogue, and then "over it they built a tower white and tall" (*u-migdal lo banu lavan va-ram*) with a cluster of bells. But one of the *Lamed-vavnikim*, the Thirty-six just men for whose sake God allows the wicked world to go on, chants *Kaddish*, the prayer for the dead, for the victims of the pogrom. And Amen, the bells ring in response. The priest sprinkles holy water to set the enchanted bells aright and stop their anomalous, autonomous ringing, but to no avail. For at the vigil for the Temple in the middle of every night, *Shuv ne'enakh ha-pa'amon ba-migdal ha-ram/ Ha-metsilot ne'enakhot gam hen/ Be-tsiltul-yegonim, be-tsiltul shel khen, Amen, amen, ve-amen!* "Again in the tall tower sighs the bell/ And with him the chimes sigh as well,/ And tolling sorrows, ringing grace again:/ Amen, Amen, Amen!" Like the Armenian writing in the wake of the Adana massacre, the Hebrew poet reacting to the pogroms in Kishinev, Kiev, and elsewhere in 1903-1905 turns Poe's almost abstract creation into a lament for a real and immediate disaster. Sevag inverts the symbolism of the church bell in protest against the silence of God; through his invention of a mystical tale in balladic form, Tchernichovsky inverts the anti-Semitic overtones of Russian church bells, redeeming and appropriating them to the *Tiqqun khatsot*, the midnight vigil. It is an unwished-for irony that for both peoples these horrors, experienced only on the eve of World War I, were but the prelude to the greater catastrophes of a dark century.

In the wake of the Armenian Genocide a republic was forged in the sliver of the country Russian rule had protected from the slaughter. In 1921, after a civil war, Armenia became a Communist republic that was to share all the triumphs and disasters of the newly born Soviet Union. The bard of this new era was Yeghishe Ch'arents', born Soghomonyan at Kars, Western Armenia, in 1897. Ch'arents' was fascinated by Poe and by the irrational, the power of Eros: he read Freud, Baudelaire, Verlaine, Rimbaud. He entitled a late poem *Ulyalum*, the Russian form of the name of Poe's poem "Ulalume"—he did not know English, so we may be certain he read Poe's poems, including "The Bells," in Bal'mont's Russian translation. (See Appendix) In recent years, as the poet's hidden private papers have been discovered, deciphered, and published, we have learnt more and more of the creative inner life of a man who had outwardly come to personify the new Communist culture of Armenia

²² Text and translation in Ruth Finer Mintz, ed. and tr., *Modern Hebrew Poetry: A Bilingual Anthology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 66-71.

but who simultaneously lived within the spiritual heritage of St. Gregory of Narek and the artistic world of the Eastern and Western Armenian Symbolists Vahan Teryan and Misak' Medzarents'. Though as a spokesman for the new, proletarian Armenia he derided the bourgeois ARF and its nationalism,²³ he also loved Varuzhan, Siamant'o, and Sevag. Through the 1930s the Stalinist dictatorship tightened its hold on the country, and Ch'arents', who had been director of the Transcaucasian Publishing House, a leading light of the new Union of Soviet Writers, chair of various Armenian and All-Union publication committees, a man whose portrait followed directly those of Lenin, Stalin, and Khanjyan (the Armenian Party Secretary) in Soviet Armenia's 1932 Yearbook, was gradually ostracized from the literary and cultural life of the nation. He wrote many of his last works alone, in a kind of delirium or trance-like state induced partly by morphine, partly by loneliness and terror. He was arrested in the great purge and murdered in Erevan in November 1937.

Ch'arents'' immediate literary precursor was Vahan Teryan; and from the latter's poetic cycle *Erkir Nairi* (The Land of Nairi), begun in 1913 and continued over ten years, he inherited the idea of calling his country by its ancient Urartean name to evoke a kind of magical-realist or archetypal, Platonic Armenia that exists through the imagination of the poet, truer than visible fact, and manifesting itself in the sublunar world through the medium of creative, literary art. By the 30s the sense of a divergence between the actuality of the country and Ch'arents'' ideal was intensified: there was the everyday Armenia of crude and petty cruelty and privation, of Stalinist cultural bloodhounds; yet hovering above it is another country, the ideal of which the manifestation of the late 1930s is but one fleeting and flawed, wounded expression. Bells ring through Teryan's cycle, several of his poems can be considered here, for their own kinship with Sevag and with ancient streams of Armenian poetry and for their crucial influence of Ch'arents'' development.

You are not proud, my fatherland:
 You are sad, and wise.
 A brand of fire consumes you,
 A promise ancient and entrancing.

²³ In the early period of Soviet history, before Stalin imposed a cultural and sexual Puritanism to buttress his dictatorial rule, free love and sexual promiscuity were part of the revolutionary ethos. The Tiflis intellectual Nikol Aghbalean, minister of culture of the first Armenian republic, recognized and proclaimed the talent of the young Ch'arents' and arranged housing and a sinecure for the poet in those very lean times. After the Communist takeover Aghbalean fled to exile in Iran, and Ch'arents' sent him in 1923 several booklets of his latest verses, writing several lines of affection and gratitude in dedication. Aghbalean was outraged by what he considered Ch'arents'' sexual immodesty and vulgarity, and sent back a crudely parodic poem: see his embittered memoir "*Etišē Ć'arenc'n u es*" (Yeghishe Ch'arents' and I), in Nikol Aghbalean, *Grakan-k'nnadatan erker* (Literary and Critical Works) (Beirut: Hamazgayin, 1959), pp. 329-343.

Could it be that for that very sorrow
 I do not love you thus tenderly,
 And submit, stubborn like you,
 My fatherland, bitter and sweet.
 I was never dazzled by your laughing glory
 With its ancient, bygone shine.
 I loved you, your soul free of vengeance,
 Your soft and breaking songs,
 Your poverty so dark and still,
 Your prayers bitter and full of pain,
 The sad striking of your bells,
 And the faint lights of your monastic cells.
 (1915)²⁴

In poem three of Teryan's Nairi cycle, *Ijnum e gishern angut' u mt'in* (Relentless and dark descends the night), 1917, the poet echoes Sevag's alarms, but in his confidence also echoes the first verse, *Erknēr erkin, erknēr erkir*, "Labored heaven, labored earth", of the ancient hymn of the birth of Vahagn, the dragon-slaying storm god (about whom Ch'arents' wrote a long *poema*; and whom Narekats'i echoes in his meditation on the semandron, as

²⁴ The Eastern Armenian text, from Partizuni, *Erkeri žolovacu*, vol. 1, p. 229:

*Du hpart ch'es, im hayrenik',
 Trtum es du u imastun:
 Kizum e k'ez mi hur knik',
 Mi hemayogh u hin khostum.
 Yev mit'e ayd vshtid hamar
 Ch'em sirum k'ez ayspes k'nk'ush
 Yev khonarhvum k'ez pes hamarr,
 O, hayrenik' darn u amush...
 Ch'eshlats'a khndun p'arrk'id
 Ants'yal u hin p'aylov yerbek':
 Sirets'i k'ez, ank'en hogid,
 Yev yergered meghm u bekbek,
 Kheghchut'yuned khavar u lurr,
 Aghot'k'nered darn u ts'avot,
 Zangaknerid zarke tekhur,
 Yev khugherid huysern aghot...*

The *hin khostum*, "ancient promise" echoes in Ch'arents'' poem *Mahvan tesil* ("Vision of death") of 1920, line 6 where the scaffold erected for a public execution is *mi hin khostum*, *vor ankatar, drzhats t'oghi* "an ancient promise abandoned unfulfilled and betrayed," Yeghishe Ch'arents', *Erkeri žolovacu* (Collected Works) (Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1962), vol. 1, p. 321. The famous twentieth and concluding poem, *Yes im amush Hayastani...* ("I love my sweet Armenia's...") of Ch'arents'' *Talaran* ("Canticle") of 1920-1921 (Ch'arents', *Erkeri žolovacu*, vol. 1, pp. 246-247), is the true heir of this poem, though, with its evocations of Nairian girls, huts lost in darkness, and the nation's millennial wounds.

we shall see presently): “Tireless pilgrim, heir to the ages,/ A Nairian sad, I march on without haste./ Let the ill-omened night cheat with threats of alarm:/ The darker the gloom, the firmer is my tread./ With faith undimmed, labor, O my land! (*yerknir im erkir*) / Sacred is your way; and lofty, your crown...”²⁵ In the last year of his life, 1923, in the later poems of the cycle, Teryan writes, “The thin tolling of the bell/ Bemoans the pains of my land” (*Barak zangaki zarke/ Lalis e yerkris ts’averē*) and “And those bells sobbing/ In my dying land—/ Do they not excite your soul/ In infinite sorrow?” (*U zangern ayn lalagin/ Merrnogh im yerkrum/ Ch ‘en huzelu k’o hogin/ Tkhrut ‘yamb anhun*). The echoes of Teryan carry far. As we shall see presently, Paruyr Sevak was to write of the Genocide, “However many words, every one a groan,/ No matter what the song it’s only crying;” and it would seem he echoes here Teryan’s lines in the Nairi cycle, “Every thought now is but a wound;/ Every look, a sharpened sword./ The bloodied corpses are mute and bare,/ Staring strengthless at heaven in vain”.²⁶

Ch’arents’, steeped in Teryan, had read Sevak as well, and it would seem he turns to Sevak’s iteration of “The Bells”, in his *Fatherland Requiem* of 1936, a work written, as Russians said in the Soviet era, “for the desk drawer”:²⁷

²⁵ Partizuni, *Erkeri žolovacu*, vol. 1, p. 227: *Ukhtavor andul, dareri zharrang,/ Mi hek’ nairts’i gnum em ankang:/ T’ogh guzhkan gishern ahasast dave—/ Vork’an mut’e sev, ayk’an yes hamarr./ Yerknir im erkir havatov anmar,/ Surb e k’o ughin yev psaked veh...*

²⁶ Ibid., p. 228: *Amen mi mitk’ hima mi verk’/ Amen hayats’k’ hatu mi sur,/ Arnot diern en hamr u merk/ Nayum erkink’ anzor u zur.*

²⁷ Yeghishe Ch’arents’, *Rek’viem hayrenakan* (Fatherland Requiem), 1936, in Anahit Ch’arents’, ed., *Antip ev č’havak’vac erker* (Unpublished and uncollected works) (Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1983), pp. 116-122. Here is the transliterated text, p. 119, line 101f.:

*Zhangotvats mi zangi
Vor ch’uni huys andam, derr
Nor arevi yev kyank’i
Yev ghoghanji kensaber.*

*Akh, es gitem, vor mi mets
Zang e vogin nayiryan
Isk menk’— miayn lezuner,
Menk’ nra dzaynn enk’ miayn—
Yev mezanits’ depi mer
Zhoghovrdi sirte kheghch
Dzgvats en bark paranner...*

*O! kheghch mardik, ayd duk’,
Ayd duk’ ek’, vor, o, ard
Lok ach’k’erd ek’ t’art’um
Kangnats zangi tak ayd,—*

... Of a rusted bell
That has not even the hope anymore
Of new sun and of life,
Of a pealing, bringing life.

Ah, I know a great
Bell is the soul of Nairi
And we are but tongues,
We are but its voice—
And from us towards our
People's poor heart
Strain burning ropes
[...]

O, poor men! It is you,
It is you, who, Oh! now
But blink your eyes
Standing below that bell,
Beneath the bell tower
Of a monastery a thousand years old.
You stand full of lamentation,
Like passionless dogs,

Zangakatan takin
Hazaramya vank'i—
Kangnel ek' duk' voghbagin,
Vorpes shner ankirk',—

Zangakatan nerk'o
T'ok ek' p'ntrum t'ak'un,
Vor vochragsorts dzerrk'ov,—
K'ashek' zangern hognats
Hazaramya zangi
Yev vayr t'ap'ek'...
[...] angin.

Vor mi himar hnch'yun
Zrahat'ap' arats,—
Voghj ashkharhi ayd ch'un
Dardznek' dasht varats,
Vor ch'mna el veh
Voch' mi zangakatun
[...]
[...]
Bayts' duk', bayts' duk', vor derr
Voch' mi ban chek' shinel—
Inch' ek' uzum mer veh
Tarrapank'its', shner?..

Below the bell tower;
 You seek the hidden cord,
 So that with criminal hands
 You may drag the tired bell
 A thousand years old
 And pull it down...
 [...] priceless.

So that a stupid sound,
 Shorn of its armor,
 The whole world's road
 You make a plain plowed
 That there no longer remain
 Not one bell tower proud,
 [...]
 [...]
 But you, but you who still
 Have never built any thing,
 What do you want of our
 High sufferings, you dogs?...

Note in the poem the connecting epithet *hazaramya* “millennial” used of both *vank* “monastery” and *zang* “bell,” themselves a rhyming pair, as well as the play on *zhang* “rust” and *zang* “bell.” We have the text of this complex poem only in fragments owing to the deterioration of the manuscript in its place of hiding, and certainly not in its complete form, since the manuscripts are drafts. Ch’arents’ has taken, I think, Sevag’s image of a man grabbing at the tongue of a bell and hanging from it. But here the bell is not the voice of the mute corpses of the victims of massacre alone. In its monastery tower it has grown to cosmic dimensions, becoming the voice of the people of Nairi. The draft is fevered, violent—let us recall that as his life was disintegrating Ch’arents’ was drinking heavily, was addicted to morphine, and had already before turning forty witnessed more of the dark side of history than we might bear in a full lifetime. And he read Poe and died at the same age as the American poet. The destroyers of Armenian culture, soulless levelers, in the poem are trying to pull down the bell, the bell to whose invisible ropes all Nairians are tied. We have observed that bells can sing out emotion in a way that nearly breaks down the barriers between music and semantics; and the poet in turn would like to be able to sing nature, to sing beauty, to sing truth in a perfect and unmediated way. Hence Pushkin’s poem, “Echo,” in which the poet alone is the equal of pure, reverberated sound. Hence “The Bells,” hence too Ch’arents’ great despairing lyric of 18 May 1934.²⁸

²⁸ The Eastern Armenian text from Ch’arents’, *Antip ev č’havak’vac erker*, p. 81:

THE LANGUAGE OF EMOTION

The wind is chanting its plowman's song, *Horovel, horovel, ho!*
 The rain enunciates the words of cold.
 My emotion-laden tongue,
 Why are you so silent now?

Whatever it is you wish to say,
 See! With greater power than you can command,
 Outdoors by the blossoming flower is said,
 And by the crystal of the water.

And in a young girl's eyes
 When at a violet raptly she gazes,
 What is there left at all
 In a poem by Teryan that amazes?

The water runs over the brim in its passion;
 The fire is a grief stained madder.
 Poet, to you will be given never
 This language of emotion.

HUZUMNERI LEZUN

*Hovn— horovel e asum,
 Andzreve— ts'urt barrer:—
 Huzumnavor im lezu
 Inch'u es lrrel?*

*Ayn, vor asel es uzum—
 Tes! k'ezanits' zoregh—
 Drsum tsaghikn e asum,
 Yev jure byuregh.*

*Yev aghjeka ach 'k'erits'
 Yerb manishkn e nayum,—
 El Teryani ergeri
 Inch'n e hmayum?...*

*Jure— hordor e huzum,
 Hure— mormok' karmir.
 Huzumnavor ays lezun
 Poet, k'ez ch'i trvi.*

3. THE BELLS OF REBIRTH: PARUYR SEVAK.

When Ch'arents' was still a young man, a boy named Paruyr Ghazaryan was born 26 January 1924, in the obscure village of Chamakhchi, Soviet Armenia—the village now bears the name Zangakatun, “Bell Tower,” after his most famous work. The young Paruyr studied at Erevan and Moscow and wrote a dissertation that was published as a monograph on the work of the 18th-century bard Sayat'-Nova. He was co-editor of the two-volume critical edition of the complete works of the first modern Western Armenian poet, Bedros Tourian. Ch'arents' had envisioned great editions of the Western Armenian poets, and had edited a few collections; this poet continued that great work. Paruyr wrote numerous lyrics and such Biblically-inspired long cycles as “Let there be light” and “Song of Songs”—and, when it was suggested by an elder writer that he adopt a *nom de plume*, chose the pen name Sevak in memory of Rupen Sevak.

In 1959, Paruyr Sevak published a poetic epic on the life of the composer Komitas *vardapet*. Komitas was a village child, educated as a priest, who became an ethnographer and ethnomusicologist, undoubtedly the most important in Armenian history. He witnessed the Genocide, went raving mad and ceased to work, died years later in exile, and was re-interred in Armenia. Sevak called his epic *Anl'reli zangakatun* (The unsilenceable bell tower), an obvious reference and response to Rupen Sevak's poem discussed above. Not only is the bell not silenced, it rings unceasingly from a tower that shall stand forever; and each section is called, not a chapter, but a *lōlanj*, a peal of bells. The book was printed in a fine edition illustrated by the graphic artist Grigor Khanjyan (1926-2000), at a critical moment, the year 1966—that is, right after the popular demonstrations in Erevan marking the 50th anniversary of the Genocide in 1965, and just before the Soviet authorities opened in 1967 the Genocide memorial that stands at Tsitsernakaberd in Erevan. The book is a *tour de force* of eloquent, alliterative style, strongly declamatory in tone, carrying the reader in its verbal flood tide through the entire history of Armenian letters and music and historical catastrophe and rebirth. The lexicon of the poet is daunting and polyphonic, utilizing every register of Armenian speech, from phrases in fifth-century Classical *grabar* culled from the works of the Golden Age to the modern dialect of the folk songs Komitas had transcribed. In this way Sevak endows the poem with the oceanic quality of Whitman and Melville: the many voices of his sea clash, and encounter each other, in symphony and in dissonance, within the single flood of historical time. It is as though a collective, millennial bell were ringing, each peal rung by a witness of a different age, sounding all the music of Armenia's history.

THE PEAL OF HOLOCAUST

To stop? Why?
 It was spring. Summer was almost come
 And heaven's firmament collapsed.
 Snow drifted over our bare heads,
 Snow like burning fire fell.
 "It is spring, down comes the snow"
 Our rivers shuddered,
 Like an opened vein were flowing:
 "Blood has turned to water"
 The valleys became graves;
 Tombs, the abysses
 "The water has swept our home away"
 Every rock became a silent monument;
 Every house, a furnace burning.
 "We have become birds without a nest"
 However many words, every one a groan,
 No matter what the song it's only crying,
 "Alas, alas, and woe!"
 Against the fire, saber, sword,
 Only the plow, the spade, the hoe,
 "O child without a home"
 Our land, our native soil,
 Our country is desolation
 "Put on black, black over my blackened heart"
 A noble race of antique times
 Was done to death, did not merely die,
 "It is spring, down comes the snow..."²⁹

²⁹ Paruyr Sevak, *Anġeli zangakatun* (The unsilenceable bell tower) (Erevan: Hayastan, 1966), pp. 206-207. The text in transliterated Eastern Armenian:

GHOGHANJ YEGHERNAKAN

Khangarel? Inch 'i hamar?
Garun er. Ch'ekats amarr
P'ul yekav yerknakamar,
Dzyun maghets 'mer bats' glkhin,
Dzyun maghets 'kraki pes...
Garun a, dzun a arel...
Gerere mer yererman
Hosets 'in yeraki bes
Arune jur a darrel...
Dzorere shirim dardzan,
Vihere, gerezmanots ':

There is only one other book-length poem in modern Armenian literature comparable in both scope and artistic design to Sevak's: Ch'arents' *Girk' čanaparhi* ("The Book of the Way"), published in 1933 and designed and illustrated by Hakob Kojoyan. Ch'arents' volume shapes a new proletarian and revolutionary narrative that transforms the entire sweep of Armenian history, the titanic and sovereign voice of the transcendent narrator co-opting to the purpose the native Epic of Sasun, the *Divine Comedy* of Dante, the life of the first Armenian novelist Khach'atur Abovyan, and the episodes of the civil wars that followed the 1917 Revolution. It spans East and West, and includes responses to Goethe and Heine, encounters with Khayyam, Ferdosi, and Pushkin, short lyrics modeled on medieval wisdom poetry, and paeans to wine, women, and song. The poem *Patgam* ("Message"), in the sense of a prophetic pronouncement) in the *Book of the Way* contains a subversive, patriotic acrostic: "O Armenian nation, your sole salvation is in your united strength!" The book was consigned to the flames soon after publication.

Kojoyan's intricate woodcuts, executed with the perfection of style of such great Russian contemporaries and associates as Favorsky—the graphic designer whose artistry Mandelstam praises in his verses—include full-page compositions and rubrics at the incipit of each section, like Gospel manuscripts, and the larger illustrations are organized in registers like the narrative bas-reliefs of the Ancient Near East. But again, these record the millennial struggles of the workers and peasants, not the sanguinary triumphs of absolute monarchs. Communism was to be the end of history; so Ch'arents' reclaimed both the genres of literature and of scriptural illumination for his retrospective and apocalypse. The work of the poet Sevak and the artist Khanjyan redeems the aspects of tradition that Socialism in the impetuous pride of its youth had derided. It begins to span the rift between the reborn Soviet Armenia and the vast devastation of Western Armenia, and addresses the tasks of mourning and of anger. Soviet Armenian historiography

Jure mer tunn a tarel...
Amen k'ar lurr mahardzan,
Amen tun varrman hnots',
Bnaver havk' enk' darrel...
Inch 'k'an barr voghje mrmunj.
Inch 'k'an yerg voghje lalov:
Zulum er, zulum, lao!
T'ri dem, sri, hri
Lok mangagh, lok bah u mach:
Tnaver-bnaver lach!...
Mer hoghe, mer hayrenin,
Mer yerkirn amayets 'av:
Sev hagir, sevsirt mare...
Hinavurts' tohmik mi azg
Ch'merrav, ayl... mahats 'av:
Garun a, dzun a arel...

had shied away hitherto from facing the full enormity of the Genocide, partly in order not to inflame anti-Turkish feeling (though even the most ardent Communists must have regarded this consideration as a formality or fantasy), and partly in order not to cast the shadow of powerlessness and victimhood over the sunlit image of the confident, muscular new Armenian—the industrial worker and collective farmer and soldier. We can observe a similar process in Israel, where the *chalutz*, or pioneer generation sometimes caricatured the powerless Holocaust victim as *sabon*, “soap.” (The Nazis used the fat of dead Jews to make soap.) Only after the survivor states Armenia and Israel were both secure and mature were they able to integrate the past and present, in historical narrative and in art.

One way Soviet Armenia accomplished this integration, recognizing the trauma and loss of the past while celebrating the strength and vitality of the present, was the erection in 1968 of a monument on the 50th anniversary of the battle of Sardarapat, where the army of the Republic of Armenia had repulsed a Turkish invasion whose purpose was to complete the genocide begun in the west by exterminating the Armenians of the Transcaucasus as well. Since the Catholicos had ordered that every church bells ring its bells to summon General Andranik’s citizen-army to the front, the monumental complex features a giant bell tower at the end of a long avenue lined with statues of standing eagles. The tower is flanked by recumbent winged bulls, with walls of narrative bas-reliefs to the side telling the story of the people’s war.³⁰ They embody much the same iconographic plan, indeed, as the horizontal narrative panels of Kojoyan’s designs for the *Book of the Way* of Ch’arents’. Paruyr Sevak wrote, turning the bells of Sardarapat into words even as Poe had done, but at the end of a very different historical journey:

SARDARAPAT

When no escape or remedy remains,
Madmen then will find a way.
Thus rose and dawned and blazed the sun
Of the great fight at Sardarapat we won:

Bells, ring out!
Summon the sacred heroes with your shout!
From Sardarapat, from this hallowed wall,
O ye generations yet to come—
Know yourselves all.

³⁰ Both the Genocide and Sardarapat memorial complexes, including the wall of bas reliefs, are illustrated in the trilingual album *K’ari simfonia* (A Symphony in Stone) (Moscow: Progress, 1974), pp. 142-149.

On the plain of Avarayr we strove,³¹
 And here a moment of repose
 We took, to render up our souls
 At the battlements of Sardarapat below.

But we have not fallen. Here we stand,
 We will return and have not lain to rest.
 When the bells ring out to sound the alarm,
 That we requite our soul's debt yet again.³²

Paruyr Sevak outlived his namesake by a little over a decade; his great precursor Ch'arents', by a few years: Sevak and his wife were killed in a car crash in Armenia on 18 June 1971. Their children survived. The accident is generally believed to have been planned by the Soviet secret police, the KGB. The song composed almost instantly to the words of "Sardarapat" had become, like Sevak's poem "Erevan-Erebuni," which commemorates the 2750th anniversary of the founding of the city, an unofficial anthem. The bells

³¹ The Armenian Christian armies under the command of St. Vardan Mamikonean faced the forces of the Sasanian king Yazdagird II in 451, resisting Iran's demand that the nation forsake its faith and return to Zoroastrianism. Among the major works of the artist Grigor Khanjyan is a vast tapestry, *Vardananc'*, 1985, which hangs now in the Veharan, the residence at Echmiadzin of the Catholicos. It portrays the battle, with various great men of Armenian history among the luminous warriors pressed from every side by the dark hordes. Among the heroes, destined for martyrdom, are Komitas, Ch'arents', and Sevak. See Nona Step'anyan, ed., *Grigor Xancyan* (Erevan: Graber, 2007).

³² The Armenian text:

Sardarapat

Yerb ch'i mnum yelk' u char
Khent'er en gtnum hnar.
Ayspes tsagets', aregakets'
Sardarapati marte mets.

Zanger, ghoghanjek '!
Srbazan k'ajerin kanch'ek'
Ays ardar patits'.
Serundner duk' dzez chanach'ek'
Sardarapatiits'.

Avarayrits' jank' arrank'
Aystegh mi pah kang arrank',
Vor shunch' arrats shunch'ernis tank'
Sardarapati patin tak.

Bayts' menk' ch'enkank', menk' misht kank',
Menk' ch'hangank', derr ke gank':
Yerb tan zange, ahazange,
Vor mer hogu partk'e tank'.

of Sardarapat have become Armenia's Liberty Bell, their message a very contemporary one, of freedom and defiance.

On the other side of the Atlantic, in Poe's homeland, other battles for freedom—for Blacks, for women, for gays—were also being fought. A bard in the line of Poe and Whitman and Woody Guthrie, a Jewish poet and songwriter from Minnesota named Bob Zimmerman had taken the pen name Dylan after the Welsh poet, and written this ballad:

THE CHIMES OF FREEDOM

Far between sundown's finish an' midnight's broken toll / We ducked inside the doorway, thunder crashing. / As majestic bells of bolts struck shadows in the sounds, / Seeming to be the chimes of freedom flashing. / Flashing for the warriors whose strength is not to fight, / Flashing for the refugees on the unarmed road of flight / An' for each an' ev'ry underdog soldier in the night / An' we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing. / In the city's melted furnace, unexpectedly we watched / With faces hidden as the walls were tightening / As the echo of the wedding bells before the blowin' rain / Dissolved into the bells of the lightning / Tolling for the rebel, tolling for the rake / Tolling for the luckless, the abandoned an' forsaken / Tolling for the outcast, burnin' constantly at stake / An' we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing. / Through the mad mystic hammering of the wild ripping hail / The sky cracked its poems in naked wonder / That the clinging of the church bells blew far into the breeze / Leaving only bells of lightning and its thunder. / Striking for the gentle, striking for the kind / Striking for the guardians and protectors of the mind / An' the poet an the painter far behind his rightful time / An' we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing. / In the wild cathedral evening the rain unraveled tales / For the disrobed faceless forms of no position / Tolling for the tongues with no place to bring their thoughts / All down in taken-for granted situations / Tolling for the deaf an' blind, tolling for the mute / For the mistreated, mateless mother, the mistitled prostitute / For the misdemeanor outlaw, chased an' cheated by pursuit / An' we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing. / Even though a cloud's white curtain in a far-off corner flashed / An' the hypnotic splattered mist was slowly lifting / Electric light still struck like arrows, fired but for the ones / Condemned to drift or else be kept from drifting / Tolling for the searching ones, on their speechless, seeking trail / For the lonesome-hearted lovers with too personal a tale / An' for each unharmed, gentle soul misplaced inside a jail / An' we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing. / Starry-eyed an' laughing as I recall when we were caught / Trapped by no track of hours for they hanged suspended / As we listened one last time an' we watched with one last look / Spellbound an' swallowed 'til the tolling ended / Tolling for the aching whose wounds cannot be nursed / For the countless confused, accused,

misused, strung-out ones an' worse/ An' for every hung-up person in the whole wide universe / An' we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.³³

4. THE MYSTICAL AND EXEGETICAL BELL THAT IS NOT A BELL.

And with Bob Dylan's song it would seem our road had ended. But nearly every subject an Armenologist studies enforces a consideration of the *longue durée*, and with Armenia the duration is nearly always very long. For all they imbibed of Poe, of Symbolism, of Communism, the Armenian poets drank of older, deeper springs as well, even when they wrote of bells. The Armenian highland was a cradle of metallurgy, so bells big and small have rung in Armenia since time immemorial.³⁴ The sound of the *k'shots'* (in English liturgical terminology, the fan or flabellum) accompanies the Divine Liturgy. This is a descendant of the ancient sistrum: a silver disk under a foot wide, engraved with cherubs; little round bells, often twelve in number, are attached to its rim.³⁵ Little bells, *božož-ner*, were attached to the necks of pack animals in caravans from time immemorial, and the poet Misak' Medzarents' wrote of their sound along the paths leading down into his native village. Tambourines and cymbals were common in ancient music making— as we shall see presently, a mystical poet noted this approvingly. Armenian *zangak*, "bell", is a loan-word from Middle Iranian; while *cnclay*, "cymbal," is Aramaic.³⁶ The latter has great alliterative possibilities—one observes that it is a fair partner to Poe's "tintinnabulation"—and it produces such rich compounds as *cnclajayn*, *ltsntsghadzayn*, "cymbal-voiced". Another Armenian word for bell, *hnč'ak* ("sunder"), is native: the political party of that name fashioned itself after the Russian reformer Alexander Herzen's journal, *Kolokol*, "The

³³ See Bob Dylan, *Lyrics: 1962-1985* (New York: Knopf, 2000), pp. 132-133. My friend the Dylanologist, Arménisant, and Joyce scholar Marc Mamigonian, to whom I owe innumerable insights and priceless bibliographical help over the years, reminded me of Dylan's song when we were discussing bells, Poe, Armenia, and America.

³⁴ Nathaniel Spear, Jr., *A Treasury of Archaeological Bells* (New York: Hastings House, 1978), pp. 110-113 (figs. 118-122), discusses a number of bronze horse bells from Urartu (Hebrew Ararat, Ch'arents' Nairi), the kingdom whose language preceded Armenian on the Plateau. One is modeled after a two-story, domed, windowed tower. These are from Alishar and Karmir Blur; and two have the inscription *Argišti úrišhi*, i.e., from the armory or treasury of king Argishti. Similar bells are known from— and illustrated in bas-relief on the necks of horses at—Persepolis, several centuries later. Urartean architects seem to have worked in Iran; and Armenia became a satrapy of the Achemenids. Numerous other horse bells of the early first millennium BC have been found on the territory of Georgia and Ossetia, just north of Armenia in the Caucasus. The only time the Hebrew word for bell, *pa'amon*, as in the poem cited above, is found in the Bible, in the book of Exodus, it is part of a list of items to be worn by the High Priest, thus the size of a horse bell again.

³⁵ Bp. Tiran Nersoyan, *Pataragamatoyc'* (Divine Liturgy) (New York, Delphic Press, 1950), p. 248.

³⁶ This goes into Arabic, in turn, as *zill*, hence Turkish *zilci*, "cymbal-maker," hence Avedis Zildjian, the Armenian name known and revered by every rock drummer on Earth.

Bell". In Muslim-occupied Armenian lands the ringing of church bells was often forbidden, and those who were allowed to construct bell towers dared not raise them higher than a minaret. But the sound of the bells of St. Karapet of Mush carried so far that the village where the ancient monastery once stood still bears the name of Çengili—the place of bells. Within monasteries, and in other churches especially when alien rulers forbade bells, the faithful were summoned to prayer by the striking of a wooden board called in Greek a *semandron*; in Armenian, *koč'nak* ("summoner"), *žamkoč'* ("summoner to the Hours"), or *žamahar* ("striker of the Hours"). There is a great old bell cast with an Armenian inscription at Tat'ew; but ecclesiastical literature, in contrast to the secular poetry we have been considering, seems to prefer the wooden *koč'nak*. The final chapters of the *Book of Lamentation* of St. Gregory of Narek explore the meaning and power of some of the physical manifestations of Christian worship, such as the chrism, or myron, and the semandron. Of the latter, the Saint writes in Ch. 92.3, "By it, the sons of Zion assemble to battle against the world-conqueror, darkness" (*sovaw gumarin i paterazmi ordik' Siovni ənddēm ašxarhakalin xawari*). It is the "kin, very much the same in kind, to the tree of life that is in Your paradise, O God, the place of the happy summoning to come together in coursing haste to the state of beatitude, the image of the type of that tree of knowledge planted to ordain the act of choice between good and evil" (*azgakic' hangunanman kenac' n p'ayti, or i draxtid Astucoy, koč'aran barwawk' hawak'man p'oyt' ənt'ac'iwk' i yarkn awrhnut'ean, patker tesaki tnkoyt gitut'ean i karg əntrut'ean barwoyn ew č'ari*). Greater than the trumpet that sounded below the walls of Jericho (that Joshua fit the battle of), it is also superior to physically stronger materials, so before it "iron employed for the needs of war was rendered base" (*anargec'aw erkat' ar i pēts paterazmi*). He insists that he is not praising the "vibrating bell of bronze" (*zangak niwt'oy plnjoy*), though "the good instructive allegories of the tambourines of renown" (*barec'uc'akan bambbran barac'i barainut'eanc'*) in Scripture are relevant to it in typology.

The sound of the semandron is likened to that of a whistling arrow traveling far, released in battle against Satan's archers (*nets arjakec'er herajigs, jaynatrakans*—a phrase that encodes with repeated variations the base (*h*)*a-r-j*, "throw," a loan from Mir. *harz-* (>MPers. *hil-*, inf. *hištan*). It resounds indeed, declares Narekats'i,

ənd cags tiezerac'
ew ənd cirs ezerac'
i coc's ĵurc'
bazmut'ean covuc'
ew klzeac' noc'a

“to the dawning-horizons of the divine realms
and to the boundary-lines of the shores
in the bosom of the waters
of the multitude of seas
and of their islands”

This pericope is phonetically and semantically complex. Its phonetic pattern is foregrounded by the two verbs *arjak*-“release” and *jig*-“pull” connected to the simile of the sound of the wooden semandron— a wooden arrow, in flight, attacking evil. The two verbal sound patterns in *j*[/dz/]-*g*/*k* are resolved in *jaynatrakans* [/dzaynatrakans/] “giving voice”: one strikes the semandron or releases the arrow and the sound ensues. This simple pattern then is elaborated in the poet’s fugue, where we encounter *cag* [/tsag/] “horizon”— where the sound reaches. But *cags tiezerac*’ [/tsags tiezerats’/] is a phrase incorporating the word *ti+ezr* (pl.), lit. “divine boundaries”, i.e., “space, universe”; and in the second line is introduced a parallel and complementary expression, *tsirs ezerats*’, with the same *ts-r-ts*’ pattern and loss of *g*. The word *tsir*, “line”, a loan from Hebrew, is paired with *ezr*, “boundary” in an earthly sense. So we have the bounds of heaven and the bounds of earth, parallel and rhymed in phonetic plays that are also kennings. Then come the *tsots’s jurts*’/ “bosom(s) of the waters” with the same consonantal pattern but a shift of the vocal palette to deeper *o* and *u*. Heaven and earth as a pair with the sea as a contrastive third element: the Narek echoes the Song of the Birth of Vahagn here in both content and linguistic play. But what of the “multitude of seas and their islands”? From his monastery he faced two islands at least, the royal isle of the Arcrunid dynasty, Aġt’amar, and the islet of Aġtēr, where he prayed. But his sources are always both Armenian and Christian, native and Biblical; so the final lines must echo the series of cosmic Psalms beginning with 96.1, *Yišmeġū ha-šāmāyim ve-tagēl hā-ārets, yir’am ha-yam u-melo’ō* “May the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, may the sea thunder and its entirety,” and 97.1, *Adonai malakh, tagēl hā-ārets, yiśmeġū iyyīm rabbīm*, “God reigns, may the earth be glad, may the many islands rejoice.”

The semandron is consecrated in the Armenian Church; the rite was translated thus by Conybeare, and it dwells more on warning and wrath than on the pealing of good tidings:

“They wash it with water and then with wine; and deterge it and hold it before the holy altar. And they say eight [sic: read “six”] Psalms:

Psalm 98 O sing unto the Lord a new song

Psalm 104 Bless the Lord, O my soul, O Lord my God

Psalm 136 Let us confess to the Lord

Psalm 138 I will be confessing thee, O Lord
 Psalm 142 With my voice I cried unto the Lord
 Psalm 146 Praise the Lord, O my soul

The Deacon proclaims:

Let us beseech in faith and concord

Thrice: Lord, have mercy.

The Priest saith the following prayer:

Lord God of hosts, and maker of all creatures. Thee do all creatures praise. Thee the trees praise, fruitful trees and all cedars [Psalm 148:9]. Thou because of thine infinite love of mankind wast pleased to dwell in the midst of our fathers (and didst converse with our fathers in the tent of witness) and to listen to their prayers. Thou hallowedst all the furniture of the tabernacle of holiness by the hand of Moses through sprinkling of blood. And now, O Lord our God, send the Grace of thy Holy Spirit into this wood, that it also may be brought nigh to and belong to the implements of the worship of thy Holy Church.

Give, Lord, grace to the voice of warning thereof, so that all who hear its noise may feel contrition in their hearts for the wrong they have done, and turn away from filthy thoughts and from all lawless words, and seek forgiveness and remission of their sins. And thou in thy kindness shalt give ear and have mercy on them.

Give, Lord, grace to the voice of warning thereof, so that all who are afflicted with sickness or terrors of satan, and hear its noise, may remember thy holy and dread name, and entreat for mercy; thou shalt hear them, and alleviate and disperse all their woes.

Give, Lord, grace to the voice of warning thereof, that all who are in sorrow or other troubles, and hear its noise, may remember thy Holy Church and thy dread worship, and entreat of thee succour; and thou shalt hear them and disperse their troubles and griefs.

Give, Lord, grace to the voice of warning thereof, that when the clouds of wrath are massed together, and men hear the sound thereof, they may also remember thy terrible name, at which all creation doth tremble, and may entreat of thee indulgence towards their transgressions, and protection of their fields and of all their fruits. And thou shalt hear and have mercy on them, and avert the sentence of thy wrath. For thou art wont by means of trifling instruments of thy service to work mighty wonders.

Even as thou didst overthrow the wall of Jericho by means of the sound of a trumpet horn; so now vouchsafe by means of the noise of this to overthrow among us all the fortifications of the enemy, that we may be worthy to bless thee, Almighty God, now and ever and to eternity.

And then they bring it to the bema before the holy altar, the deacons holding it up. And the priest anoints with the chrism the four corners, and takes the semandron and strikes it thrice, and gives it to the attendant to beat. And forthwith they go into church for the office of the hour.”³⁷

So the semandron of Narek and of all the Armenian Church is a bell not made of metal but of the wood that furnished the Cross that sounds but does not ring; and it flies like an arrow across primordial Armenian sacral poetry and Biblical cosmology, attacking the archers of the satanic world-conqueror’s horde—a martial and probably contemporary image evoking the Central Asian marauders of Anatolia whose ruinous assault on civilization had barely begun. Of course both Sevak, and Ch‘arents‘, were raised on the Narek and never stopped studying it. We can see why, as well as how, with Poe, it inspired them. Even when Narekats‘i’s bells are made of wood they have a cosmic and moral power and a wealth of rich sound that Poe would have recognized and that Ochs and Dylan would have delighted in. But then, they did not know Armenian.

APPENDIX

In her groundbreaking monograph *In the World of Ch‘arents‘* Manuscripts (1978), the poet’s daughter mentions a long draft:

Poem anvernagir

1. *Erazneri masin*

2. *Erazə*

3. *Banalin*

Īst Ēdgar Po-i + Freyd

Sksvac ē 2-IV-1937, Erevan

Anno Domini MCMXXXVII

i t‘wak. Hayk. R̄ Y J Ē

Elišē Č‘arenc‘

³⁷ Frederick Cornwallis Conybeare, *Rituale Armenorum: being the Administration of the Sacraments and the Breviary Rites of the Armenian Church, together with the Greek Rites of Baptism and Epiphany; edited from the oldest manuscripts by F. C. Conybeare, M.A., F.B.A., late Fellow of University College; and the East Syrian Epiphany Rites, translated by the Rev. A. J. MacLean, D.D.* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), pp. 38-39.

Melsabaro dpir, ergasan

“Poem without a title

1. On dreams

2. The dream

3. The key

According to Edgar Poe + Freud

Begun 2 April 1937, Erevan,

Anno Domini MCMXXXVII

in the Arm(enian) y(ear) 1387

Yeghishe Ch‘arents‘

Clerk of sinful ways and songster.”³⁸

The poet wrote numerous drafts of the early stanzas of this projected major work and one overlapping with it, “Ulalume,” without ever completing either poem, much less editing the rough drafts into a final version. The manuscripts were hidden from the police and suffered considerable damage over the years; so the lacunae are numerous. Part of the poem was published in 1983; the rest, in 1996.³⁹ I have brought the two parts together here.

ULALUME

1. Introduction.

Concerning dreams.

Amazingly confused, absurd, and dark

I had of a sudden a dream this evening.

Silent, I had plunged into an abundantly beatific, immaterial,

Narcotic state. Strange, unwilling,

I was whirled in a blue ocean.

In my brain there was not a wisp of cloud, not a scintilla, eve, of care

That might agitate my spirit’s imperturbability dark.

My eyes were closed, and weary, and stained with care,

But in all my being I remained awake.

Amazingly confused, absurd, and dark

I of a sudden this evening beheld a dream.

My eyes wide open, I was plunged into a waking sleep,

³⁸ Anahit Ch‘arents‘, *Č‘arenc‘i jetagreri ašxarhum* (In the World of Ch‘arents‘’ Manuscripts) (Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1978), p. 113.

³⁹ Ch‘arents‘, *Antip ev č‘havak‘vac erker*, (Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1983), pp. 666-668; Davit‘ Gasparyan, ed., *Eliše Č‘arenc‘. Norahayt ējer* (Yeghishe Ch‘arents‘. Newly-Discovered Pages) (Erevan: Erevan University Press, 1996), pp. 314-320.

That was no dream, but an adventure fantastic
 Or as it were delirium, that would seem to have no end,
 Was not a sleep but a waking dream,
 Like delirium, a curious adventure.

Amazingly confused, absurd, and dark
 I saw all of a sudden a dream this evening:
 Helpless, fallen into semi-wakeful sleep,
 Rocked without will in a shoreless ocean,
 I was interred and insensate remained
 When from my terror I awoke, the delirium now calm,
 But in my soul there stayed a wordless misty dark
 That transported me, and...

I. O! morphine's boundless bliss,
 The spirit's calm and shoreless weariness.
 Ethereal as an impersonal sleep,
 Dreaming exhaustion, egoless self...
 I tasted that unconscious bliss
 As if I'd slumbered and a soft, meek
 Familiar being were rocking me
 With its deceptive charm and unearthly song.

II. I've long grown familiar
 With that strange and hapless yogic life,
 And, sitting with my legs folded beneath me for hours,
 I enjoy unbounded rest
 Or dream long, like a limpid teardrop,
 Like an unblemished conscience that cries...
 But more than that brilliant reverie
 I turn the pages of my endless past, its past,
 And more than the distance of these visions
 The chasm of the past it is that often takes me captive.

When for hours thus seated, legs folded beneath me,
 Either I enjoy unbounded rest
 Or the precincts and the lands of dreaming,
 Certain I should never find myself in those climes severe...
 Or shall I fashion songs, unreal and clear
 As the tears of a wailing conscience.

2. For a long time now have I
 Become familiar with this unreal life within my room.

For a long time now have I
 Become accustomed to lie here night and day,
 Or seated, all awake
 In this sunless bed, this un<...> hour, passionless,
 Solitude.
 For a long time now have I
 Grown accustomed to this strange and carefree, yogic life,
 And seated thus crosslegged for hours,
 Either I enjoy a shoreless calm
 Or dream of works as clear as tears,
 Like the tears of an unblemished conscience...

But more than this brilliant dreaming
 I turn the pages of the past, of my infinite past...
 Or I enjoy pure yogic rest
 But more often that these sighing visions
 The chasm of the past imprisons me...

2. For a long time now have I grown familiar
 With this yogic life conferred upon me from above,
 And for hours thus crosslegged seated
 I enjoy either a pure and yogic rest,
 That is, in silence I sit and for hours
 I gaze at my navel, without pondering, without passion.

2. There is another diversion also, still more mindless,
 That the endless perusal of the silence's book
 When you know beforehand every incident,
 Every chapter and citation, every page...
 So that also I

2. For a long time now I've grown accustomed
 To this unreal life given me from on high,
 And seated thus crosslegged for hours
 I enjoy a yogic peace.
 That is, I sit in silence, motionless: for hours
 I train my spirit like a passionless yogi,
 Rising up and away from life and its petty passions
 To gaze in silence for hours at my navel, as

For a long time now I've become accustomed
 To the unreal life granted me from on high,
 And on my bed seated crosslegged thus
 I teach my wretched soul a yogic

2. For a long time now I've grown accustomed
 To the unreal life given to me from above,
 And seated thus crosslegged for hours
 In order to sample yogic peace
 I train my wretched spirit, that untroubled, certain,
 Rising over life, passionless and free of feeling,
 Simply— as is only proper to a yogi—
 To gaze for hours in silence at my navel...

And on my bed seated thus, legs crossed,
 I train my wretched spirit for the abstract and unpassioned
 Final deep plunge into the looking glass,
 For passionless and unattainable bliss...

2. Simply— I study, confident in my strength of will.
 Simply— I compel myself, confident in patience
 As is only proper to a yogi
 To gaze in silence for hours at my navel...

3. And so? Do I attain that bliss?
 Or, bored by the charmless spectacle of my navel,
 Do I flatten the wall
 Like a flood or a confused...
 To fight all abstract puberty
 And let my blood's <...>
 Cursing this spirit's enslavement,
 <...> every abstract peace
 <...> from a bed without enchantment
 <...> priceless
 And <...> bewitches

3. And so? Do I reach that bliss,
 Or, quickly tiring of my own navel,
 Lunge, like a Tork' unchained,⁴⁰
 Preferring to any abstract deed
 An animal, mindless, <...> unsoulful
 Sensuous joy, that from the navel
 Floods abundant, roars, thunders, churns, tearing,
 Like a bolt of lightning at the end of its existence...

⁴⁰ Arm. *Tork' št'ayazerc*: Tork' is a fearsome titan of Armenian mythology who could carve with his fingernails on stones and who cast huge boulders from the coast at the ships of invaders, see James R. Russell, "Polyphemos Armenios," *REArm* 26 (1996-7), pp. 25-38. Perhaps Ch'arents' conflates him here with the apocalyptic hero king Artawazd, who is chained till the end of days in the gorge of Mt. Ararat.

3. And so? So I reach that higher bliss,
 Or, worn out by this hard, dark occupation
 Or, plainly in a dream, or by my own hand,
 Tearing from my navel some sort of "thesis" fantastic
 I tax my mind so that at last like
 A man crazed having fallen into an endless labyrinth,
 Who dully falls, and

4. Alas! How intimate and ever sacred for me was
 Alone this precious bursting into flame,
 But by a whim of fate— or was it only
 Stupid human fanaticism, I was drawn away from life beneath the sun
 To <...> this solitude,
 By my identity's passionless <...> now,
 Massacring the stormy daring of my spirit,
 I grow used to another hollow fanaticism...

Alas! How intimate and ever
 Agreeable alone to me this unconsumed burning,
 Yet present, the bed, as an immovable stone,
 Isolated from life, as a stranger

6. Sister Dian's shining chase does not <...>⁴¹
 Emerging freshly onto the plain <...>
 With boyish body, delicate and childlike,
 Like the star-bright, light-spattered, sunlit sky

... And a golden arrow in your hand, carefree and still
 With such sixteen-year-old⁴² hips clean and slim,
 With boyish body, delicate, childlike,
 Blue-eyed as the star-bright sunlit sky...

7. O my clear breaking dawn, my going swiftly
 Still in advance of the sun, in that moment streaming milk
 Like a lily pale when dawn awakens,
 Opening milky-dark, and crescent moon colorless,
 Bow of the soul, gripped and heated brow,

⁴¹ Cf. Poe's "Ulalume": "Astarte's bediamonded crescent,/ Distinct with its duplicate horn./ And I said, She is warmer than Dian," etc.

⁴² He uses the marked Classical Armenian form *veštasnamya*, as in his poem on the beautiful Giovanni Beltraffio, whom Leonardo woke one night to draw the face of Christ, see James R. Russell, "The Armenian Counterculture That Never Was: Reflections on Eghishe Ch'arents'," *JSAS* 9 (1996-97 [1999]), p. 32.

Silver-flecked like adamantine and naïve,
 Star blinking, in amazement,
 Dawns. Newly-come day, that ineffable beaming...
 Morning star, enkindled, burning, lovely, beyond saying,
 A day newly come, shines, shining day,
 No way
 New song
 New life
 New torch

9. What shall I do, my poor and helpless love,
 Nairian my song, tragedy my fate,
 Since your high ascent seemed poison
 That your early anger never forgave
 And the more you unfolded and the higher you went
 All the more uncomprehending and unlucky and savage
 All who did surround you at your untoward ardor

That seemed contempt to that black conclave,
 Even your early service to that assemblage lofty...

(10)

By highest right that stems from your place of birth,
 To those wretched hordes without a shred of talent...

That seemed contempt to that black conclave,
 Even your early service to that assemblage lofty,
 And the more you grew and the higher you soared,
 So much the worse did you become for those independent of all graces,
 By highest right that stems from a hidden place,
 To those hordes who sit themselves down as masters...

MISAK' MEDZARENTS': THE CALM BEFORE THE STORM



Misak' Medzarents' was born in the village of Pingyan, north of Malatya and Akn, in the farthest west of historical Armenia. Where the Euphrates river bends wide and lazily west on its course south to Mesopotamia was the Hittite province of Melid that the ancient Greeks came to know as Melitene: it is the people they called Melitenioi who were perhaps the first speakers of Armenian, moving over what was to be the country's ultimate western boundary, as they sought the rising of the sun. The city now called Malatya remained at the traditional boundary between Roman and Parthian, then Byzantine and Sasanian, spheres of influence. Within its bend was the Armenian kingdom of Cop'k', Sophene—and the mountain fastnesses north of Xarberd and south of Erznka, called Dersim, never submitted to any alien conqueror. Centuries later and for long ages, till the baptized armies of Tiridates the Great destroyed it, sometime in the second decade of the fourth century, the temple of Aramazd, father of the gods of the pantheon of the Armenian's national faith, rose over the cliffs of the Western Euphrates—in Armenian, the Aracani—river at Ani-Kemakh, to the north and east. Somewhat eastward on Sepuh in the mountains ringing the plain of Erznka the Arsacid prince who had brought the faith was spending his last days in prayer. Trdat, the legend says, appeared at the cave entrance and held out his magic Havluni saber to the Illuminator. Saint Gregory raised his hand, and the weapon of death, turning downwards in the shape of the Cross, the contrivance of life, entered the stone to await the future king.

The Parthian dynasty that had ruled Armenia for nearly half a millennium fell in 429 but its blood flowed in the veins of the great *naxarar* noblemen and the Pahlavuni Catholicoi. A generation later the *nakharrar* Vardan and the priest Lewond shed that blood to preserve the new faith against the Sasanian Persians' onslaught; and late in the eighth century the Mamikonians took their last stand, against a newer enemy and conqueror, the Muslim Arab Caliphate. In the century that followed, two surviving *nakharrar* houses, the Bagratunis and Artsrunis, succeeded in carving out kingdoms in the north and south of Armenia. In the early eleventh century, the diplomatic and military balancing act faltered: the successes of Byzantine campaigns against the Abbasids enabled the emperor Basil to turn his attention to Armenia. In 1021, Senek'erim Artsruni ceded Vaspurakan to the Empire and moved with 14,000 retainers to the west of Armenia, to Sebastia; and in 1045 Byzantium annexed the great Bagratid city of Ani. The Armenians even transferred the sacred relics of their saints to these new appanages: the monastery of Narek, on the southern shore of lake Van, was re-founded near Sebastia at Tephrike (Tk. Divriği). St. Gregory of Narek, the great mystical poet of the tenth century, had lived on the lake shore and later in a mountain cave. As a boy Misak'

Medzarents, an avid reader of the Narek, was go on pilgrimage from his native village of Binkyan to the western shrine, which by the 19th century had come to be called Areka *vank*.¹ But these shifts of Armenian population and power back towards the lands through which the remotest bearers of their speech had come in immemorial antiquity turned to panicked flight after the Seljuk Turks shattered the forces of Romanos Digenes at Manazkert in 1071. Armenians remained, in numbers, in their own land for another millennium. Ani continued to prosper, even to expand; and a class of powerful merchants called *mecatun*, literally, “great houses”, grew alongside the ancient nobility. But the highland was never to know freedom under Christian kings again.

Legend has it that one of the retainers of Senek'erim, a man named Benjamin, or Benik, fortified a place called Hrabat' (Arabic for “town”) on the banks of the Aratsani in the far west.² A chronicler from nearby Ani-Kemakh where Aramazd's temple once stood, Grigor Daranaghts'i, came in the early years of the seventeenth century to the place, by now called Benkan after the long-dead prince: ... *apa ealeal antic' gnac'ak' i Benkan i vank'n, arak' ew dadarec'ak' andēn, or amroc' ēr ew mardikn paterazmolk' anddēm yap šatakol anirawac'.* “Leaving there, we went to Benkan, to the monastery. We stayed on in that place, which was a fortress; and the men, fighters against lawless marauders.” Grigor spent the year 1611 there and began to copy a Bible; he finished copying other books there, too.³ In July 1878 the Armenian ethnographer Garegin Sruanjteanc' visited the village, now called Benka or Binkyan: in Western Armenian the name is either Pengyan or Pingyan. It was almost entirely Armenian in population, with about 1000 inhabitants, three churches and a monastery, and five teachers in two schools serving 150 boy and girl pupils who learned, among other subjects, English and French. Every home had books on its shelves; and the village received newspapers and journals from Constantinople and abroad. More important, the village retained and defended much of its ancient freedom. The spoken language was Armenian, not Armeno-Turkish; and Binkyan even minted its own coins marked in Armenian script for local trade. The men of the village were excellent fast horsemen who bore arms and struck terror into would-be Kurdish marauders and rapists: no Muslim dared look at an Armenian woman. On the landward side, the village nestled between the slopes of two mountains, *Ḫač'mēj* and *Sōsik*. The first means something like “Cross within”; the second, “Little plane tree”, refers to the giant ancient shade tree of traditional village squares, by the rustling of whose thousands of leaves the ancient Armenians

¹ See M. Thierry, *Répertoire des monastères Arméniens*, Turnhout: Brepols, 1993, p. 76 no. 410.

² On Lynch's map, Pingan, as the name of the village was pronounced in Western Armenian, is on the east bank of the Western Euphrates (Aracani), north of Egin (Akn) and west of Rabet.

³ Fr. Mesrop Nšanecan, ed., *Žamanakagrut' iwn Grigor Vardapeti Kamaxec'woy kam Daranalc'woy* [Chronography of Fr. Grigor of Kamax or Daranali], Jerusalem: St. James', 1915, pp. 162-163. The name Benik is historically attested only from the 12th or 13th century: see H. Ačařean, *Hayoc' anjnanunneri bařaran* [“Dictionary of Armenian Proper Names”], vol. I, p. 407.

practiced divination. A famous and most unusual bridge spanned the Aratsani: it could be raised in time of trouble and was closed with iron gates every night. The villagers were farmers and also raised silkworms: one poem by Medzarents', *Šerami eraza*, "What the silkworm dreams", was obviously inspired by the latter craft.⁴

The people of Pingyan successfully resisted the first wave of Muslim marauders during the massacres of 1895-96, but a second, larger attack devastated Binkyan, with the survivors fleeing into the mountains or to large cities. Most had traveled to the capital and had relatives with whom to stay. Apparently a number stubbornly returned; for Binkyan defied the order of deportation in 1915 and ended its thousand-year life fighting in self defense.

The principal clan of Pingyan was the Mecaturean, pronounced Medzadurian, family, who lived in 66 houses clustered around a stone *aivan*, or vaulted, palace-like structure. When Sruanjteanc' visited there, eight years before the poet's birth, one of them was village headman, or *müdir*. According to one tradition the family were descended from the *meliks* of Karabagh, that is, descendants of the ancient nakharars: these proud, warlike mountaineers had for centuries retained a measure of independence on the eastern edge of Greater Armenia and formed the nucleus of the uprising of David Bek in 1722—the time of the first real stirrings of the modern Armenian liberation movement. According to Vahan Arslanian, a relative, the Medzadurians had come from Ani.⁵ This would have probably happened in the 13th or 14th century; and if his supposition is true, then the family name may perhaps be understood as a deformation of the term *mecatun*, pronounced *medzadun*—the merchant-princes of the medieval Bagratid metropolis. So it is more than likely that the early Medzadurians who made the long trek from one end of Armenia to the other chose a place where the old freedoms survived. In January 1886 Iskuhi (*née* Avakian) Medzadurian bore a son, Misak', to her husband Garabed *agha*. The latter, like many villagers, moved to the capital to work; and Misak' was to join him in Galata in September 1902. A monastery dedicated the *Eric' Mankanc'*—the three Hebrew youths cast into the fiery furnace, in the Book of Daniel—stood in Pingyan, and Misak' bears the Armenian form of the name of the middle one, Meshekh. (Shadrach—Setrak—and Abednego are the other two. They bear Cappadocian names, and were thus local holy men.) He was the youngest child of the family, with two brothers and a sister. Gevorg had left the village become a prominent lawyer and journalist in Sebastia (Sivas). But Misak' spent his first nine years in Pingyan, where he was a somewhat inattentive schoolboy who loved going out to the fields and woods and

⁴ See the engraving (pl. no. 210, "The bridge of Benkean") accompanying the article *Benkean* in *Ep'rikean, Bnaštarhik ba'aran* ["Geographical Dictionary"], vol. I, pp. 414-415. On the village, see also Ašak'el K'ēč'ean, Mkrtič' Parsamean, *Akn ew Aknc'ik'* ["Akn and Its People"], Paris, 1952, pp. 101-115.

⁵ See Albert Šaruryan, *Misak' Mecarenc'*, Erevan: Sovetakan Grol, 1983, p. 25. Most details of the life of the poet are culled from this authoritative biography by the greatest scholar and editor of 19th- and early 20th-century Western Armenian poetry.

listening to the shepherds' flutes when the herds were driven home. Sometimes he went out to the nighttime irrigation of the fields with a kinsman and would ride behind the saddle on the way back. He went to the spring of Cak to hunt butterflies. On one of his lonely rambles he met a bear. The villagers went on pilgrimages to monasteries in the mountainous countryside; and Misak' joined these.

Misak' loved the village love songs and lyrics called *šer* (from the Arabic for "poem") and *haren* (from *hay(e)rēn*, "Armenian" poem, the genre for which the late medieval bard Nahapet K'uč'ak, "the Boy", was famous); and he listened with rapt attention to the recitation of *hek'iat*'s—folktales. His mother Iskuhi was a devout woman: her prayers on Saturday nights made a strong impression on him and echo through his poems, as do the words of the Sunrise office and Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church and the hymns and prayers of St. Gregory of Narek. I have dwelt at some length on his early childhood and origins in order to dispel the possible impression that he was a country bumpkin who escaped what Marx rather unkindly called "the idiocy of rural life" to escape to a short but brilliant career—he died of consumption at twenty-two—in the big city Constantinople. Rather to the contrary, his earliest and most powerful memories were of an almost magical realm where armed and virile Armenians unbowed by centuries of Ottoman rule lived in freedom, in the midst of a flourishing traditional culture augmented by European learning and enlightenment. Medzarents' language is extraordinarily rich; and its Classical elements are not stilted and bookish, but naturally flowing. His evocations of village life and of nature are vital, rather than precious and contrived; and a happy childhood in the midst of an accomplished and loving clan of probable nobility and fabulous antiquity left in him a deep, indestructible cheerfulness that emerges again and again in his work, the sun coming out from behind the clouds. In all these respects he differs sharply from the other great young Western Armenian poet of nearly two generations before, Bedros Tourian.

It was to end. The reign of the paranoid, obscurantist sultan Abdul Hamid was oppressive enough: it was forbidden to print the words *Hayastan* "Armenia" and *azg* "nation", but even words like *astl*, "star", were prohibited, since it was suspected they might refer to Yıldız ("Star") palace. When Pingyan was first attacked in 1895, during the first great wave of Muslim massacres of the Armenians, Misak' and his mother went to live with his elder brother in Sivas (There was to be a second, far deadlier attack that reduced the family home to flames and depopulated the village, a year later.) He studied at the Sahakian school there; and was then sent in 1898 to Anatolia College, a boarding school run by American Protestant missionaries in Marsovan (Merzifun). Misak', who was remembered as slender, melancholy, and a little bashful, studied English and French. He knew Verlaine, probably also Baudelaire and maybe Rimbaud. He may have read Poe and Blake in English, and he loved Oscar Wilde's writing in particular, and later published an essay about him. Some Armenian writers had

fled abroad, to Paris or Cairo, to escape the Hamidian reaction; but their writings in the journals they founded, such as *Anahid*, were smuggled in. So Misak' read Arshak Chobanian and Krikor Zohrab as well as the *fin de siècle* fare of decadents like Yeghia Demirjibashian. He read and revered Bedros Tourian's lyrics—and was in Scutari to visit the poet's grave and write a tribute inspired by Wilde's elegy of Shelley. In a later critical essay on the writings of Abp. Yeghishe Tourian—Bedros' younger brother, born Mihran—Medzarents' observes that this is who Bedros, who died of consumption at twenty-one, might have become had he lived longer.⁶

Life in the large provincial towns was still dangerous for Armenians and Misak's relatives worried about his rambles. In June 1901, Medzarents' was on his way in Marsovan to visit a sick friend—Nerses Hoveyan, who was to die of consumption two years later—when a Turkish butcher's boy attacked and stabbed him in the shoulder with a knife. Misak' had sickened and been close to death during a severe drought when he was a year old; though the stab wound healed, it seems to have permanently weakened the boy. He left Marsovan to join his father in Constantinople the following year, in September 1902, and enrolled in the *Getronagan* "Central" Armenian school. He withdrew from his studies because of advanced consumption in 1905; and he died on 4 July 1908 (the night of 21 June O.S.).

The attack brought forth Medzarents' first poem, *Marmni vērk', srti vērk'* ("Wounds to the body, wounds to the heart"); and soon after his arrival in the capital he was publishing poems in Armenian journals such as *Arevelean mamul* ("Eastern Press"), using first the *nom de plume* Šawasp Ciacan (Arm. *dziadzan*, "rainbow", the title of his first published volume of verse), then Medzarents'. He quickly shed the remnants of village dialect for the standard literary Western Armenian of Constantinople, with its complex and rather overblown prose syntax. His poems, which were rather unfairly compared to the work of the contemporary Symbolists (Eastern Armenian criticism would compare him to Vahan Deryan) achieved instant, if not always favorable, notice: Arp'iar Arp'irian attacked him among other young poets in an article in *Masis* in 1902, still more unfairly implying a kinship in his work with Decadence. Medzarents' was neither hurt nor passive in response: striding happily into the arena, he published vigorous defenses of his own work and attacks on his critics. He had made friends in Sivas and Marsovan, and his social circle in the capital expanded; so his satirical poems both mock his critics and gently nudge his friends. Guilt by association is an imprecise method in literary criticism. The Symbolists' creed asserted that exotic colors, misted vistas, nocturnal reveries and half-heard murmurs are the delicate

⁶ See J.R. Russell, *Bosphorus Nights: The Complete Lyric Poems of Bedros Tourian*, Armenian Heritage Press and Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 10, Cambridge, MA, 2006, "Homage from the Future: A poem by Misak' Medzarents'," pp. 366-368, with Armenian text and translation.

and allusive symbols in this world of another, truer and better one. Though Medzarents' poems have all these elements he cherishes nature, celebrates life, and regards its Creator with grateful amazement. In this regard he is still remoter from the decadents, whose exploration of the Inner World—the *Nerashkharh* of Medzarents' contemporary Tiran Č'rak'ean, "Indra", comes to mind—is a longing for death, for the grave. Indra created a plethora of new compound words in Armenian to express, or perhaps conceal, his arcane imaginings; Medzarents' compounds seem rather strivings to evoke a vividly remembered scene or color or feeling in the world as it exists. His deep optimism and cheerfulness in the face of sickness and the certainty of an early death seem almost improbable, and contrast with the agonized sorrow of Bedros Tourian. Like Tourian, though, he worked feverishly towards the end: the volumes *Ciacan* ("Rainbow") and *Nor Taler* ("New Poems") were printed in 1907; and he continued to publish until a month before he passed away. All in all, he wrote about a hundred poems, roughly twice as many as Tourian—but then, he lived two years longer.⁷

The year of Misak's death saw the revolutionary overthrow of the *ancien régime* and the installation of the Young Turks. The story by now is familiar: Armenians participated enthusiastically in the new parliament and expressed nationalist aspirations. The ultra-nationalist Turkish Committee of Union and Progress, especially after the Balkan war in which Turkey lost the city of Salonica and most of what was left of its European territory, regarded the Armenians as a dangerous alien element to be eliminated from the political life of the empire; their economic role, radically to be curtailed; their physical presence, to be extirpated or greatly reduced. In 1915, with the Great War half reason, half pretext, Turkey murdered or deported the Armenians from their homeland. Only starving refugees, or the Armenians living in the eastern sliver of the country under Russian rule, remained. The Turks and Kurds destroyed whatever Armenian monuments were left standing; and the postwar fascist state of Mustafa Kemal expelled the few Armenians who had trickled back to the ruins of their old homes, while changing the names of towns and villages in an effort retroactively to eradicate the Armenian past. Armenia did not exist—it had never existed. The campaign of mass murder that the Turks had called a *jihad* at the time—the Polish Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin was to coin the term "genocide" to give a name to what had been done to Armenia only in the 1940's, in the midst of the massacre of his own people—was a civil war, or resistance to a fifth column fighting for the Russians, or just one of those tragedies that happen in war. The latest iteration of Turkish denial is the approach of the journalist Ece Temelkuran, who overtly refuses to study the events and prefers to view the present in terms of a perverse

⁷ The standard edition is by Albert Šaruryan, Misak' Mecarenc', *Erkeri liakatar žolovacu* [Russian title, *Polnoe sobranie sochinenii*, "Complete Works"], Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1981. The edition of 1986 published by the Catholicosate of Cilicia at Antelias, Lebanon, is also usable, though P. Snapean in his introduction, p. 15, identifies the Czech Jewish writer Franz Kafka as a Pole.

Gestalt psychology whereby both Armenians and Turks suffer from trauma, especially the Armenians, whose greater trauma suggests only that they are frozen in infantile complexes. Christopher de Bellaigue, who was stung by my accusation of Holocaust denial in the *New York Review of Books*, after he characterized the Genocide as a reaction by their Ottoman fellow-citizens, if you please, to Armenian rioting, has written a slim volume peddling a similarly psycho-analgesic anti-history. Another dilettantish columnist, Roger Cohen of the *New York Times*, applauds it and calls for historians to be more "vague". If there were some intellectual content it might be dismissed as a *recherché* joke about Symbolist poetry. But there isn't.

Medzarents' published his *ars poetica*, *Inc' arbec'ut'eamb*, "With what intoxication!" which we will look at presently, in *Arevelyan Mamul* on 1 August 1907, with a dedication to his friend, the poet and prose writer Kegham Parseghian, whom he had met in the offices of the journal *Surhandak* ("The Courier") two years before. So one checks the dates: 1883-1915—Kegham was three years Misak's senior, and he was murdered in the Genocide. The death knell of the date 1915 rings in every biography of every friend and contemporary. Daniel Varuzhan, Siamanto, Krikor Zohrab: there is absolutely no doubt that, after perhaps another few more volumes of verse Medzarents', just shy of his thirtieth birthday, perhaps married, with a son and daughter to whom he sang the songs and chanted the tales of Pingyan, where he had been planning to go to collect folklore—maybe he would have made it back there and brought God knows what oral treasures—would have been dragged from his home, tortured, and then shot or bludgeoned to death and dumped in an unmarked mass grave. But Misak' was one of the *apriyan nahatakner*, the Martyrs of April 1915, wasn't he, just *avant la lettre*: the young Turkish thug with his butcher's knife, the wound to the body that was really a wound to the heart. And the exile ever westward, across the Euphrates—to Sivas, to Marsovan, to Constantinople, away from the home of the sun into the darkness, into the nowhere left to go that the Muslims, the world, have thrust the Armenians. And it was over.

But the great world ground on. In 1917 the Caucasian front collapsed as the Russians left to fight their revolution; and Turkey pressed on to kill the rest of the Armenians on the plain of Ararat and in the mountains of Karabagh. But the mills, for once stalled: in 1918 General Andranik's army beat back the invading Turks from Alexandropol and Eastern Armenia was saved. Intellectuals from Tiflis, refugees from Van and Kars, began in the new Soviet Union to rebuild what was left of Armenia. The young poet Yeghishe Ch'arents', who became general editor of the Transcaucasian Publishing House, vowed to print editions of the Western Armenian poets Tourian and Medzarents'. In 1934, the State Publishing House (*Petakan hratarakč'ut'yan*) at Erevan published an edition of the complete works of Medzarents' edited by Ch'arents' and illustrated by T. Xač'vank'yan, with a fine glossary and an introduction prepared jointly by the Soviet Armenian writers Alazan and Valaršak Norenc'. According to the great green *Soviet Armenian*

Encyclopedia Alazan, whose real name was Vahram Gabuzyan, was born at Van in 1903, served as secretary of the Union of Soviet Armenian Writers and editor of the literary paper *Grakan T'ert'* till 1936, and published a volume of reflective essays, *Horizons*, in 1957. Norenc', a better-known writer and close friend of Ch'arents', pursued a career with a similarly strange empty bit, like a donut hole in the middle. For Soviet writers like Ch'arents' without the hole, there is instead a terminal date, 1937. So soon after the publication of the 1934 edition another one came out with the same date but no editorial page and no introduction and the reference to the latter in the table of contents (at the back, Russian style) neatly blacked out. Medzarents' brother poets had been erased by Stalin's great purge from history; and Ch'arents', the greatest poet ever to write in Eastern Armenian, was shot and dumped in an unmarked pit across the Hrazdan river from central Erevan. One genocide had not been enough. But Stalin died, Anastas Mikoyan flew to Erevan bearing the order that the banned poets be rehabilitated and published, the statue of the tyrant was toppled, and Mother Armenia, sword in hand, rose over the capital city.

Prevented by the Hamidian censorship from speaking openly of his nation's hopes, Medzarents' had perhaps attempted in his verses to do the very thing his critics were unable to see: to imagine a free and empowered life spoken in Armenian alone on one's own land, steeped in the images and sounds of ancient and unbroken tradition joined harmoniously to world culture. This was a vision unencumbered by the lachrymose paradigm of defeat, of suffering and martyrdom, whose final expressions were the escapism of Symbolism and the masochistic death-wish of Decadence. Misak' Medzarents' died only a bit over half a century after Xaç'atur Abovyan's first vernacular Armenian novel, *Vērē' Hayastani*; a strip of Armenian land, the khanate of Erivan, had been wrested from Muslim rule for the first time since the fall of the Cilician kingdom in 1375. And he was only the second poet of real importance to write in the common vernacular Armenian of modern times that most of his nation spoke. Five years after Abovyan's *Wounds of Armenia*, Avraham Mapu's novel *Ahavat Tsion*, "The Love of Zion", the first to be written in modern Hebrew, was published. Five years before Misak's birth Eliezer Ben Yehuda settled in Jerusalem to raise a Hebrew-speaking child in his own ancestral land; and as the young Medzarents' was moving from town to town and school to school, a Viennese journalist named Theodore Herzl witnessed the Dreyfus trial and forged the political movement of national liberation of the Jews, Zionism. Two peoples whose talent, energy, and economic advancement excited envy; two peoples whose lack of political and military power excited contempt. And even as both struggled to create a normal life in a land of their own, events overtook them.

In 1957, this time under the editorship of S. Tarone'i Medzarents' *Erkeri žołovacu* ("Collected Works") was printed yet again, with the introduction by Alazan and Norenc' restored though abridged to about a third of its original length. Soviet Armenians could cherish again their entire national heritage: the

great poet Paruyr Sevak published in 1971—the year of his own young, untimely death—the critical edition of Bedros Tourian's work. The superb, authoritative study and edition of the complete works by Albert Šaruryan came in the early 1980's. As Misak' used cheerfully to affirm, the rain is harbinger of a clear day. And the work has survived, with the tenacity of the little village clinging to its steep mountainsides above the Aracani through the surging flood of time. So let us turn now to the poems.

● 2 ●

The first work I would like to examine is *Kaydzer*, "Sparks", a perfect, small example of Medzarents' poetic and thematic intricacy and loveliness, his dense intertextuality.

The drumbeat of my soul and its tambourine's
Trill this night descend in laughter.
Like cymbals clashing, they delight:
My memories clap their hands together.

Accompanying the lutes' song
Your falcon's eyes' flame
Purple-born and fire
Burn within my soul again.

Drunken on that intangible ambrosia
With kisses redolent of flowers
Sway there in mad dances
The regal lady's undulations.

The dark night gently wears away!
Oh, just once more, just once again!
My soul intoxication craves
In the rivulets of fire flowing from your gaze.

The first stanza introduces a rhythmic pattern of musical sound: in the words *tap' u t'ampugi* "tambourine and drum" is the actual percussive beat *táp-tamp*; and there follows a cadence of alliterative patterns: *dzidzogh* "laughter" > *dzandz-ghá* "cymbal" > *ts'andzin* "joyful", with *dzáp'* "clapping" in the final line finishing the pattern and recapitulating the sound pattern in *-ap* of the beginning.

The second stanza moves from the sense of sound to that of sight—from sound to color—and introduces a density of allusion to ancient visions instead of alliteration. The musical instrument *pamplir* in the first line reminds one at once of lute, the *p'andurn*: Movsēs Xorenac'i in his *History of the Armenians*, 1.31, declares that he heard with his own ears the bards singing of the birth of the fiery-

haired god Vahagn from a flaming reed in the purple sea (*covn cirani*). And the stanza mentions fire thrice, calling it *ciranecin*, “purple-born”. The epithet refers to the ancient Song; but it is also a calque—a part-by-part literal translation of Greek *porphyrogenitos*, with the sense of noble or regal. The latter meaning is echoed by *šahēni*, “falcon-like”, since the Persian name of the noble hunting bird includes *šāh*, “king”.

The third stanza moves to the senses of taste, smell, and touch: it begins with *ginov*, “drunk”; and the substance of the intoxication is the touch of a kiss, *hamboy*, literally, “the sharing of a scent”. That scent is *dzaghg-anuš*, “flower-sweet”, but note that both *nektar* and *anoyš* mean “ambrosia, drink of immortality” as well. The stanza then evokes the lovely erotic motion of the dance: resuming the motif of archaic nobility, Medzarents’ uses the very archaic Iranian word *pampiš* (Middle Persian *banbišn*) for “queen”.

And in the fourth stanza the fabulous reverie of wild music and undulation, of purple-hued fire and mystic intoxication, fades even as the velvet night dark goes to predawn gray, but not without a last potently marked word. The gaze of the beloved is *hrahosan*, “flowing with fire”: the compound comes from the Hymn of Vesting that precedes the Divine Liturgy: *Anjrewacin bažak hrahosan, or hetar yAřak’ealsn i surb vernatann, heł ew i mez, hogid surb Astuac, and patmučani zk’o zimastut’iwnn* “That rain-born cup flowing with fire that you poured into the Apostles in the holy coenaculum, pour upon us as well, O Holy Spirit, God—your wisdom together with this vestment.” The passage adumbrates a spiritual intoxication imagined as a cup of fire pouring down like rain, the mystical drunkenness that has infused the poet’s soul with both artistic wisdom and sensual delight.

The brief poem *Kišerin erazank’ə*, “What the night dreams”, recalls William Blake’s *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience* in its deceptive simplicity.

In the tenebrous fog dreams the night
Of the burning cherry lips of daybreak bright,
And then the shining stars of joy all smile
Upon the gloried lap of heaven’s blue delight.

But sometimes too in nightmares deep
Dawn yawns abyssal in the nighttime’s sleep
And after the rude blast’s growls and heaves
The rain comes, shedding floods of tears.

Here the tenebrous fog, *aghchamughch*, of the first line of the first stanza adumbrates the phonetically paired and thematically twinned *mghtsavanch*, “nightmare”, of the first line of the second; so rain may come even if one dreams of a clear day. And the dark day, an inversion of the hope of light, becomes a spatial inversion, too: dawn does not rise or break but yawns, an *antunt*, or bottomless abyss. The language and structure are simple at first glance, then

strange and disorienting. But Medzarents' tends to recover his strength and thrust darkness away, as in *Gyank'in yerka*, "The Song of Life":

From within life's frightful furrows
Hissed whispers interspersed with cries
To me, All hopes come but to great vanity.
Emptiness seals life's inanity.

Every flower by its fading is attended;
Every life, in black shadows, ended;
And as the incense of the bloom is routed
So vanishes all hope, unsprouted.

But through my smouldering reveries
Steals a light of sudden purple bright:
The gold and iridescent lovely song of life
To all of which I listened, trembling.

Let not these gloomy lamentations crush you,
Nor your golden hopes be scattered to the wind.
Each furrowed brow is smoothed, a salve to every pain
Comes in self-forgotten smiles and laughter.

Look now, the blue of heaven's canopy
By bleary clouds is sometimes stained
And smiles wink out, the rain pours down—
But tears of rain predict their very end.

Our word for rain contains the sun's name as its ending,
And crying ends with sunlit smiles,
And all the past occasions of our laughing
Create a long inheritance of happiness.

The line *Amēn antsrev arev m'uni irmēn verch*, literally "Every rain has a sun after it" I have translated "Our word for rain contains the sun's name as its ending", stressing the play on Armenian *antsrev* "rain" – *arev* "sun" and the double meaning of *verch* as "after" and "ending".

In *Irigvan tēm*, "Towards dusk", Medzarents' encodes his pen name, *dziadzan*, "rainbow":

Close to voluptuous daybreak in my slumber I dreamed
Of the song of life in burning hues festooned
And shivering rainbows of sūken shimmer stretching
Fringe aglow into the other world.

Diurnal life's concerns the maelstrom
 Of enchantment of my dreams dispelled
 And I saw life up close and shorn of manic
 And deceitful games: savage wounding pain.

Dusk comes, shadows swiftly fall,
 In vain now morning's reveries I seek.
 A savage love imbibed the dewdrops of their light
 And with my sobbing I remained, all alone and far away.

The last two lines of the first stanza enclose the poet's rainbow in a cadence of gorgeous, reduplicative compounds, whose rhythmic doubling and length the very verb *g'ergarēin* "they were stretching out" both expresses and phonetically reflects: *Ev toghtochun dziadzanner medak'sarēch/ u p'aghp'adzob g'ergarēin ashkharh m'antin*. But the only phonetic echo the *dziadzan* finds, as night falls, is *hedzedzan-k'*, crying. The poems *Giragmudk'*, "On the Eve of Sunday" and *Khung ev arts'unk'*, "Incense and tears" evoke the poet's mother's evening prayers and are suffused with a spiritual calm. The first bears the Classical Armenian epigraph,

"Coming at the setting of the Sun, we have beheld this evening's light."

The softly fleeting violet evening light is happiness:
 Golden threads are wreathed in velvet mist of frankincense;
 Blue fringes, rainbow, voices' ripple, mystic rose;
 And, as they melt, the shining tears of tapers.

My incense-thirsting soul sips the silent moment
 As the censers swing, their eyes of golden flame.
 Soul-seizing fear there sets me down, unblinking,
 I sense the kiss, my soul swathed in sea green.

Hues of amethyst anoint the swirls of incense smoke:
 On bended knee before the mystery I stand; my arms, a Cross,
 And wait for Sunday, brilliant, to dawn upon my soul.

The torches dream, enwrapt in chrysolite and emerald,
 From arch and dome the light and laughter rise,
 My soul sinks, buried in this vision splendid:
 The softly fleeting violet evening light is happiness.

The liturgical text of the epigraph is the ancient hymn recited Saturday evening, *Erg kirakamtic'*: *Loys zuart' surb p'arac' anmah!*... "Hallelujah, hallelujah! Joyful light of the holy immortal glory of the heavenly father, holy

maker of life, Jesus Christ! We have come at the setting of the sun and seen the light of this evening. We bless Father and Son and Holy Spirit of God. And all say Amen. Make us worthy in every hour to bless in a voice of song the name of the glory of your holy Trinity, which gives life, on account of which this world, too, glorifies you."⁸ And the second poem:

Her tear drops with the dripping myrrh
My mother mixes in the censer:
Passing through and unseen door
She listens, happy

To a voice emerging from the Otherworld.
To the eyes that observe
Her Saturday evening incense
Her hand ceaseless makes the sign of the Cross.

And to all she gives a portion
Of the ringing censer's flower smoke;
And the eve of Sunday is a mirror
Where the ardent fire glows

Of guardian angels luminous in soul
Whom this evening she has given to sip
Her tears and weekly incense smoke.

And now my grey-haired mother bows...

The guardian angels here are the *zavart'unner*; compare the phrase *loys zuart'* in the hymn. But the angels are *lusahoki*, "of luminous soul", an epithet of the departed; so the simple rhyming collocation of *khung*, "incense" and *arts'unik'* "tears" may reflect both ardent prayer and sad recollection of those departed to *Andrashkharh*, the Otherworld. As his mother swings the censer to give each member of the family a breath of its aroma, Misak' hints at its cymbal-clapping sound: *dzukhēn dzaghik mā dzap'eli*. Paruyr Sevak probably had in mind these lines about a loving mother's pure hearted faith and its transcendent power, and the sounds and scent of Armenian Christian prayer, when he wrote in his poem *Kheghkataka*, "The Jester" (1962): *Vortegh en mernum bolor kirk'era?/ Tsap' u tsntsghayi tsanrut'yan nerk'o./ Naye khunkerum*. "Where do all the idols die?/ Under the weight of applause and of cymbals,/ And also in incense."

⁸ On the hymn and its echoes in recent Armenian writing, see J.R. Russell, English trans., intro., and commentary, Derenik Demirjian, *The Book of Flowers*, Belmont, MA: Armenian Heritage Press, 2003.

Medzarents' writes a homeland of sleeping skies, nocturnal royal revels, weeping dawns, angels peeking in from the otherworld at his mother's prayers, the sounds of cymbals, colors of rainbows and streaming silks. He wonders what a silkworm dreams in its cocoon. And in the cycle *Ellayi, allayi*, "Would, would that I were" he creates a world-embracing liturgy of his own:

Evening.

Would I were this evening
 to touch every passerby's brow
 lovely, languorously to linger
 Would I were this evening.

Would I were this evening
 filled with human song and birdsong
 and the elements' clamorous heartbeat
 would I were this evening.

Would I were this evening
 lazy, charming, gauzy, rosy-smelling
 and undulant as a gold-brocaded curtain
 every soul sheltering.

Would I were this evening
 Dense with the bells' clangor that strides upon Heaven,
 as an incense-dimmed chapel anointed, torch-litten
 would I were this evening.

Would I were this evening
 tranquil to give to the waning lamp
 of a dying girl new flame from my shining—
 would I were this evening.

Would I were this evening
 filled with the oceanic waters' heavy booming
 and with the blossom of the breezes' melody—
 would I were this evening.

Would I were this evening
 that on daybreak's pearly pillow fades
 tossing its gorgeous tresses streaming—
 would I were this evening.

Would I were this evening
 resplendent, universal, sweet, bestowing
 upon all my shining locks' fire and gold,
 would I were this evening!

And even broken in sickness, his generous spirit imagines only light, in the poem *Arevin*, "To the Sun":

With the gentle and full-voice wind from the south
 So like a kiss though dreamed of long ago
 It fills my love-lorn soul with pleasure.
 Sun, shine on, your arrows tinged with gold
 Upon my birth pangs muffled by the fog
 There where thought lingers and has lost its way:
 Shine on, good Sun, for I am sick...
 Plunging madly in the fluid casement's breast
 For the noon's embrace, lush green, dream fire-bound,
 I attend with outstretched arms.
 Spin round me all your nets of flame
 And rock me in your heat until
 Locked in your kiss, consuming, burning,
 The drowsy children rise and file
 Out of my soul
 That I may rise and tread anew
 My ardent paths of sensuous delight.
 I am sick, good Sun, shine, shine on...
 My soul is a bird, It longs
 For laughing song and air and light.
 But the trill that takes wing from its depths
 On steps over-shadowed and unseen
 Is short of breath. It plummets down.
 Shine, shine, good Sun, for I am sick.
 In your flaring, effortlessly roused
 Long as the wild, fierce hornets' antic hay
 Whirls on, drunken with your flame,
 Till thirsting leaf expire; blossom, fade—
 I drink this restful day its nameless pleasures,
 Slothful, sentient,
 Intoxicant, luxuriant.
 Just a little longer,
 Good sun, shine on, for I am sick.
 For one last time
 Cleave to my impassioned soul: it burns with fire!
 I am sick, good Sun. Shine, and shine.

This is a poem I think Ch'arents' might have had in mind when in 1920 he wrote *Mahvan tesil*, "Vision of death", which uses the expressive words *marmrel* (*marogh ev marmrogh irikva mej*, "in the evening waning and decaying") and *borb* (*im borb erkir, lusapsak k'o apagan* "my land of fire, your future crowned

with light”) that stand out here too. Both poems are pleas *in extremis*; and Medzarents’ draws expressly from the language and gestures of prayer: the line *t’evadaradz gə spasem*, “arms outstretched I wait” evokes a line from the Narek that he cites in his article *Naregats’iin hed*, “With Narekac’i”: *Aha karkarəm zkarkameal bazuks hogwoys yanun k’o, hzawr...* “Now I stretch wide my soul’s bending arms to you, O mighty one...”

The final poem I would like to present here is the one I believe may best serve as the *ars poetica*, the poet’s particular artistic credo. *Inch’ arpets’ut’yamb*, “With what intoxication!” was printed, as noted above, less than a year before Medzarents’ death, and was dedicated to a friend who was to be murdered in 1915. The poem deploys every gorgeous alliterative cadence, every intricacy of verbal combinatory invention, every extravagance of imagery, every incantatory rhythm its author had honed, and gathered, and cherished. You will find in it the marital diadem, the *narōd*, and the folksong’s word for loveliness, *khorođ*. The green of the crowns of trees is *dzovadzup’*, “sea wave tossing” and the plains’ purple majesty is *dzirani*. There is a catalogue of herbs, *pazmapurum*, “with crowding multitudes of their aromas” and at the end as all elements and beings join the dance together they experience an *antratarts dziadzanum*, a reflecting, returning “rainbowness” that is the poet bidding envoi, his soul reaching up from all, a graceful arc composed of color, light, and dew to touch the face of heaven and once again embrace the earth. In its pantheistic intoxication, its unashamed love, its elemental exultation and delight, it stands as a testament, an inheritance, a clarion of the Armenian language and literature, the victory of a free spirit come from an unconquered ancient land. What is, in the end, the light that shines in darkness, and the darkness comprehends it not, but the singular courage of the soul. And here it is.

How drunken, the trees in the light!
 Trees in the wind and in the rain,
 Shaggy-tressed trees, trees that to the heavens strain,
 And saplings green and tossing, crests like sea waves,
 Tumbling to the bosom of the wheat fields in a daze,
 All life is drunken on the sun’s abundant blaze!
 In what intoxication the grass above the dark soil rises,
 Opens to the light, amazed,
 In the instant of its life the dewdrops of its eyes.
 How drunken are the flowers in the dew:
 Flowers in the light, at ease beneath the hand’s caress,
 Are swooning now in expectation.
 With what intoxication!
 Every hillock on its green brow binds
 The blossoms’ multicolored nuptial diadem,
 And from the lovely plain and dale
 The red foot stork now guides his bride:

Returning home, imbibes his longings' satiation.
With what intoxication blackbirds drink the light
And whisper it, alert
In orchards' leafy fastnesses.
With what intoxication the snow-white jays afloat
On high, sail, perambulate upon the sky,
Taking wing, their bodies gilded on the glowing firmament.
With such intoxication the turtle dove
Her nuptial bed arranges in the shady bower of a tree
For her swain in patient passion.
The drunken butterfly unfolds upon
The tiny sparkling lakelet of its leaf
And with its milky winds erects its canopy.
With that intoxication above the purple plain
To scarlet flowers hives the bee
To suck upon the tiny female nipples, luxuriant.
In their drunkenness the seas brim blue,
The river waters surge, the streams are spilling;
The rivulets purl swiftly; lakes, azure—
The brook, his waves green-fronded tossing,
Slips between the willows' pale lunar limbs.
The drunken clouds now shake their shaggy heads,
The wondrous liquid massing in their breasts,
And, like a snaking thread, the rain descends
To slake the hot gold thirst of earth.
With that intoxication drink their fill
Upon the parched soil's universal burn
All creatures born, all flowers grown:
Drunk, the wave laps in embrace the perfumed tree:
Thyme and mint and basil growing wild
And storax, frankincense, aromas teeming
Are embracing, drunken, every thing,
All shapes and forms, all colors gleaming,
All essences and elements: He
Whose rainbow every thing reflects, returning,
God! Who from God knows where, has come to them.





210. Բենկեանի կամուրջը:



ՅՅ. ԻՆՉ ԱՐԲԵՑ ՈՒԹՅԱՄԲ...

Գեղամ Բաբսեղյան բաբեկամիս

Ի՜նչ արբեցությամբ, ծառեր, լույսին մեջ,
 Մաղեր հովին մեջ և անձրևներուն,
 Վարսավոր ծառեր, ծառեր երկնուղեշ,
 Ու ծառեր մատաղ՝ ծովածուսի կանանշ
 Ցորենի ցանքին գոգն ինկած շվարուն՝
 Ամենն ալ կյանքին կ'ըմպեն հորդ ճաճանշ:
 Ի՜նչ արբեցությամբ խոտն՝ այս հողեն վեր
 Կ'ելլեն, ըզմայլո՜ւն՝ կը բանա լույսին՝
 Վայրկյան մը ասլուղ իր ցողն աչքեր:
 Ի՜նչ արբեցությամբ ծաղիկներ շաղին,
 Մաղիկներ լույսին, մըտերիմ ձեռքին,
 Ըսպասումներուն մեջ կը նըվաղին:
 Ի՜նչ արբեցությամբ ամենմեկ արոտ,
 Ամենմեկ բլրակ՝ իր կանանշ ճակտին
 Կը կապե երփնած ծաղիկն նարոտ:
 Ի՜նչ արբեցությամբ դաշտերեն խորոտ,
 Ծվ հարս հովիտեն՝ կարմըրոտանի
 Կ'առնեն արագիլն իր դարձին կտրոտ:
 Ի՜նչ արբեցությամբ սարյակներն, արթուն,
 Լո՛ւյսը կը ծըծեն, լո՛ւյսը կը հծծեն,
 Մրգաստաններու մեջեն սաղարթուն:
 Ի՜նչ արբեցությամբ ձյուն ճայեր, ծրփին,
 Բարձրեն՝ օդաճեմ լյուղ կու գան. արփին
 Մեջ կ'ոսկեզօծին ու կը թևանան:
 Ի՜նչ արբեցությամբ սատրակն հարսենի,
 Առագաստ ըրած ծառի հովանին՝

Կըսպասե տարփոտ իր վարուժանին։
 Ի՞նչ արբեցությամբ թիթեռն է բացեր,
 Լեւակի մանրիկ լիճին վրա փրփրուն՝
 Առագաստաշեն իր կաթ թեփկներ։
 Ի՞նչ արբեցությամբ ծիրանի դաշտին
 Շեկ ծաղիկներուն մը վազն մեղուն,
 Սըծել իգայի պտկունքներն հեշտին։
 Ի՞նչ արբեցությամբ ծովերն են կապույտ,
 Գետերն՝ հորդաշուր, աղբյուրներ՝ զեղուն,
 Լիճներ՝ խաժագուն, առուն՝ շուտափուլթ,
 Լոռածամ առուն՝ որ կ'անցնի քովեն
 Ուռեստաններու գեջ, լսնակապույտ։
 Ի՞նչ արբեցությամբ ամպեր կը թոթվեն
 Հրաշալի հեղուկն իրենց ըստինքին՝
 Որ ղերթ ասղանի վար կը սողոսկի՝
 Մարելու երկրին պասուքը ոսկի։
 Ի՞նչ արբեցությամբ զայն կո՛ւշտ կը խըմեն
 Համազրավ տապեն սարսառած հողին
 Սընունդներն ամեն, ծակտիքներն ամեն։
 Ի՞նչ արբեցությամբ հոգին կ'ընդգրկեն
 Ալյակն հորդահոս՝ ծայրիի բույրին,
 Մաթրին, անանուխ, վայրի ռեհանի
 Բազմաբուրումներն ըստաշխ ու խունկե։
 Ի՞նչ արբեցությամբ կ'ընդգրկեն անի-
 Բոլոր ձևերն ու երանգներն ամեն,
 Բոլոր գոյությանց, բոլոր տարրերուն
 Իր մեջ անդրադարձ ծիածանումեն՝
 Աստվածն՝ որ եկավ՝ շե՛ս գիտեր ուրկե՛...

3. Կ Ա Յ Ծ Ե Ր

Հոգվույս դափ ու թմբուկի
 Կ'իջնե ծիծաղն այս գիշեր.
 Մնծղաներու պես ցնծուն՝
 Մափ կը զարնեն իմ հուշեր:

Բամբիռներու երգին հետ
 Քու շահենի աչքերուդ
 Միրանեծին բոցն հըրուտ
 Կ'այրի հոգվույս մեջ նորեն:

Գինով՝ աննյութ նեկտարեն
 Համբըւրներուն ծաղկանուշ՝
 Հոն խուլաբար կը պարեն
 Շարժուձևեր բամբիշի:

Ցայգն համրորեն կը մաշի՜,
 Ա՛հ, քի՛չ մըն ալ, քի՛չ մըն ալ,
 Կ'ուզե հոգիս գինովնալ
 Նայվածքիդ մեջ հրահոսան:

THE BOOK OF THE WAY (GIRK' CHANAPARHI) OF YEGHISHE CHARENTS:
AN ILLUMINATED APOCALYPTIC GOSPEL FOR SOVIET ARMENIA.

James R. Russell
Harvard University

To Joseph B. Russell, my father; and to the memory of Sidney A. Russell, my grandfather.

1. THE BACKGROUND.

In 1932 *Pethrat*, the State Publishing House in Erevan, published the *Hoktember/Noyember Taregirk' (October/November Yearbook)*¹ to commemorate the achievements of Soviet Armenia on the fifteenth anniversary of the Revolution and the tenth of the foundation of the USSR and the incorporation of Armenia into the Union. The poet Yeghishe Ch'arents', his friend the writer Aksel Bakunts', and Yeghia Ch'ubar edited the volume, which was designed and illustrated by the well-known graphic artist Hakob Kojoyan. Following a title page, the book opens with full, facing-page woodcuts of the founder of the Soviet Union, Vladimir Il'ich Lenin, and of Iosif Vissarionovich Stalin, who had by then consolidated dictatorial power. The former appears against the background of a regimented line of banner-bearing soldiers and workers marching; this emphatic pattern of regimentation has been carried forward and made more abstract, even dehumanized, for the background to Stalin, who looms over waters flowing evenly through the symmetric locks of a dam and tractors seen from above moving along the parallel furrows of a collective farm. The leaders of the masses thus preside over a society unified in purpose and strength, as inevitable and incontrovertible as mathematics and science in its ideology, its historical progress, and its power. Gone are the antique, hieratic double-headed eagles and obscure religious symbols of the Tsars: the Soviet Union is a new phenomenon in human affairs and a future that works (as H.G. Wells put it), with a new and severely modern iconography of its own.

The next Communist leader of the hierarchy depicted in the *Yearbook* is Armenia's Party Secretary Aghasi Khanjyan, patron and protector of the eccentric Charents, whom the poet called fondly and reverentially the Dauphin of Nairi. He merits half a page in which the themes of the first two portraits are blended together but also softened by being broken up into a *mélange* that works in the distant vista of the country's mountains. (Pls. 1-4: title page, Lenin, Stalin, and Khanjyan in the 1932 *Yearbook*.) After two grainy photographs of minor local functionaries comes Kojoyan's striking full-page, two-color title of Charents' "Praises of the Grape, Wine, and Belles Lettres, written for the Fifteenth Anniversary of the October Revolution" (discussed below with its twin in the *Book of the Way*), with vignettes of Armenia's feudal past and Socialist present. The poet very nearly dominates the book of which he is the chief editor, overshadowing all three of his country's rulers; and one is left with two impressions.

The first impression is that the art of the book as Kojoyan designed it is not simply decorative but consciously iconographic: the order of the pictures and their design speak to the reader in the symbolic language of a system of belief, much as though, *mutatis mutandis*, one were opening an Armenian illuminated manuscript of the Gospels. The observation that Communism was a dogma that co-opted the imagery and techniques of earlier state and confessional ideologies, particularly the theme of apocalypse and the end of history, to its own purposes is not new. The Russian Symbolist poet Alexander Blok (1880-1921), for instance, wrote a long poem, "The Twelve" (Rus. Двенадцать), in which a violent gang of Red Guards are revealed to be the Apostles, with Christ at their head.² Recent study of the arts in the early Soviet Union has focused on Russian book design of the 1920's, particularly of the avant garde, futurist trends, and on the remarkable efflorescence of Russian Jewish art and book production in Yiddish in particular, in towns of the former Pale such as Vitebsk and in the metropolitan centers of the USSR.³ With the imposition of Socialist Realism, the study of the Soviet artistic heritage turns often to a comparativist approach that juxtaposes Russian art at the height of Stalinist totalitarianism to that of Nazi Germany.⁴ The experience of the cultures of Central Asia and the Caucasus, south of the Slavic big brother, receives little attention, suffering perhaps from a patronizing condescension that Russian chauvinists seem to

have communicated by osmosis to some scholars of Soviet studies abroad. Armenia has a religious and artistic background in the Ancient Near East— Urartu, Assyria, and Iran— and in Eastern Christianity, where the country has strong ties to Syrian and Byzantine painting but also developed powerful artistic schools and exegetical traditions of its own. The art of this Transcaucasian/Near Eastern Communist polity ought to fascinate one as the Communist reflex of the culmination of the visual traditions of the Ancient Near East and of East Christianity, but it has not received hitherto the attention it warrants: even in the Armenian studies field, art historians focus on the glories of the medieval period, while the modern era is left largely to students of politics and of the vast and terrible record of the Genocide, that watershed in modern Armenian history before which so much else simply pales in significance.

The second impression, aided no doubt by hindsight, is the exposure of Charents by his immense personal presence in the *Yearbook*, a dangerous hubris. For in that same year a volume of the work of Soviet Armenia's greatest living poet was published, more modest than the sumptuous jubilee edition he had expected. This was a warning: the USSR had room for only one cult of personality, that of the *ghekavar* (the Helmsman)— as Charents and others called Stalin— and the satellite cults of those whom Osip Mandelstam, a friend of Charents, derided as the “Ossete’s” half-men, his thick-skinned leaders. Charents wrote the bulk of the poems that comprise the volume *Girk' chanaparhi* (*Book of the Way*), which came out with Pethrat a year later, in 1933, in the first six months of that year,⁵ incorporating the cycle of poems already printed in the *Yearbook*. Kojoyan designed the volume in its entirety. Charents' collaboration with the artist had, thus, already begun; but the two must have worked still with the speed and dedication of a Stakhanovite shock brigade of the five-year plan to produce the finished volume within a single year. Modern Armenian literature has no other artistic object, I think, quite like it: from start to finish it is a unified graphic and textual work, the Communist response to and meditation upon a millennium of Armenian Christian manuscript books of the Bible that co-opts several others styles as well, particularly the Ancient Near Eastern triumphal bas-relief. The first edition of the book contained a play, “Achilles or Pierrot”, that the Armenian Communist Party arbitrarily and inaccurately condemned as Trotskyist on 14

November 1933. It was withdrawn, and in 1934 a second edition (still bearing the date of 1933) was issued with other poems to fill the gap: “*Arvest k’ert’ut’yan*” (“Ars poetica”) and “*Girk’ imastut’yan*” (“Book of Wisdom”). The book also contains the famous acrostic *Hay zhoghovurd, k’o miak p’rkut’yunə k’o havak’akan uzhi mej e* (“Armenian people, your sole salvation is in your united strength”), formed by every second letter of the lines of the poem “*Patgam*” (“Message”)—a title itself underscoring the powerful intent of the poet.⁶ Charents seems to have injudiciously boasted to an acquaintance that he had got away with his trick, the friend promptly informed on him, and the verse, which the poet had not intended as anti-Soviet or nationalistic, but which was easily so interpreted so as to incriminate him, was then emphasized in a memorandum from Moscow to Armenia of 27 January 1937. The verse was the nail that sealed shut the coffin, and the decision of the establishment to do away with him was now certain: he was arrested on 26 July of that year and died or was executed on 27 November.⁷ Some who kept copies paid in the years to come with their freedom and even their lives.⁸

2. THE BOOK.

The *Book of the Way*, Charents’ last, is a *tour de force* and a tour of time and space as well, in which the poet’s path through life and Armenia’s long road through the ages merge into a single monumental, epic narrative. Charents and Armenia have arrived, he writes, at the crossroads of history. He retells the *Epic of Sasun*, but with his own, critical, triumphalist Communist voice. He changes the traditional invocation of blessing, the *Voghormi*, that begins each section (called a *chyugh*, “branch”) of the recited text, into a curse, excoriating the country’s princes and priests—as though the folk bards of the past had somehow failed to see the true story. And he has the imprisoned apocalyptic hero Little Mher—Mithra—emerge from his millennial captivity in the rock of Van: “*Minc’hev orn ekav—yev demk’ov varr/ Yelav k’arayrits’ Mhern ardar,/ Yev berets’ zarmin Ohani ch’ar/ Ankum verjnakan yev mah anchar*” (“Till the day came, and with fiery countenance/ Mher the righteous emerged from the cave,/ And brought to Ohan’s wicked kin/ A final fall and an unspeakable death”). In the epic, this event is to take place at the end of time, but for the poet the Bolshevik revolution of 25 October 1917 (7

November outside Russia) is Apocalypse Now. In “Vision of Death”, he beholds a vast and politicized vision of that death— the death of a whole class of enemies, of class enemies— wholly unlike the other lonely, introspective, emotional lyric poem with the same title, “*Mahvan tesil’*”, written in 1920, in which Charents sees the preparations for a public hanging and offers to die alone on the scaffold as the ransom for all the Armenian people. Now, he encounters the great Armenian poets, scholars, and national leaders of the past century. These include, in order, the Mekhitarist scholar Ghevont Alishan; the Persian Armenian novelist and social reformer Raffi; the patriotic writer Raphael Patkanian; the founder of the Dashnak party, K’ristap’or Mik’ayelian; the leaders of the nationalist Dashnak party Rostom and Zavarian; the democratic poet Step’an Nazarians’; the Western Armenian poet Mgrdich’ Beshigt’ashlian (who holds a brass shepherd’s flute) and the poet Bedros Tourian (who plays a genuine one, *iskakan sring*); Grigor Artsruni, founder of the progressive newspaper *Mshak* (*The Cultivator*); Catholicos Mkrtich’ Khrimian [called universally and lovingly *Hayrik*, (“The Little Father”)]; the Dashnak statesman and poet Avetis Aharonian; the poets Siamant’o and Daniel Varuzhan; and at last, at the travelers’ emergence from the darkness of the pit, “a light of heavenly hue” (*erknaguyn mi luys*)— Lenin. In the *Divine Comedy*, Virgil and Dante come out of hell on the dawn of Easter Sunday, but to Charents it is, again, the Revolution that is the resurrection and the life, the true light and salvation of mankind. So as the lone, proud Dante guides him through the Inferno (he turns down Virgil and Ferdosi as unworthy of this new voyage, as they were poets who bowed in fealty to kings) he derides his political enemies, the Dashnaks. It is not just a titanic settling of scores but an entire cultural and political landscape, all doomed by their heresy or simply by their failure to live long enough to see the Communist salvation dawn and become properly enlightened by Marxist class-consciousness. When the Party met to consider the book, even Khanjyan expressed outrage that Charents in his survey seemed to have drawn so decisive a line between past and present, to see nothing at all in Armenia’s past and tradition worthy of remembering and preserving.

The Armenian Revolutionary Federation, Dashnaks for short, who populate this parochial Inferno, are an Armenian socialist party who founded the short-lived first

Republic and were driven by the Communists into exile after the bitter civil strife of 1920-1921. The literary scholar Nikol Aghbalian, who had served as the ill-fated Republic's minister of culture, had taken Charents under his wing and publicized his work. Though the poet sent copies of his books with respectful dedications to Aghbalian in Tehran, the older man was enraged by Charents' anti-Dashnak polemics, which he regarded as base ingratitude. Aghbalian wrote back accusing Charents of vulgar obscenity, and even penned an embittered parody of the poet's proletarian verses about free love.⁹ In 1936 the Boston Dashnak paper *Hairenik* (*Fatherland*) published a scathing review of the *Book of the Way*, predicting that its author would be writing more Communist propaganda for years to come. But by then Charents was wholly isolated, in fear of arrest, writing very different poems that were to survive only because they were buried secretly by friends.

As the *Book of the Way* progresses, Charents scales the unapproachable peak of Ararat anew with Khach'atur Abovyan, whose novel *Verk' Hayastani* (*Wounds of Armenia*), was both the chronicle of Russia's liberation of Eastern Armenia in 1828 and the first prose work in the vernacular tongue—written one generation later, in the fateful revolutionary year of 1848. The Church had condemned Abovyan for setting foot on the holy mountain, and disapproved of his secularist views, which were doubly dangerous since as a teacher he imparted them to young and impressionable minds. Shortly after finishing his book, Abovyan left his house one morning and vanished: the mystery of his disappearance has never been solved. In the poem, Charents has Abovyan set out on his last day for Ararat, "that there he might sample eternal rest" (*vor chashake ayntegh haverzhakan hangist*). The poet felt a close kinship to Abovyan as an ingenious literary innovator, and perhaps even foresaw a confluence of fates. But there is an echo here, too, of a verse from the final poem of the *Tagharan* (*Song Book*) cycle of 1920, in which Charents exclaims that he loves Mount Ararat *inchpes anhas p'arrk'i champ'a*, ("like the way to an inaccessible glory"). The road to Ararat and its glorious summit and mystic snows may thus be the way to death as well.

Armored trains played an important role in the civil war that followed the 1917 Revolution, and a popular Russian Communist song bade: Наш паровоз, вперед гуди, в коммуне остановка,/ Иного нет у нас пути, в руках у нас винтовка (“Our locomotive, forward, let your whistle blow, our stop is at the Commune:/ We have no other way, and hold a rifle in our hands”). So Charents, retelling an actual event of the anti-Dashnak Bolshevik uprising in Armenia of May 1920, boards an armored train, *Zrahapat Vardan Zoravar*, bearing the name of St. Vardan Mamikonian, the fifth-century hero of Armenia’s war for spiritual survival as a Christian polity against the attempts by Sasanian Iran to force the nation to return to Zoroastrianism. The train is converted to the Communist cause in the Armenian civil war and races on to victory, sending its defiant message not in the eloquent, ponderous diction of ancient hagiography but by the lightning and the concise wording of what has been called the Victorian Internet—the telegraph. It is the cadence of Charents’ early revolutionary tirades *en escalier*, the style of his comrade, the larger-than-life poetic hero Mayakovsky.

Speaking to the centuries to come, the poet addresses seven counsels to future poets—the seventh being that they accept no counsel! And he engages in a conversation outside space and time with his poetic brethren Goethe, Schiller, Heine, and Ferdosi. The book contains also the praises of wine and song with which Charents had celebrated his old-new land’s anniversary in the *Yearbook*. He had experimented with the various poetic styles of his time: decadence, symbolism, futurism, Mayakovsky’s stridently declamatory proletarian verse, and a limpid, almost neo-Classical realism. Here is his personal artistic summation on the threshold of middle age, but it is a bequest that is transcendent, in which he addresses the ages, challenging the Armenian canon in general and, with the book’s iconographic program, the Gospel (and manuscript art) in particular.

One has mentioned Mayakovsky; and the strident Russian bard of the Revolution, after deriding the suicide of the poet Sergei Esenin, had gone on to take his own life in 1930. These events shocked all Soviet literati, and would have had a very powerful impact on Charents. He knew and admired Mayakovsky; and Esenin had belonged for a time to the group of the Imaginist poets: Alexander Kusikov, a Russian-Armenian poet

from Moscow, belonged to this school and Charents used a line from Kusikov as the epigraph to his autobiographical “*Ch’arents’ Name*” (“Book of Charents”, with the title modeled on the Persian of Ferdosi’s *Book of Kings*, the *Šāh-nāme*). It is very likely that Charents had known Esenin as well. In his last poem, Mayakovsky overtly *rejects* the telegraphic mode, returning to a lyricism that with impassioned solemnity surveys the world rather than haranguing it. It is also a letter to his beloved, much reworked, that became, in the end, his *obiter dicta* and suicide note. Уже второй, должно быть, ты легла./ В ночи Млечпуть серебряной Окою./ Я не спешу и молниями телеграмм/ Мне незачем тебя будить и беспокоить./ Как говорят, инцидент исперчен./ Любовная лодка разбилась о быт./ С тобой мы в расчете и не к чему перечень/ взаимных болей, бед и обид./ Ты посмотри, какая в мире тишь./ Ночь обложила небо звездной данью./ В такие вот часы встаешь и говоришь/ векам, истории и мирозданию. “It’s past one in the morning. You must have gone to bed./ The Milky Way at night streams silver like the Oka./ I’m in no hurry and there’s no need/ With the lightning bolts of telegrams to disturb and wake you./ As they say, the incident’s exhausted./ Love’s boat has shattered on life’s daily grind./ We’re quits, you and I, no need to reckon/ Mutual offenses, miseries, and pains./ But look, what a silence is upon the world./ Night wraps the sky in starry tribute./ At hours such as this you arise and speak/ To the centuries, to history, to all the cosmos.” Charents perhaps knew that the *Book of the Way*, his speech to the centuries, to history, and all the cosmos, was a valediction.

Modesty and obscurity rarely saved anyone from the meat-grinder of the Stalin purges; but Charents’ titanic, heroic persona made him perilously visible to the Helmsman in the Kremlin, who knew of him, asked about him, toyed with him. And this made Charents the prey of the cowardly, spiteful, and envious homunculi that came to dominate Soviet Armenia’s arts and letters in the late 1930s. There can be no doubt that his greatest book was also his nemesis. But that is of course the fault of a degenerate system and a pathological society, not of the magnificent book or the man: such a man cannot become silent and compliant.¹⁰ And what a man he was. The teenager dreaming in Symbolist verse in dusty Kars, the revolutionary soldier, the mischief maker of hungry

proto-Soviet Moscow, the energetic and meticulous chief editor of Armenia's main publishing house, the bold speaker at the first congress of the Union of Soviet Writers, the head of the publication committee for the millennium of the Sasun Epic, the Armenian member of the All-Union publication committee for the Pushkin centenary, the poet, the heir of Sayat Nova and the bards of old, the drinker who could party till dawn whom Khanjyan supplied with cases of cognac, the caring father, the grieving widower, the versatile lover, the drug addict whose reveries became dramas defeating space and time, the mystic, the friend of William Saroyan, Leonid Pasternak, and Osip Mandelstam, this Prometheus, this giant— for if such a man can grow to his true stature he is Olympian— was ostracized and isolated, tied down with a thousand tiny, lethal threads, stabbed with a thousand small cuts by the reprobate creatures of the Soviet Armenian literary mafia, then arrested, then dead in November 1937. Khanjyan had been killed by Beria at Tiflis the year before, sharing the fate of other Party leaders of Stalin's inner Caucasian circle, like Sergo Ordzhonikidze in Georgia. The great purge swept away the best of the Soviet Armenian intelligentsia, leaving behind in positions of authority betrayers, assassins, cowards, and time-servers, sparing some artists like Kojoyan with the plain luck to survive unnoticed or to evade denunciation; and Charents was not to be fully rehabilitated until 1954, a year after Stalin's death, when Anastas Mikoyan—the Armenian in the Central Committee of the CPSU— personally ordered that a book of his verse be published without delay.¹¹ One will consider the book, not for its fateful political implications for the poet's career— historians of the era continue to trace that trajectory— but as a unique artifact of Armenian iconography; and this leads one to address two further issues, that do still have, however, a political aspect.

The first of these is the nature of the ideological message of the *Book of the Way*: The October Revolution and the victory of the Communists in Armenia several years later was seen as the single great watershed, the turning point, in the history of the human race. Socialism was now being built in one great country, but that blessed land was beset on all sides by the forces of darkness. The 1930s thus telescoped together both the tribulation and the resurrection, as it were. Historical inevitability, instead of Divine will, ensured that Communism was to win through. This is the final conflict, declares the

“Internationale”, which was then still the national anthem of the USSR (it was Charents who did the official Armenian translation) and with that was to come the decisive enlightenment of the whole human race, that hitherto had languished in darkness—for Marxism alone provided the only key to the true perception of historical and all other reality, even the physical sciences. In human affairs, Communism thus was to bring the perfection and the end of history. In his lyrics Charents imagined this utopia and evoked a future Erevan of perfect beauty, imagining the handsome, curly-haired Komsomol lad (*gangraher tghan*) walking down the road to Ararat amidst gardens and orchards, clean factories and beautiful houses, and pausing at the poet’s grave. This is a meditation on death as well as on future life, and echoes to some degree Pushkin’s lyric on death with the final wish that “young life play at the entrance to (my) tomb” (И пусть у гробового входа младая будет жизнь играть); but the great Russian poet whose work Charents knew and loved had, for all his cautious support of the Decembrists and hope for democratic reform, never believed in any sort of transfigured future reality of the sort Christianity offered and Communism was to preach. Life itself was magical enough. These assertions of Charents are the claims, then, of an apocalyptic faith; and the *Book of the Way* in its texts and iconographic program supports them from the particular standpoint of Armenia and its multifaceted engagement with Ancient Near Eastern, East Christian, and modern Western and Soviet art.

The second issue one engages is the attitude of the poet himself to this radical ideology, that he embraced and advocated so forcefully and overtly. Charents was born in 1897 in the sleepy, provincial garrison town of Kars, Russian Armenia, under the *ancien régime*,¹² and although he was spared the worst traumas that befell the nation in the Armenian lands under Ottoman domination, he was a Russian soldier on the Caucasian front and witnessed the aftermath of the Genocide of 1915, including the devastating loss of his native town. The Symbolist poet Vahan Teryan was his immediate model and precursor, and he looked up to two other, more traditional, Eastern Armenian poets, Hovhannes T’umanyan and Avetik Isahakyan. Both were lyricists so close in spirit to folklore and folk life that some of their verses became actual folksongs whose authorship was not always remembered. Their words were, as Pushkin had declared about his own

poems, as close to unadorned nature itself as the echo. But Charents was very interested in the whole range of Western Armenian poetry as well, with its far more formal aestheticism— from its mid-19th-century progenitor Bedros Tourian (1851-1872)¹³ to the Symbolist Misak‘ Medzarents‘ (1886-1908: both died tragically young, of consumption), and the other great lyric and patriotic poets who were murdered by the Turks in 1915, Rupen Sevag, Siamant‘o, and Daniel Varuzhan. His debt to these artists is greater than has been supposed hitherto. Siamant‘o (the *nom de plume* is that of the romantic hero of a Kurdish folk epic: the poet’s actual name was Adom Yarjanian) in 1898 published at Manchester a poem on the massacres two years before, “*Mahvan desilk*” (“Vision of Death”), and Charents was to borrow the title twice, once in a poem of 1920 and again for a much longer poem in the *Book of the Way*. In the poem “Dream of Torment” (“*Ch‘arch‘arank‘i yeraz*”) of the cycle “Torches of Last Breath and of Hope” (“*Hokevark‘i yev huysi chaher*”), Siamanto concludes, *Hamarroren yev ariapar tuk‘ tser jamp‘an vjrrets‘ek‘* (“Firmly and manfully decide upon your way”).¹⁴ Perhaps Charents was inspired in part by this line to select the title of his book itself.

Despite his avowals of utter rejection of the past, Charents was still devoted, not only to the other, martyred, Armenia to the west of the Soviet frontier, but to the long Christian Armenian tradition as well— to the bards, from the 16th-century Nahapet K‘uch‘ak to the 18th-century Sayat‘ Nova, and, particularly to the mystic poet of the tenth century, St. Grigor Narekats‘i.¹⁵ He writes fondly of these literary ancestors in his *Tagharan* (*Song Book*) of 1920, and he was committed to the publication of Western Armenian lyrics. The 1932 *Yearbook* records his shepherding of several into publication, and more were to come.¹⁶ His unpublished manuscripts, which came to light and began to be published and studied from the late 1970s on, are sometimes imbued with Christian poetic usage and religious faith: a poem in three parts the poet calls a triptych, as though it were an icon, deliberately emulates the “speech with God from the depths of the heart(s)” of the *Narek*. Yet, the *Book of the Way* expresses a contradictory view, deriding St. Gregory of Narek himself and rejecting the pre- and non-Communist Armenian heritage: he addresses the manuscript illuminators of medieval Armenian scriptoria, chiding them for wasting their talent on books that degraded the joys of life and

condemned men to servitude.¹⁷ We cannot require consistency of genius; yet Charents in his seeming simultaneous espousal of two different world views seems to exhibit a kind of paranoia which, one might suggest, is both a concomitant of apocalypticism itself and a result of living in an ideologically driven, apocalyptic society that had broken radically with its own roots and past. That is, he was driven by the tremendous power of a mass movement that presented itself as the last hope for true human freedom and equality in a world already staggering under the burdens of capitalist exploitation, colonialist oppression, and religious obscurantism, and now further threatened by the dark shadow of fascism. Yet, his formation as a person and poet embraced the pre-Revolutionary heritage, and he could no more deny this than reject his own art. So he resorts to extremes, he wavers between private and public faces, he sees his growing doubts as inadequacies, he rebels. The Erevan of Charents was still a fairly primitive Near Eastern town of only about sixty thousand souls, most of whom lived by the rhythms of an ancient traditional life deeply rooted in Christian faith. This was the heritage of Charents as well; yet at the same time he was committed to Marxism-Leninism, with its claim that it had achieved the right answers to all meaningful human questions: the world was about to be perfected, and history was about to end. Any deficiencies in Soviet society itself, never mind opposition to it, must therefore be the fault of malign conspiracies; and since these could very well snuff out the last hope of the race, any means was justified in rooting them out, in exposing and destroying the enemy. Even if the enemy proved to be oneself. Rather like the mystics he both excoriated and venerated, Charents thus saw the contest between good and evil as an inner battle as well as an outer one. *The Book of the Way* chronicles both wars.

3. THE ART.

The Book was designed and illustrated by a friend and longtime associate, Hakob Kojoyan. The artist was born in 1883 at Akhaltskhe, an Armenian enclave in Georgia.¹⁸ His father was a jeweler. The family soon moved north to Vladikavkaz, in Ossetia; and in 1898 the boy was sent to study engraving in Moscow. From there he went to Munich to study under Anton Aschbe, where the great Russian graphic artists Favorsky and

Dobuzhinsky were working. This was an exalted company: the Russian Acmeist poet Osip Mandelstam, a friend of Charents, was to praise the delicacy and mastery of Favorsky's engravings; and Dobuzhinsky was for a time the writer Vladimir Nabokov's drawing teacher. Vladimir Andreyevich Favorsky (1886-1964) wrote several essays in the 20s and early 30s on graphic composition and the relationship of illustration to text that express concerns Kojoyan would have shared: one observation would be applicable to the successive stages of narrative and movement the Armenian artist attempts in the registers of his framed pages of the *Book of the Way*: "Compositionality consists in fully realizing movement and time as synchronism, for without this capacity, by whose power a thing that is complex is perceived by us as simple, the portrayal of space is not possible."¹⁹ After graduating in 1907 from the Munich Academy of Arts, Kojoyan went to Paris, spent two years there, and returned to serve in the first World War in the Russian army. He returned to the Caucasus in 1918, joining Nicholas Marr's expedition to the vast ruins of the medieval capital of the Armenian Bagratid dynasty, Ani, then lived for two years in Tabriz. In 1922 he accepted the invitation of the Soviet government to settle in Armenia, and designed and illustrated for *Pethrat*, the publishing house chaired by Charents, a number of titles including Stepan Zoryan's *Hazaran blbul* (*Thousand-voiced Nightingale*) and the children's books of the poet Hovhannes T'umanyan. In the 30s he designed and illustrated Charents' *Book of the Way*, the *Book of the Fox* (*Aghvesagirk*'), 1935, a collection of fables by the medieval author Vardan Aygekts'i), and the Armenian edition of Maxim Gorky's work. The *Book of the Fox*, with its spare, exquisite historiated capitals, exemplifies the way the artist balances a modernist restraint and linearity of design and the richness of the heritage of Armenian medieval book illumination (see Pls. 5-6). In 1929, Kojoyan designed and illustrated a book published in Paris for the Armenian diaspora to extol the achievements of the young Soviet Armenian republic.²⁰ The angular style of the woodcuts of the cover and chapter headings and their mixture of Armenian and proletarian themes may be seen as preliminary studies for the achievement that was to be the *Book of the Way* (see Pls. 7-9). The latter is undoubtedly Kojoyan's *magnum opus* and the only one accomplished in full collaboration with its living author, an admired friend. The artist survived the poet; and his subsequent major project illustrates his capacity to employ ancient styles to new purposes.

Kojoyan had always been interested in the Epic of Sasun and was to illustrate the sumptuous jubilee edition published two years after Charents' arrest and execution. The Stalinist regime had begun a campaign against the innovative styles and art-for-art's-sake sophistication of the Soviet culture of the 20s, deriding it as a decadent "formalism" detached from the native talent and legitimate interest of the people. Folk epic, supposedly an oral and unmediated expression of popular genius, was elevated by Socialist Realism to the status of a kind of secular scripture; so in his illustrations of *Sasunts 'i Davit'* Kojoyan uses gold ink on blue paper as though producing an ancient manuscript for imperial use; and a great central illustration of David on horseback, surrounded by a frame of smaller subsidiary scenes from the epic, is a deliberate adaptation of Orthodox icon painting, with David himself the vanquisher of evil replacing Armenia's mounted warrior saints: George, Sergius, and Theodore.

Kojoyan, as has been noted, was an avid student of medieval Armenian art, so several observations are in order about key aspects of it that would on some level have informed his own ideas about the visual plan and composition of the *Book of the Way*. The Bible is the book most often copied and illuminated by medieval Armenian artists. Armenian Gospel illustrations may be divided into three sets: the canon tables at the beginning of the manuscript, the four portraits of the Evangelists that precede each Gospel, and the narrative illustrations of the life of Christ interspersed through the book. For the *Book of the Way*, the portrait of Charents and the title page facing it have co-opted the first two categories; and we shall discuss these two pages presently. Of the three types of Gospel illustrations the narrative set is the most complex for the researcher: Prof. Thomas Mathews has distinguished in Armenian Gospel illumination four systems in this category: a frieze with "dense, moment-by-moment strips of scenes across the page"; marginal placement, with vignettes alongside the text; a "festival" type of image with select scenes from Christ's life; and a "running narrative system which interrupts the columns of text to insert the illustration". He also notes that in Western art, by contrast, the illustrations tend to be more detachable from the text, while Armenian pictures tend to adhere closely to it.²¹ In his illustrations of the *Book of the Way*, Kojoyan has

employed an amalgam of the first, second, and third types— dense, narrative strips that move across the page and alternate with lines of text or employ individual words or phrases, all placed in a “festival” frame preceding the body of the poem, which begins with a framed, historiated capital letter. This method allows the artist and author the widest field of possibilities for work together on the book; and it is worth noting that some of the greatest medieval Armenian Gospel manuscripts, such as the Gladzor Gospel at the UCLA Library, were the product of close collaboration between illuminator and scribe.

There is one other salient artistic factor that plays a role in Kojoyan’s style and composition of narrative pictures though it is unrelated to the Christian heritage: the Ancient Near Eastern royal bas-relief. The narrative triumphal reliefs in stone of the Assyrian and Achaemenid kings, rediscovered in the nineteenth century by archeologists, quickly became well known to Armenians, who saw their ancestors, the recently-discovered civilization of Nairi/Urartu, as the peaceable, all-too-often defeated captives of the haughty monarchs of the great empires of the ancient Near East.²² Charents recast in early poems, for instance, the well-known narrative of Movses Khorenats‘i, the nation’s *patmahayr* (Father of History)— the Armenian Herodotus!— which pits the faithful, guileless Armenian king Ara the Beautiful against the lustful, mighty Assyrian queen Shamiram (Akkadian Šammuramat, better known in the West by the Greek form of her name, Semiramis), who invades his domains in order to kidnap him and enjoy his love. Movses, ever the euhemerist, insists that the queen’s *aralēzk*‘ (the supernatural white dogs of Armenian mythology who licked fallen heroes back to life) could not save the king, who was killed by accident in the field, so Shamiram dressed up a courtier and displayed him to the people. The story may be a source of the tenth book of the *Republic* of Plato, which describes how Er, son of Armenios, died in battle, saw the rewards and punishments of the afterlife, and was revived some days later.²³ Charents shifts the scene to contemporary Erevan and laments that Shamiram might now enjoy without strife the favors of many street-smart Aras, but the true Ara would ever elude her: this permutation may in its way be a weary comment on art in the age of mechanical reproduction! Kojoyan himself illustrated in 1945 Nairi Zaryan’s tragedy *Ara geghets‘ik* (*Ara the*

Beautiful): one scene shows the imperious Assyrian monarch in her throne room, whose wall is a series of horizontal registers of battle scenes with horse-drawn chariots rolling over the prostrate bodies of defeated enemies (see Pl. 10).²⁴ Though the illustration came over a decade after the *Book of the Way*, this is precisely the formal composition of a number of the illustrations of the Charents volume. It subverts or co-opts the genre, of course, by reversing the roles: it is the masses, and their heroes, who defeat and drive out the tyrants. The Soviet Armenian artist Suren Step'anyan, a contemporary of Charents and Kojoyan, executed sculptural bas-reliefs of lines of collective farmers busy at their harmonious work, thereby employing the Ancient Near Eastern genre, with its numerous regimented figures, in the service of the new Soviet creed of collectivism (see Pl. 11).²⁵ So there seems no reasonable doubt about the inspiration of the style that artist and poet agreed upon: it was part of their *Zeitgeist* and iconographic vocabulary.²⁶

We may consider now the illustrated pages of the *Book of the Way* in order, starting from the beginning of the book, where a portrait of the poet faces the title page (Pls. 12, 13). The text on the portrait page, top, reads: *Yeghishe Charents' Anno MCMXXXIII*— the Latin (which is Charents', not Kojoyan's usage) establishing the lapidary monumentality of the scene, and also setting the scene for a tension presently to be explored between Armenia and Rome. Below is the text of Charents' epigrammatic "Answer to Goethe": "O Olympian, in this world when/ There are neither lords nor vassals of the Spirit,/ Again she will reap the abundant harvest,/ And again, again on our ways/ Forward the Goddess of Song will lead us." The heroic portrait and the use of the word "Olympian" raise the poet to that status, but as a bard of the masses, not of an elite. On the facing, title page, Kojoyan repeats the phrase in lines selected elsewhere in the book from the work of the poet in red that divide the two pictorial friezes on the title page: "A new Yerevan rises/ Where there are neither lords nor vassals." Thereby he underscores the theme of a new Olympian while linking the two pages thematically. The upper frieze shows masons and a rising sun, with a line of lutanists walking left towards them; the lower one, ranks of soldiers and marchers with drums walking right, against a background of factories. The direction of movement creates a boustrophedon effect, as though one were reading an ancient text, the eye moving down one row of characters and

then dropping down to the next line and proceeding in the opposite direction, much as an ox plows a field; but it also draws one over and down to the title itself.

The next large illustration opens the retelling of the folk epic of David of Sasun (Pl. 14). There are two pictorial registers: in the upper one, the turbaned busts of men identified as the characters Lion Mher and Loud-Voiced Ohan frame David charging left on his magic steed K'urrkik Jelali (Fierce Little Colt), Lightning Sword in hand. Kojoyan had created this image a decade before, and it had already become the icon of the text and tradition: it remained only for the sculptor Yervand K'och'ar to cast it in metal (Pl. 15), and it is now one of the symbols of modern Armenian statehood, reflecting the traditions of monumental equestrian sculpture from Marcus Aurelius Antoninus to Falconet's Peter the Great, the Bronze Horseman of St. Petersburg, of Pushkin and Gogol. *Davit' hur-dzin k'shets'* ("David spurred his fiery horse") runs the text. The lower register, with the verse *O, anmah Mher, rramik du ayr* ("O immortal Mher, you man of the masses"), shows the risen apocalyptic hero of the epic's final chapter, Little Mher. Surrounded and diademmed by the adoring commoners for whose salvation he has emerged from millennial imprisonment in his cave at Van, he rides slowly to the right astride K'urrkik Jelali, Lightning Sword (Arm. *ketsaki t'ur*) raised, driving away a line of priests and nobles in their cowls and tiaras who retreat before him, heads bowed in shame. The action of this scene has been slowed: David rode to war with force and speed, but the storms of history's road are past, and now, at the end of time, Little Mher brings rest and peace.²⁷ The historiated capital at the incipit of the text recalls the close reader's attention to these contrastive movements and attitudes of the horse: beneath the capital letter *D*, K'urrkik Jelali is shown in a third attitude, kneeling and sad within a dark chamber. This scene alludes to David's early youth: his cowardly uncles, afraid that the scion of Sasun might see the steed, remember the seed from which he had sprung, and rise in rebellion against Armenia's alien oppressors, the Arab Caliphs, had imprisoned the horse in a dark, sealed room. Thus the vision of the free future is framed between two of the past—of war and captivity. Charents, before his dismissal from the post of editor-in-chief at Pethrat, had chaired the committee preparing a splendid jubilee volume of the Epic; but Kojoyan survived to illustrate it.²⁸ As for Mher, Avetik' Isahakyan, the poet whom

Charents called, reverentially, *varpet* (“master”), also made the ancient figure of apocalypse harbinger of the new Soviet end-times.²⁹

The next composition, “At the Crossroads of History” (*Patmut ‘yan k’arrughinerov*”), has three pictorial registers divided by lines of text (Pl. 17). The top is divided into two contrasting vignettes: on the left, a lean Armenian wolf, mouth opened slightly and head turned away, slouches warily past mount Ararat at night; while on the right, a haughty vixen labeled ROMA in Latin uncials, frozen in sculpture on a plinth, growls directly at the viewer and gives suck to Romulus and Remus, the twin founders of the imperial city. *O, ch ‘i yeghel mer gayln pghndzya* (“O, our wolf was not one of bronze”) declares the caption. The next register enlarges the contrast of this class war: noble cavaliers, capes flying, gallop left to right towards a castle on a mountain, overlooking crude peasant huts crouched in a valley. *Aparank ‘ə... isk nerk ‘evum—khugher* (“The palace... and hovels down below”) explains the caption. The third and lowest register brings us from the mythology of antiquity and the legendry of the medieval period into the class conflict of the modern world: on the eve of Revolution, aristocrats and bosses are shown as the slave drivers of the cowed, exhausted masses; but the caption, drawing together the lessons of all three epochs, ominously promises, *Piti zharrangenk ‘ mer dareri korustə* (“We shall inherit our centuries’ loss”). In the Communist end times, that is, the oppressed and despoiled are to receive full recompense, much as though they had risen from the dead to the Last Judgment. Medieval Armenian iconography affords numerous depictions of the torments of the rich in hell: here, the balance will be righted on earth.

The next large composition introduces the long poem “Towards the Mountain of Ararat” (*Depi lyarrn Masis*”). But here instead of a continuous narrative graphic sequence, the illustration is broken up into a series of chronological vignettes (Pl. 18). “To Ak’sel Bakunts’, my brilliant friend,” reads the dedication just below the title;³⁰ and there follow three registers: the Romantic poet laboring by the light of his lamp’s midnight oil (“He had not slept that night,” the caption helpfully explains); the standard portrait of the writer Khach’atur Abovyan with his name in clear uncials; then a cameo

portrait of Abovyan's German sweetheart, a spray of flowers and oak leaves with the anchor of true love, and the opened book *Verk' Hayastani*, Abovyan's *Wounds of Armenia*.³¹ It is only in the third register that Kojoyan reintroduces the continuous narrative panel, showing Abovyan on the day of his disappearance, striding at dawn towards Mount Ararat, the rising sun at his back and the houses and ruins of old K'anak'er, his home village near Erevan, behind him. The somewhat precious, narrowly framed pictures of the first two registers express, perhaps, the sentimentality and confining morality of the European Romantic era; while the third register expands to a monumental, heroic view of liberating movement into a mysterious, brilliant world to come. In it, the old village is left in the night and the past, the sun of a new era is dawning, and the man who created modern Armenian prose is walking into the future whose foundations he has laid—one in which, as in the poem "The Curly-haired Boy", the main road of Armenia in the Communist paradise to come leads to Ararat. But Ararat is also, as I have noted, for Charents the road to an unattainable glory; and the scene is of course that of Abovyan about to disappear. Death is thus merged, apocalyptically, with the promise of a glorious future rebirth. The historiated capital letter *N* shows a writer surrounded by the pages of a manuscript, a carafe of wine conveniently close. Abovyan in the poem is a monumental and tragic figure, a great lover and literary genius, larger than life—Charents' precursor. The frontal portrait of Abovyan indeed recalls that of Charents facing the title page of the *Book of the Way*. Charents uses the marked Classical Armenian *lyarrn* (*learn*) rather than modern *lerr* for "mountain" in the poem, to endow the titan peak, unapproachable and wreathed in myth, with a corresponding linguistic marking. It may also underscore the continuity between the Classical tradition and the new literature begun by Abovyan and brought to fruition by Charents.

The three-quarter-page illustration for "Vision of Death" ("*Mahvan desilk*") consists of five pictographic registers of outlined, rather than shaded, figures that seem rather like lines of hieroglyphic text (Pl. 19). This is doubly effective since they illustrate ghosts of the dead; and the impression of hieroglyphs must be intentional since the jackal-headed god of the Egyptian pantheon, Anubis, is shown seated upon a throne in the midst of the fires of hell in the bottom register. The page, which illustrates the events

of the poem in sequence, thus gives the impression of an unrolled segment of a papyrus of the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. The historiated capital letter *K* directly below shows Charents in the foreground in a Central Asian cap (Rus. тюбетейка), with Dante just above and behind him. The figures move right to left, as though marching backwards into the past, while the poet and his guide face left to right, emerging at last into the light—not the dawn of Easter Sunday, as in the *Divine Comedy*, but the brilliance of Lenin. The epigraph is a line from “*Mahvan desilk*” (the source of Charents’ title) in the cycle “*Torches of Death Throes and of Hope*” (“*Hokevark ‘i yev huysi chaher*”) by the Western Armenian poet-martyr of 1915, Siamant’o: “*Godoradz! Godoradz! Godoradz!*” (“Murder, murder, murder!”) The words appear only in the illustration, not in the text, though in general it is Kojoyan’s practice to select a few lines from the poem for an illustration and they are repeated in the body of the text as well. And these three howls of pain are the only words in the illustration at all. These departures from the usual pattern may elevate the clamorous emotion of the epigraph to the status of an icon in its own right; and Siamanto’s poem, which I translate here in its entirety,³² is Dantesque in its visionary horror, intensely ekphrastic, that is, a description of a thing pictured rather than merely the verbal expression of a more abstract thought or feeling. The word picture here becomes more than a caption to Kojoyan’s linear illumination—it is almost a soundtrack:

Murder! Murder! Murder!
 In the cities and outside the cities
 And the barbarians turn in blood
 From the dead and from the dying
 And throngs of crows fly past above
 With bloodied beaks and drunken cawing.
 A sirocco strangles the half-dead in a fury,
 And voiceless caravans of aged women
 Flee in haste along the wide, wide ways.
 From the midst of night a wave of blood is rising,
 Tracing fountainheads against the canopy of trees,
 And on every side shrill the driven
 Quarry from the conflagrated fields.
 In the streets the slaughtered generations I behold
 And mobs turning from the unhistoried killings.
 A tropical heat is massing
 From the noble cities given all to flames,
 While under snow that falls with the weight of white marble

Lonely shiver the ruins and the dead.
 O listen, listen to the horrid wagons' creak,
 Beneath their heaps of corpses,
 To the tearful prayers of men in mourning
 In long lines stretching down the way to mass graves,
 Beneath the winds that smite and crush the trees.
 O do not come closer, closer, closer!
 Do not come nigh to the cemeteries, to the sea
 Of red waters on which I spy a distant ship
 And mountains of the dead therein,
 And on the pain-blown rolling breakers
 Wash whitened skulls and bones.
 Listen, listen, listen!
 To the summons of the storm upon the swelling sea:
 Murder, murder, murder!
 Listen, listen, listen!
 To the death-knell, to the howling dogs in terror
 That reaches me from the valleys and the graves:
 O shut your windows! Shut your eyes as well!
 Murder! Murder! Murder!

The illustration to the poem "*Zrahapat Vardan Zoravar*" ("The Armored Train 'Vardan the Commander'") follows the pattern, by now familiar to the reader, of horizontal strips of linear narrative divided by text (Pl. 20). As noted earlier, the poem comes to its climax in a terse, lightning-fast telegram, and the concluding line, "*darrnum e iskakan zrahapat*" ("is becoming a real armored train") forms the base caption while the telegram is the theme of the historiated capital directly below. By contrast Charents dismisses the ideology and struggle of the bourgeois Dashnaks as a mere "*t'ghit'e saghavarit*" (a "paper helmet") they have clapped onto their heads— and this line provides the caption of the second line. But Kojoyan has chosen to illustrate it, at the exact center of the composition, not a modern soldier's helmet but the Roman-looking plumed one that for the last few centuries has been standard in portrayals of St. Vardan Mamikonian, hero of the Battle of Avarayr against the Sasanian Persians in A.D. 451. A good example is a much-reproduced, naïve Armenian-American painting of St. Vardan overturning an Iranian fire-altar (the original hangs in a stairwell at the Kavookjian auditorium at St. Vartan Cathedral, New York City) (Pl. 21). The style of the helmet in recent art reflects the conviction of the Armenian faithful that this was not merely a war of Christianity against Zoroastrianism but one of the civilized West against Oriental

despotism and barbarism. The image lost nothing of its potency: a decade after the first publication of the *Book of the Way*, during the dark days of World War II, the left-liberal magazine *Baïkar* depicted the spirit of Vardan, plumed helmet and all, leading Soviet Armenian soldiers into battle against the Nazis (Pl. 22).³³ In medieval Armenian depictions of the battle, the Persians advance on monstrous, exotic elephants, much as the fifth-century eyewitness Eghishe *vardapet* (after whom Charents was named) described the war in his hagiographical history of it.³⁴ The Armenians are proper, heroic horsemen; so the choice of mounts marks the cultural differences and values. Grigor Khanjyan's famous tapestry *Vardanank'*, 1985 (Pl. 25), does not show the central figure, St. Vardan, in a plumed helmet, but it intensifies the ideological symbolism of the battle scene in other ways: the mostly bareheaded Armenian martyrs of all ages, Charents among them, dressed in light-colored garments, are a kind of celestial army transcending time. They are hemmed in by their enemies to right and left, who move in and down from above. So the Armenians, when one views the picture from a distance, are a Greater Ararat, a triangular mountain of light, while some of the helmets of the anonymous dark horde of armored Iranians besieging them are identifiably those of the Nazis. Headgear in the iconography of the War of Vardan is meaningful indeed; so Kojoyan's centering of Vardan's iconic plumed helmet then is an intentional and shocking inversion of the great and overdetermined icon of Armenian armed resistance to tyranny. The illustration bears a message to which few Armenians would lend credence and most would find repellent. Revolution is the only authentic war of national liberation: St. Vardan's war was as thin and insubstantial as the paper helmet of a child playing with a cardboard sword. Charents returns to the theme of false leaders in the intricate play "Achilles or Pierrot, an Interlude" later on in the *Book of the Way*. In short, the Vardan revered by the hagiographer whose name the poet bears, is not a hero, but a clown—not an Achilles, but a Pierrot.

Kojoyan's illustration of "The Masons of the Future" ("*Galik'i vormnadirnerē*") is a straightforward depiction of the proletariat, dedicated to the Stakhanovite *harvatsayinner* (a calque on Russian ударники)—the "shock-workers" of the Five-Year Plan. Like that of the next poem, "Sowers of the Communal Plains" ("*Hamaynakan*")

dashteri sermnats 'anner”), it is somewhat anticlimactic: both pictures simply show people at work, without irony, shock, conflict, or intricacy of symbolism (Pls. 26, 27). But “Paean to the Grape, Wine, and Belles Lettres” (“*Govk' khaghoghi, gimu, yev geghets 'ik dprut 'yan*”), despite the elegantly lighthearted title, returns to the theme of class struggle, contrasting feudal oppression with human equality in Communism. And it is a fairly simple reworking of the full title page Kojoyan made for the same poem in the *Yearbook* a year earlier (Pls. 28, 29). This suggests that the project involving the collaboration of artist and poet might already have been well underway.

The illustration of “Nork”, a poem about a district of Erevan where a slender yet unbroken poplar tree buffeted by storm winds stands in for the Symbolist poet Vahan Teryan, has four creative men in the bottom panel parallel the four storm winds raging above; and a curving caption serves as the hill over which the pencil-thin poplar rises (Pl. 30). Teryan, who wondered once whether he was the last poet of Nairi, was the model—the idol—of the young, romantic Charents. The revolutionary pushed him away, scorning his reveries; but the older, introspective poet, integrating at last the various strains of the Armenian past into the inner chords of an increasingly private symphony, returned to Teryan’s verses. “Nork” reflects that inner struggle, perhaps. One is tempted to associate the plowman’s ancient chant, “*Horovel, horovel, ho!*” of the upper register of “Sowers of the Communal Plains”, with Teryan and with a poem Charents wrote in a troubled and reflective mood after the debacle of the *Book of the Way*, in May 1934:³⁵

THE LANGUAGE OF EMOTION

The wind is chanting its plowman’s song, *Horovel, horovel, ho!*
 The rain enunciates the words of cold.
 My emotion-laden tongue,
 Why are you so silent now?

Whatever it is you wish to say,
 See! With greater power than you can command,
 Outdoors by the blossoming flower is said,
 And by the crystal of the water.

And in a young girl’s eyes
 When at a violet raptly she gazes,

What is there left at all
In a poem by Teryan that amazes?

The water runs over the brim in its passion;
The fire is a grief stained crimson.
Poet, to you will be given never
This language of emotion.³⁶

If the plowman of Kojoyan's illustration is representative of the past, then Charents a year after the *Book of the Way* longs in a way for the archaic sounds and rhythms of that past. If the plowman is a collective farmer of the present or future, there is still anxiety, for the poet cannot echo him, and stands at the remove of the formalist, the esthete, from unmediated reality. He is, to borrow from the vocabulary of Christian *Heilsgeschichte*—the history of cosmic wellbeing, healing, wholeness— unjustified, lacking salvation.

With the play "Achilles or Pierrot" on page 173 of the *Book of the Way* (Pl. 31), a straightforward depiction of the action in the theater, the cycle of illustrations concludes, though the book itself is 317 pages long. The cycle began with the answer of Charents to Goethe; and a number of Goethe's poems are translated (with Charents' full retort) in the long, unilluminated, latter half. Goethe has two prologues to Faust, one in Heaven that is an answer to Job; and one in the theater that is a reflection on Kalidasa. The strategy is a *majmu' al-bahrain*, a confluence of the seas of East and West, that the great poet ever sought to realize. Charents was even more a poet of both oceans; so perhaps "Achilles or Pierrot" brings the cycle round as a ring to its closing, the rest of the book pure text, Charents and the other poets in the spectral dialogue of *les artistes chez eux*.³⁷

If one takes as a template for our literary journey the life of Christ that the medieval illuminators labored to illustrate, then the scenes of greatest power and pathos are those of His life as a man amongst us, culminating in the Passion and Crucifixion: though there are of course paintings of the Ascension, the Dormition of the Virgin, the Cross of the Parousia, and other scenes following the Resurrection, these are, like the rites of the Divine Liturgy itself after Communion, something of an anticlimax, events no longer of a human career but of a divine world at some remove from the reader, the

celebrant, the communicant. The victory of Communist Revolution parallels this quandary: history is over, life is good, and there is nothing more to say, in a frictionless and redeemed cosmos. "Friction is fun," a student named David Soloff scribbled in his notebook in a class at Columbia many years ago, when we were addressing a problem of this kind in religious apocalyptic thought. The frictionless world is also entropic, and an artist, at least one whose major field of interest is the human world we actually know, cannot do very much with it. His labors are ended.

The foregoing, then, is a contribution to the study of Soviet ideology as expressed in the exquisite graphic art of the fully designed book, in the period of the last flush of creative freedom, before the imposition of Socialist Realism and the destruction of much of the Soviet intelligentsia. There are many other such studies; but none, to my knowledge, has considered hitherto with depth and nuance the particular case of Armenia, a Soviet republic with roots in the art and civilization of the Ancient Near East, pre-Islamic Iran, early Christianity, and the medieval Middle East, as well as a long and rich heritage of interaction with Europe and Russia. In this respect, the essay is a first step; and one can but hope others will continue the work adumbrated here. Charents, it is seen, is a Protean intelligence and cannot be fit into any Procrustean bed the critics prepare. The *Book of the Way* is his revelation and passion and *ars poetica*, his combative and provocative synopsis of the Armenian past and its apocalyptic present instant. But the Way is for movement and for the unknown. Where yet might the traveler have gone?

POSTSCRIPT.

It is in the nature of apocalypse that, one proclaimed, it must be postponed. Stalin retreated from the grand plan of world revolution into the project of building of Socialism in one country. After World War II the Socialist camp, by conquest more than by revolution, expanded vastly. The Soviet Union was no longer an embattled experiment, but a superpower. And, one was now told in the stagnant Brezhnev era, the USSR had achieved a developed form of Socialism and Communism was just on the horizon; as the system continued to decay, a joke was based on this latest dogmatic postponement: "The

horizon is defined as an imaginary line that recedes as you approach it.” Christianity has offered humankind enough to endure without rapture or *parousia*, perhaps even without the initial Resurrection itself: Dostoyevsky famously asserted that he would follow Christ, even if Christ be proven wrong. There is not very much about the Soviet system that has not been proven wrong, and perhaps Goya’s painting of Saturn devouring his own children expresses its legacy to the arts and letters.

But the Marxist gospel captured the imaginations, and commanded the loyalty, of good men who lived and created honestly, who even in adversity and disillusionment saw their cause as corrupted, but not wrong in its essence. Perhaps fighting the good fight, in hope and dedication, though one is lied to and betrayed, though no clear day ensues, is sufficient to sustain a man’s belief that he has made his life meaningful. And we must remember the world in which Charents lived, the character of the adversary. So here is an incident from the career of another artist, far across the ocean from Kojoyan and Charents but no less their comrade and contemporary.

In 1920, two poor Italian-American immigrant factory workers—Bartolomeo Vanzetti and Nicola Sacco—were arrested for the murder of a paymaster and his guard in South Braintree, Massachusetts. They were anarchists, regarded with loathing in the Red Scare that swept a terrified America; and a year later they were convicted of murder in the first degree and sentenced to death. There was no evidence they had been at the scene of the crime, no evidence either that the stolen payroll could be traced to them. The conviction was appealed and the case dragged on through the Roaring Twenties, but in 1927 a commission chaired by President Lowell of Harvard upheld it, and they were executed that August. Lowell was also the initiator of the *numerus clausus*, the policy that barred Jewish students from top American universities. Lowell’s was the Harvard of the notorious “secret court” that ferreted out and condemned gay students and went to extraordinary lengths to ruin their lives, long after their expulsion. The American Jewish artist Ben Shahn regarded the judicial murder of the two immigrants as “another Crucifixion”, a pivotal historical event he had never dreamed of witnessing.³⁸ His paintings of the affair, particularly “The Passion of Sacco and Vanzetti” (Museum of

Modern Art, New York), which shows Lowell in academic robes with his accomplices gloating over the open coffins of the men, so enraged the establishment that in the depths of the Great Depression one wealthy donor offered a fortune for the painting just so that he might burn it. (It was not sold.) Lowell inaugurated the “house” system at Harvard—his stated aim was to bring students of diverse backgrounds and interests together in a friendly and democratic environment— and the university dedicated one to Lowell. It is a pleasant building with sonorous Russian bells in its tower. It still bears his name; but the Harvard of today, where Lowell’s Master is a gay woman and one of the greatest living scholars on Hinduism and religious diversity, is a very different place from the bastion of privilege it was in Lowell’s day. But that is the point: to understand Charents and the passions of his time one must project one’s mind and imagination away from these times, to his own. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics named a *battleship* after Sacco and Vanzetti.

My father, Joseph B. Russell, was born in Brooklyn, New York on the tenth of the month Sacco and Vanzetti passed into immortality. He grew up with friends who left these shores to fight Hitler and Mussolini in Spain with Russian rifles, since the Western powers blockaded the Spanish Republic. (An ambulance of the International Brigades, one is happy to report, bore on its side the prominent notice that it had been donated by students and faculty of Harvard University!) Other friends, including a Yale boy named John Armstrong who later married Dad’s cousin Willa and became a sedate New York literary editor, stormed the German passenger ship, the Bremen, in New York harbor in 1935 and ripped down its swastika flag. Dad served in the US Navy and in my childhood worked as a legal volunteer for the Rev. Martin Luther King. Such was the good fight on this side of the Atlantic.

Charents was a poet of many parts, of warring contradictions and contending thoughts, of changing passions; and his love of the Russian Revolution and his hope in its aims and ideals, even his faith in its apocalyptic claim that it was to inaugurate the social and economic equality, freedom from superstition, and universal human solidarity that alone can save the human race and even the planet, remains a part of him that some new

ideological trend cannot erase. And I disdain to conceal that I share some of that grand hope still, which, when one looks at what the world has become in the last two decades since the Red flag ceased to fly, may not be that bad a thing at all.

Endnotes

¹ A note on transliteration: Except in cases requiring historical or bibliographical precision, where one employs the Hübschmann-Meillet system of transcription of Armenian (e.g., Č'arenc'), the simplified orthography of Modern Eastern Armenian—the language of Ch'arents', henceforth simply Charents—is used for both the Eastern and Western dialects, without unnecessary diacritical marks; but whenever the latter is cited one adheres to its phonetics. So Rupen *Sevag* is the Western Armenian poet, while the Eastern Armenian poet who adopted his surname is Paruyr *Sevak*.

² One notes that Charents was a close reader of Blok; and in 1937, when the former had been ostracized entirely from professional and social life and awaited arrest, he translated Blok's poem "A voice from the chorus" (Rus. "Голос из хора") into Armenian. Three drafts in manuscript survived and were published by the daughter of the poet. Here is a roughly literal translation of the first:

How often we now bewail
Our black and joyless fortune!
If only, men, you knew
The cold and darkness of the future.

Now you squeeze the beloved woman's hand
And play with her— at peace.
And you cry, seeing poison
Or the beloved hand gripping a dagger,
Little child, O, child!

You'll find no end to lies and deceit.
And death is still far away.
The world will become darker
And the earth will enter a blacker way
For age after age!

And the last age, the foulest,
Even we will see.
Heaven will release frightful sin,
Foul smiles on every lip will rest
So passionless!

My little child, you'll dream of spring:
Spring will not bloom.
You'll desire the luminous Sun in the sky:
The Sun will not dawn.
And your cry, when you want to scream
Will, like a stone, go unheard.

Be satisfied, then, with your fortune old:
Meeker than water, humbler than grass.

If only, men, you knew
The cold and dark of the future!

1937, 5-6-June, Erevan

In the Russian, the line Все будет чернее страшный свет is best translated, “All blacker will be the awful light”, where the author plays on the pregnant ambiguity of the two meanings of Rus. *svet*: “light” and “world”, while opting for the startling image of light that radiates darkness. Charents in the drafts renders the line *Piti sevana inch'k'an gna*, “The farther it goes, the blacker will it get”, but opts for *ashkharh*, “world” in his final version. To make a rhyme parallel to Blok’s *lozh'-noz* (“the lie-the knife”) the Armenian poet has *t'uy'n-dashuyn* (“poison-dagger”). See Arm. text in Anahit Č'arenc', ed., *Eliše Č'arenc' Antip ev č'havak'vac erker (Yeghishe Charents: Unpublished and Uncollected Works)*, Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1983, pp. 432, 676-677.

³ See M. Rowell and D. Wye, eds., *The Russian Avant-Garde Book, 1910-1934*, New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2002. Kojoyan often divides the illustrated page into three registers interspersed with significant lines of text; and one might compare the strategy of the woodcuts by Moshe Broderzon for the Passover song “*Had gadya*” (“One kid”, p. 140). In the final scene, God’s all-seeing Eye is set above in a futuristic skyscape of linear cloud and fire; the avenging sword hangs in mid-air; and below the skeleton of the vanquished Angel of Death lies prostrate. Father, who in the song has bought the one kid, looks to the left, and the goat that had been sacrificed leaps up, revived. The artist privileges the modern vernacular over the venerable classical: the original Jewish Aramaic text (*Ve-ata ha-qadosh barukh hu*, “And the Holy One, Blessed be He, came...”) is inscribed at the bottom; but the Yiddish version, the everyday language of many Soviet Russian Jews, dominates the scene in an arch over the top.

⁴ The *opus classicus* is Igor Golomstock, *Totalitarian Art*, New York: Icon Editions, 1990. The author ran into trouble with the Soviet authorities when he showed a slide of a Nazi painting to his students and they thought at first glance it was a Socialist Realist one!

⁵ Hrant T'amrazyan, *Eliše Č'arenc'*, Erevan: Arevik, 1987, p. 127.

⁶ The word is an old loan from Iranian that is found in Aramaic as well as *pethgāmā*; and in modern Persian and Turkish usage *payghāmbar*, “bearer of the message”, can render no less than Arabic *rasūl*, “messenger”, with reference to Mohammed, bearer of the *Risāla*, the Message—the *Qur'ān* itself. The Armenian word carries, then, an implicit weight and power.

⁷ Some authorities assert that Charents was taken in his pyjamas to a killing field on the far side of the river Hrazdan from Erevan and shot, his body then dumped in an unmarked grave. According to another version, he was denied the morphine to which he had become addicted: he banged his head on the walls of his cell in withdrawal and died.

⁸ On the chronology and events of this period see Anahit Charents, “Yeghishe Charents’s Final Years: His Life and Work from 1934 to 1937,” in Marc Nichanian, ed., *Yeghishe Charents: Poet of the Revolution*, Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2003, pp. 68-105. Charents himself wrote a long letter from Erevan to Marietta Shaginian (a well established Soviet writer of Armenian nationality living in Moscow who wrote in Russian) on 1 December 1933. It includes this passage, which I translate from the original Russian. “Я имел несчастье написать новую книгу стихов и поэм, страниц 300, под общим заглавием *Книга Пути*,— о прошлом, настоящем и будущем

нашего народа, с основной идеей, что ни один господствующий класс в прошлом не давал положительной исторической идеи нашему народу и только пролетариат после Октября. Революции дал нам эту идею. Это, так сказать, основная концепция книги, в которой, кроме стихов, посв. прошлому, есть такие стихи, посвященные ударникам, колхозникам, тов. Сталину и т.д.” “I have had the misfortune to write a new book of verses and long poems of about 300 pages, under the general title the *Book of the Way*, about the past, present, and future of our people, with the fundamental idea that not one ruling class in the past gave our people a positive historical idea, and only the proletariat after the October Revolution gave us this idea. This is, so to speak, the fundamental concept of the book, in which, aside from verses dedicated to the past there are poems dedicated to shock workers, Comrade Stalin, and so on.” In the same letter, Charents compares his predicament to the Beilis trial. (In the twilight years of Tsarist rule a Jew from Kiev named Mendel Beilis was falsely accused of murdering a Christian boy to use his blood for the baking of Passover matzo. This resurrection of the medieval blood libel outraged the civilized world and scandalized the Russian intelligentsia. In the preface to his long poem, “Возмездие” (“Retribution”), the Symbolist poet Alexander Blok mentioned the trial without asserting Beilis’ obvious innocence— so strong was the revulsion of Russian liberals towards such genteel anti-Semitism that the writer Vladimir Nabokov, who was strongly committed to a Western liberal democratic ethos, never forgave Blok.) For the full text of the letter, see Davit’ Gasparyan, ed., *Ēliše Ć’arenc’, Norahayt ējer (Yeghishe Charents: Newly-Discovered Pages)*, Erevan: Erevan University Press, 1996, pp. 263-267.

⁹ He reproduces his parody, written in the 20s, in the article published in *Akōs*, Vol. 6, 1945, “*Ēliše Ć’arenc’ u es*” (“Yeghishe Charents and I”), repr. in Nikol Aḡbalean, *Grakan-k’nnadatakan erker (Works of Literary Criticism)*, Beirut: Hamazgayin, 1959, pp. 329-348. Charents often used the word “crotch”, which offended the elder writer. Nowadays the homoerotic verses of the poet’s unpublished manuscripts, or, more precisely, this writer’s audacity in following Charents’ dying admonition that the finder of these writings publish them (for nobody any longer would dare to criticize the divinized Charents), has enraged the new puritans. They can be read in J.R. Russell, “From an Archive of Unpublished Poems of Yeghishe Ch’arents’,” *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, Armenian Heritage Press and Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9, Cambridge, MA, 2004. See also the Armenian translations of this writer’s principal studies of the poet, including the latter articles: “*Ēliše Ć’arenc’ i antip banastelcut yunneri arxivic*” (“From Yeghishe Charents’ Unpublished Poetry Archives”) and “*Ć’arenc’ ē: margare*” (“Charents: the Prophet”) in *Ink’nagir grakan handes (Autograph Literary Journal)* 5, Erevan, 2008, printed 2009, pp. 5-41. *Plus ça change...*

¹⁰ In the mid-30s, in Moscow, Charents told the young William Saroyan to “say yes and then spit in their eye”. Years later Saroyan mused in a memoir consisting of letters to the dead, “Why didn’t you say yes? I’ll tell you why, Charentz. Because you are more than an Armenian, more even than only another member of the human race. You are a poet, so shocked by the treachery of all men seeking to save their skins at any cost that only with the help of cocaine could you stay among them and pretend to be one of them. God love them, as every poet is obliged to say, not with contempt but with charity. They all did, they are all doing, only what you advised me to do, which I have never done, which you never did.” William Saroyan, *Letters from 74 rue Taitbout or Don’t Go But If You Must Say Hello To Everybody*, New York: World Publishing Company, 1969, p. 122.

¹¹ Curiously, some of Charents’ verses were published long before his rehabilitation— at Erevan, in a sumptuous anthology of Armenian verse in 1946 intended to attract repatriants to the country enfeebled by war. One poem is a slavish, feverish ode to Stalin that Charents had written in his

last year, in a desperate and pathetic effort to save himself: it is incomprehensible that the grotesqueness of its circumstances, its selection, its inclusion, everything about it, evaded the editors. Yet, equally one cannot conceive of their intending an irony or coded message, even in the very narrow postwar window of relative artistic freedom that preceded the Leningrad affair, the pillorying of Akhmatova, Shostakovich, and Zoshchenko, and the subsequent horror of the campaign against “rootless cosmopolites” and the manufactured Doctors’ plot.

¹² The poet’s autobiographical novel *Erkir Nairi* (*Land of Nairi*) evokes the town of his boyhood.

¹³ See James R. Russell, *Bosphorus Nights: The Complete Lyric Poems of Bedros Tourian*, Armenian Heritage Press and Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 10, Cambridge, MA, 2006.

¹⁴ Atom Earčanean Siamant’o, *Amboljakan gorcə* (“Complete Works”), Boston: Hayrenik’, 1910, p. 54.

¹⁵ Charents owned and frequently read a Classical Armenian copy of the cycle of 95 mystical and penitential poems of Narekats’i, the *Matean olbergut’ean* (*Book of Lamentation*, often called simply the *Narek*). He also read and annotated a study of the *Narek* (see James R. Russell, “Bedros Tourian’s Cruciform Poem and Its Antecedents,” *Journal of Armenian Studies* Vol. VI, No. 2, Belmont, MA, Winter-Spring 2000-2001, pp. 27-45).

¹⁶ One such volume suffered a fate similar to that of the *Book of the Way*: the introduction by Step’an Alazan and Vagharshak Norents’ to the first Pethrat edition of the poems of Medzarents’ was excised from the second edition when both men were purged; and in the Table of Contents (located at the back, as in all Soviet books) their names are simply blacked out. The year after Nikita Khrushchev’s de-Stalinization speech to the 20th Party Congress in 1956 a third edition of Medzarents’ appeared at Erevan, this time with the Introduction and its authors restored—but at only a third of the original length, their “infantile leftist” sentiments excised (see discussion in James R. Russell, “Calm before the Storm: The Armenian Poet Misak Medzarents on the Threshold of the Genocide,” Boston University, 13 Oct. 2010, special publication of the Boston University Armenian Program).

¹⁷ In 1935, the Soviet Armenian writer Derenik Demirjian published his novella *Girk’ tsaghkants’*, “Book of Flowers”, a parable about a medieval Armenian illuminated manuscript that survives the vicissitudes of history. The manuscript is not a Gospel; it contains a pantheistic poem inspired by the vision of the medieval lyricist Kostandin of Erzuka (modern Erzincan). But, like his contemporary Mikhail Bulgakov, who has Woland (Mephistopheles) in *The Master and Margarita* retrieve a novel about Pontius Pilate condemned by the Soviet critics and declare that manuscripts do not burn, it would seem the Armenian writer was arguing against censorship and for the preservation of the treasures of the past. He was doubtless aware of the bitter irony that Charents’ great book, at first condemned for its very derision of the past, had been banned two years before. See J.R. Russell, *The Book of Flowers*, by Derenik Demirjian: English trans., intro., and commentary, Belmont, MA: Armenian Heritage Press, 2003.

¹⁸ See K. Zurabov, intro., *Hakob Kojoyan*, Erevan: Sovetakan groġ, 1983.

¹⁹ “Композиционность... заключается в том, чтобы осознать движение и время как единовременность, а без этой способности, в силу которой нечто сложное воспринимается нами как простое, невозможно изображение пространства,” cited by N. Rozanova, ed., *Favorskii*, Leningrad: Aurora, 1970, p. 17.

²⁰ Yovhannēs Yakobean, *Xorhrdayin Hayastan (Tpaworut 'iwnner ew Usumnasirut 'iwnner) [Soviet Armenia (Impressions and Studies)]*, Paris: Gegharvestakan Hay Tparan, 1929.

²¹ Thomas F. Mathews et al., *Armenian Gospel Iconography: The Tradition of the Glajor Gospel*, Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1991, pp. 76-78.

²² As Mehmet-Ali Ataç convincingly argues in his monograph *The Mythology of Kingship in Neo-Assyrian Art*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010, many reliefs strove to portray the beauty and harmony of the paired, muscled legs of beasts and men, the re-enactment of mythological scenes, the rehearsal of learned symbols. However to many viewers, then as now, the scenes of battle, victory, subjugation, and punishment of enemies will have left the more enduring impression, that of overwhelming might and unmitigated cruelty. It is mainly this aspect Kojoyan employs or subverts. See Leo Bersani and Ulysse Dutoit, *The Forms of Violence: Narrative in Assyrian Art and Modern Culture*, New York: Schocken, 1985.

²³ On the ancient connections of the myth, see James R. Russell, "The Platonic Myth of Er, Ara, and Arda Viraz," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 18, 1984, pp. 477-485.

²⁴ See Zurabov, *op. cit.*, pl. 115 and p. 205.

²⁵ Suren Step'anyan, *Bambakahavak'* ("Picking the Cotton") and *Depi garnanats'an* ("To the Spring Sowing"), in *Xorhrdayin Hayastani kerpavestā 1922-1934 (Art of Soviet Armenia, 1922-1934)*, Erevan: Pethrat, 1934. After some decades, the liberalization of Moscow's cultural policy and the toleration of some local patriotism enabled Soviet Armenia to commemorate and celebrate the nation's past while emphasizing the strength and vitality of the Socialist present. In 1968 the country dedicated a huge complex of monuments on the 50th anniversary of the battle of Sardarapat, at the site where an Armenian people's army had repulsed a Turkish invasion whose purpose was to complete the genocide begun in the west by exterminating the Armenians of the Transcaucasus as well. Since the supreme patriarch of the Armenian Church, the Catholicos, had ordered that every church ring its bells to summon General Andranik's citizen-army to the front, the complex features a giant bell tower at the end of a long avenue lined with statues of standing eagles. The tower is flanked by recumbent winged bulls, with walls of narrative bas-reliefs to the side telling the story of the people's war. They embody much the same iconographic plan, indeed, as the horizontal narrative panels of Kojoyan's designs for the *Book of the Way* of Charents.

²⁶ On their collaboration, see V.H. Mat'evosyan, "Č'arenc'-Kojoyan ('Girk' čanaparhi')," *Sovetakan Grakanut'yun (Soviet Literature)*, Erevan, 1967, No. 9, pp. 33-42.

²⁷ In fact, the composition of Mher's part of the scene most closely resembles the horizontal, narrative reliefs on the late medieval tombstones of the Armenian regions of Karabagh (Arts'akh), Nakhijevan, and elsewhere that show the departed enjoying the pleasures of the afterlife. For a discussion of the iconography of these monuments see James R. Russell, "The Scepter of Tiridates," *Le Muséon* 114.1-2, 2001, pp. 187-215.

²⁸ In subsequent editions of the Epic, the artist Ervand K'och'ar rendered David (Pl. 16) and other characters in the style of ancient bas-reliefs, endowing them, however, with an un-ironic triumphalism that essentially reverses the subversive ideological intent of earlier Soviet art. [See Hovsep' Ōrbeli, *Haykakan herosakan ēposā (The Armenian Heroic Epic)*, Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1956, pl. opp. p. 88].

²⁹ See James R. Russell, "Mithras in Stalinist Armenia," *Ararat Quarterly*, Vol. 39, No. 154, New York: Spring 1998, pp. 45-46; and "The Epic of Sasun: Armenian Apocalypse," forthcoming in S. La Porta, ed., Proceedings of the conference "After the Apocalypse: The *Nachleben* of Apocalyptic Literature in the Armenian Tradition," The Center for Literary Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, 4 June 2007.

³⁰ Bakunts', a prose writer whose works describe the life of the Armenian villager, was killed in the Great Purge of 1937 and was rehabilitated only after Stalin's death.

³¹ The book is the first novel in vernacular Armenian, and describes the liberation of Eastern Armenia from Muslim rule by the Russians in 1828.

³² Atom Earčanean (Yarjanian)-Siamant'o, *Amboljakan gorcə (Complete Works)*, Vol. 1, Boston: Hairenik, 1910, pp. 51-52.

³³ *Payk'ar: Nor tarwoy bac 'arik, 1943 (Struggle: Special New Year Issue, 1943)*, Boston: Baikar. Marc Mamigonian, Director of educational and cultural affairs of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Belmont, Massachusetts, contributed this explanation to a display of the magazine cover for the exhibit *The Armenians and the Book*, Lamont Library, Harvard University, 9-25 April 2012, curated by this writer: "Baikar was the name of the Boston-based (later Watertown-based) publishing arm of the *Ramkavar Azatakan Kusak'ut'iwn* or (Armenian) Democratic Liberal Party, which issued an Armenian-language newspaper of the same name (1923-1993), an English-language weekly newspaper *The Armenian Mirror-Spectator* (1932-present), numerous books and pamphlets, and from 1930-1931 and 1942-1963 an annual anthology of literature and essays. In the 1940s the *Baikar* annuals bore the striking artwork of Zaven Melik'... In an explanatory essay in this issue of the volume, the artist explained: 'The moving force which prompted the creation of this picture, is Armenia's magnificent contribution of her heroes to the battle-torn Stalingrad where my relatives are and from whom I have heard no word since the war. In this greatest battle in the history of mankind, the Armenian heroes, led by the Spirit of Vardan, have been doing their glorious part in twisting Hitler's 'invincible' swastika into humiliating contortions... Perched atop a tank, I have pictured a typical Armenian youth, with the vengeance burning in his eyes, and charged with a determination not to return to Erivan until the Nazi hordes are routed... Rising from the valley of the Arax, I have portrayed the Spirit of the Great Vardan pointing the way towards the Axis storm...' The composition of the 1943 magazine cover was probably inspired partly by a Russian war poster of 1942 that shows the spirit of (St.) Alexander Nevsky, the hero of Sergei Eisenstein's patriotic, anti-German film of the same name (1938), hovering over a Soviet cavalry charge against the barbarous Hun invader (Pl. 23). Such emulation is not unusual: the Armenian artist Eduard Isabekyan's canvas "Reply to Hazkert" (*Patasxan Hazkertin*, i.e., Yazdegerd II, 1960: see *Eduard Isabekyan*, Erevan: Sovetakan Groġ, 1985, pl. 38), an incident in the history of the war of A.D. 451, is clearly inspired by the Russian artist Il'ya Repin's famous painting, now in the Tret'yakov Museum (Moscow), of the Zaporozh'e Cossacks writing a defiant and hilariously obscene reply to another local tyrant of another age—the Ottoman Sultan.

³⁴ The motif is borrowed from the standard Hellenistic portrayal, as on coins (Pl. 24), of the battle between the Macedonian Alexander, on horseback, and the Indian king Porus, on an elephant.

³⁵ The Armenian text:

HUZUMNERI LEZUN

*Hovn— horovel e asum,
Andzrevə— ts 'urt barrer:—
Huzumnavor im lezu
Inch'u es lrrel?*

*Ayn, vor asel es uzum—
Tes! k'ezanits 'zoregh—
Drsum tsaghikn e asum,
Yev jurə byuregh.*

*Yev aghjeka ach'k'erits '
Yerb manishakn e nayum,—
El Teryani ergeri
Inch'n e hmayum?...*

*Jurə— hordor e huzum,
Hurə— mormok' karmir.
Huzumnavor ays lezun
Poet, k'ez ch'i trvi.*

³⁶ Text in Anahit Ch'arents', *Unpublished and Uncollected Works*, *op. cit.*, p. 81; tr. by J.R. Russell.

³⁷ This is the expression my teacher Professor Nina Georgievna Garsoian, the dean of Armenian Studies in America, used when all the official guests had left her great Easter party in New York with its endless bottles of red wine, the roast lamb, and the fish pie called *karasun tel* for its forty layers. Her students and scholarly friends were left, this is what she called us, and never have I felt so honored, before or since.

³⁸ See James Thrall Soby, *Ben Shahn*, Penguin Modern Painters Series, West Drayton, Middx.: Penguin Books, 1947, pp. 6-7 and pls. 2, 3.

LIST OF PLATES

1. Title page of the *Hoktember/Noyember Taregirk* ("Yearbook"), Erevan: Pethrat, 1932.
2. V.I. Lenin in the *Yearbook*.
3. I.V. Stalin in the *Yearbook*.
4. A. Khanjyan in the *Yearbook*.
5. Vardan Aygekc'i, *Aluēsagirk* (*Book of the Fox*), designed and illustrated by Hakob Kojoyan, Erevan: Pethrat, 1935, title page.
6. Hakob Kojoyan, "Book of the Fox", pp. 22-23.
7. Hakob Kojoyan, title page of Yovhannēs Yakobean (Hagopian), *Xorhrdayin Hayastan* (*Tpaworut 'iwnner ew Usumnasirut 'iwnner*) [*Soviet Armenia (Impressions and Studies)*], Paris, 1929.
8. Hakob Kojoyan, illustration of Hagopian, *Soviet Armenia*, Chapter 5, "Soviet Armenian Architecture".
9. Hakob Kojoyan, illustration of Hagopian, *Soviet Armenia*, Chapter 11, "Educational and Cultural Institutions".
10. Hakob Kojoyan, illustration of Nairi Zaryan's tragedy *Ara geghets'ik* ("Ara the Beautiful"), 1945.
11. Suren Step'anyan, *Bambakahavak* ("Picking the Cotton") and *Depi garnanats'an* ("To the Spring Sowing"), in *Xorhrdayin Hayastani kerparvesta 1922-1934* (*Art of Soviet Armenia, 1922-1934*), Erevan: Pethrat, 1934.
12. *Girk' chanaparhi* (*Book of the Way*), Erevan: Pethrat, 1933, Portrait page, left, facing Title page.
13. *Girk' chanaparhi*, Title page, right, facing portrait page.
14. "David of Sasun" ("*Sasunts'i Davit'ə*"), *Girk' chanaparhi*, p. 9.
15. Yervand K'och'ar, equestrian statue of David of Sasun, Erevan.
16. "Bas-relief" graphic illustration of David of Sasun by Yervand K'och'ar, from Hovsep' Ōrbeli, *Haykakan herosakan ēposə* (*The Armenian Heroic Epic*), Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1956, pl. opp. p. 88.
17. "At the Crossroads of History" ("*Patmut'yan k'arrughinerov*"), *Girk' chanaparhi*, p. 41.
18. "Towards the Mountain of Ararat" ("*Depi lyarrn Masis*"), *Girk' chanaparhi*, p. 54.

19. "Vision of death" ("*Mahvan tesil*"), *Girk' chanaparhi*, p. 64.
20. "The Armored Train 'Vardan the Commander'" ("*Zrahapat Vardan Zoravar*"), *Girk' chanaparhi*, p. 121.
21. Armenian-American painting of St. Vardan Mamikonian.
22. *Payk'ar* ("Baikar", i.e., "The Struggle"), Boston, 1943, cover.
23. Soviet Russian war poster commemorating the 700th anniversary of the defeat by St. Alexander Nevsky of the Teutonic knights. Right, top corner: "In this war, let the intrepid example of our great ancestors inspire you. —I.V. Stalin." Bottom: "He who comes to us with the sword shall die by the sword! —Alexander Nevsky."
24. Victory decadrachm of Alexander the Great, Babylon, ca. 322 B.C.: a Macedonian warrior, possibly Alexander, is shown on the reverse on horseback fighting the Indian king Porus, who is mounted on an elephant.
25. Grigor Khanjyan, *Vardanank'* tapestry, 1985.
26. "The Masons of the Future" ("*Galik'i vormnadirnerə*"), *Girk' chanaparhi*, p. 128.
27. "Sowers of the Communal Plains" ("*Hamaynakan dashteri sermnats'anner*"), *Girk' chanaparhi*, p. 135.
28. "Paeon to the Grape, Wine, and Belles Lettres" ("*Govk' khaghoghi, ginu, yev geghets'ik dprut'yan*"), *Girk' chanaparhi*, p. 147.
29. "Paeon to the Grape, Wine, and Belles Lettres" ("*Govk' khaghoghi, ginu, yev geghets'ik dprut'yan*"), in the 1932 *Yearbook*: below the title is the additional text, "written at Erevan for the fifteenth anniversary of the October Revolution".
30. "Nork", *Girk' chanaparhi*, p. 162.
31. "Achilles or Pierrot, An Interlude" ("*Ak'illes t'e Pyero—intermedia*"), *Girk' chanaparhi*, p. 173.

Հոկտեմբեր շնչեմբեր



Տարեգիրք
Գրականություն,
Արվեստ,
Գիտություն և
Ժողովրդագրական
հետազոտություն

Խմբագրություն
Ֆեդերե Չարեյ
Ապել Բադույան
Ֆեդիա Չոբար

Պետական հրատարակչություն
~~Երեւան~~

1932

Plate 1

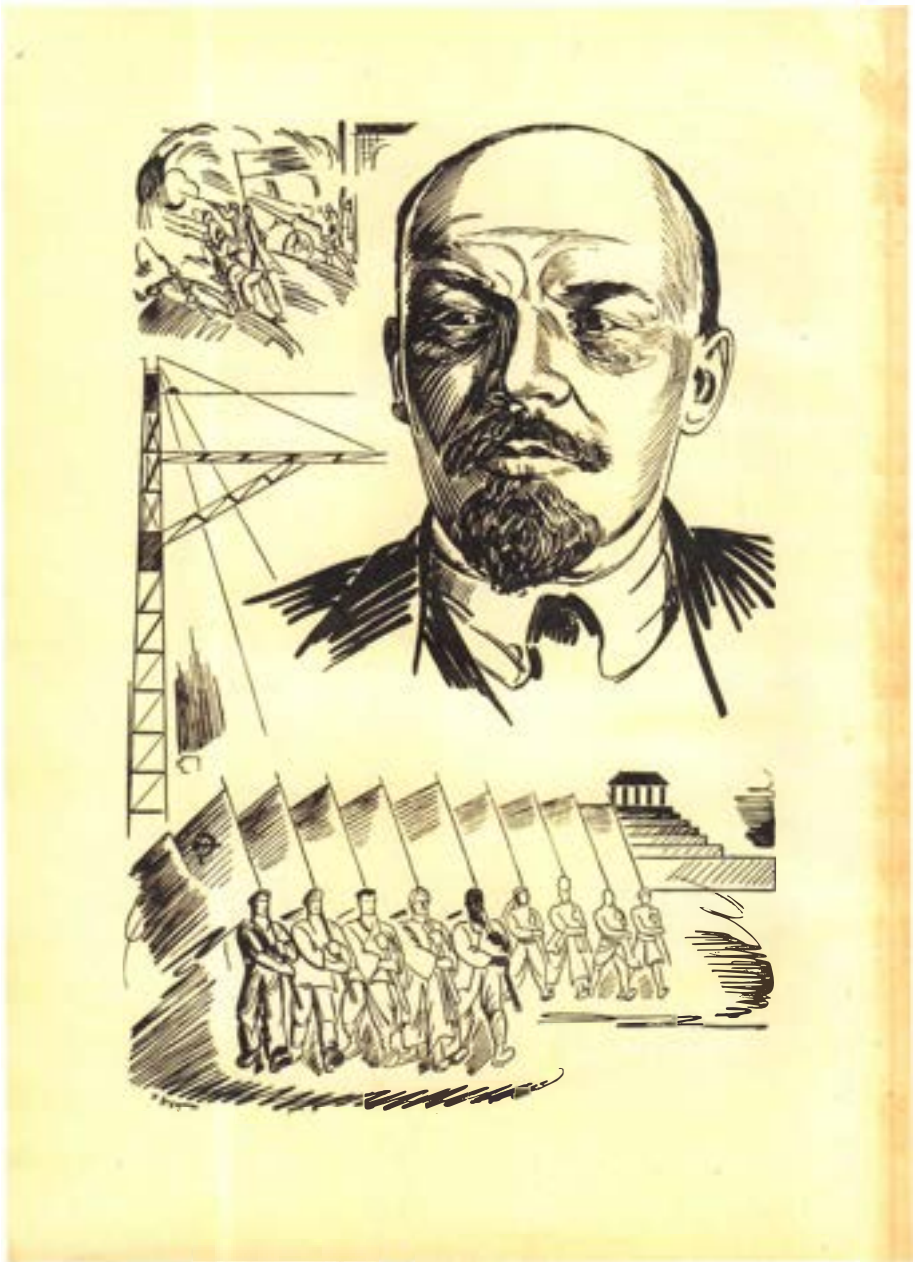


Plate 2

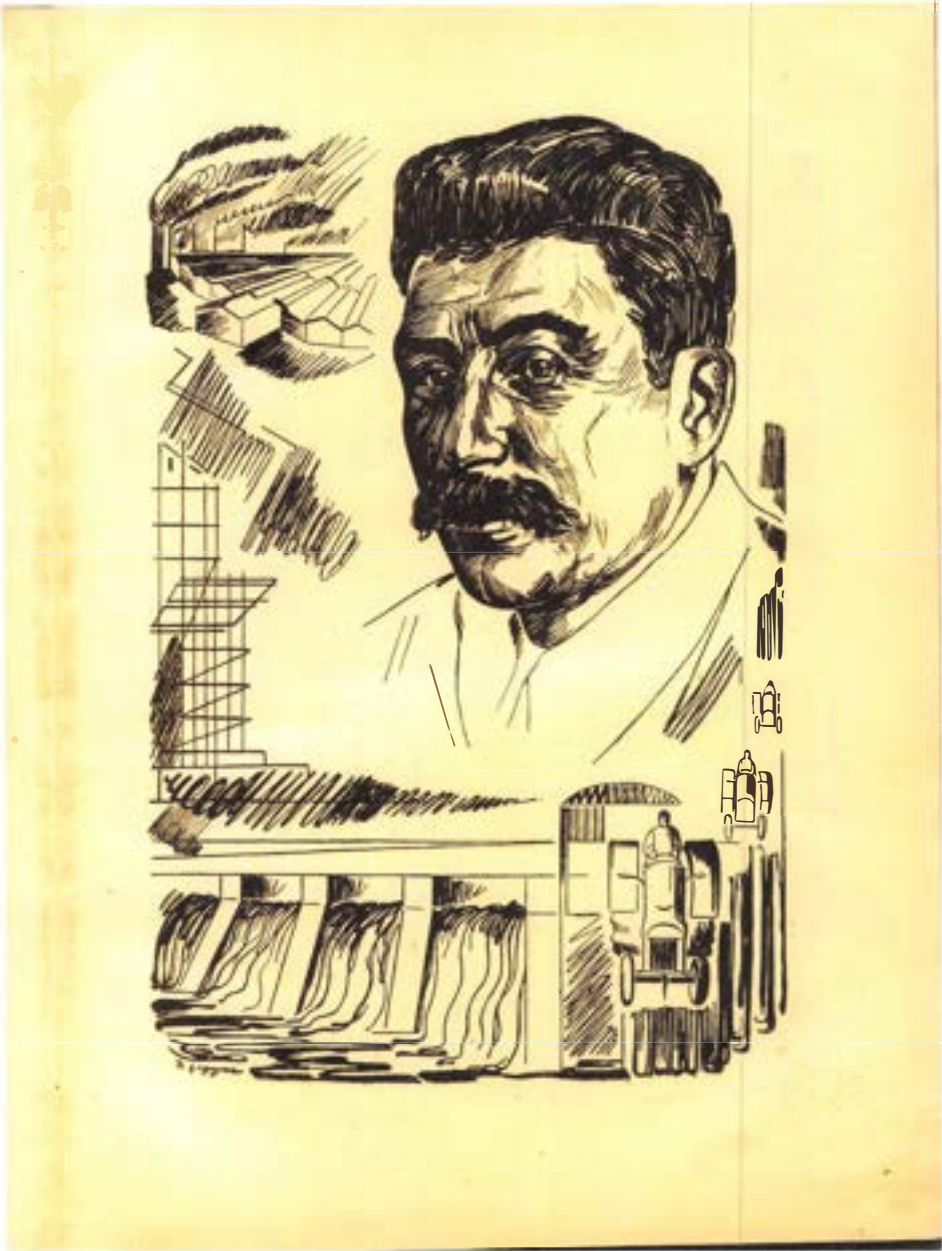


Plate 3



Հ. Վ. ԻՐ. Ն. ՊԱՆՈՍՅԱՆԻ ԳԻՐԴԱՐԱՆԻ Ա. ՆԱԽԱԶԱՆ

XV ՀԱՅԵՍՏԱՆԻ—XII ՆՈՅԵՄԲԵՐ

Ա

ՆԱԽԱԶԱՆԻ ՍԵՂ-ՎԵՐԵՐԵՐԸ ժամանակագրականորեն նկատարարելով հայկական լեռնային հանգրվանները՝ հայտնաբերում են հայկական հայրենիքի մասին հիշատակներ։ Նախապես հայտնաբերվում են հայկական հայրենիքի մասին հիշատակները։ Նախապես հայտնաբերվում են հայկական հայրենիքի մասին հիշատակները։

1917 թ. հայկական լեռնային հանգրվաններում հայտնաբերվում են հայկական հայրենիքի մասին հիշատակները։ Նախապես հայտնաբերվում են հայկական հայրենիքի մասին հիշատակները։ Նախապես հայտնաբերվում են հայկական հայրենիքի մասին հիշատակները։

Նախապես հայտնաբերվում են հայկական հայրենիքի մասին հիշատակները։ Նախապես հայտնաբերվում են հայկական հայրենիքի մասին հիշատակները։ Նախապես հայտնաբերվում են հայկական հայրենիքի մասին հիշատակները։

Նախապես հայտնաբերվում են հայկական հայրենիքի մասին հիշատակները։ Նախապես հայտնաբերվում են հայկական հայրենիքի մասին հիշատակները։ Նախապես հայտնաբերվում են հայկական հայրենիքի մասին հիշատակները։

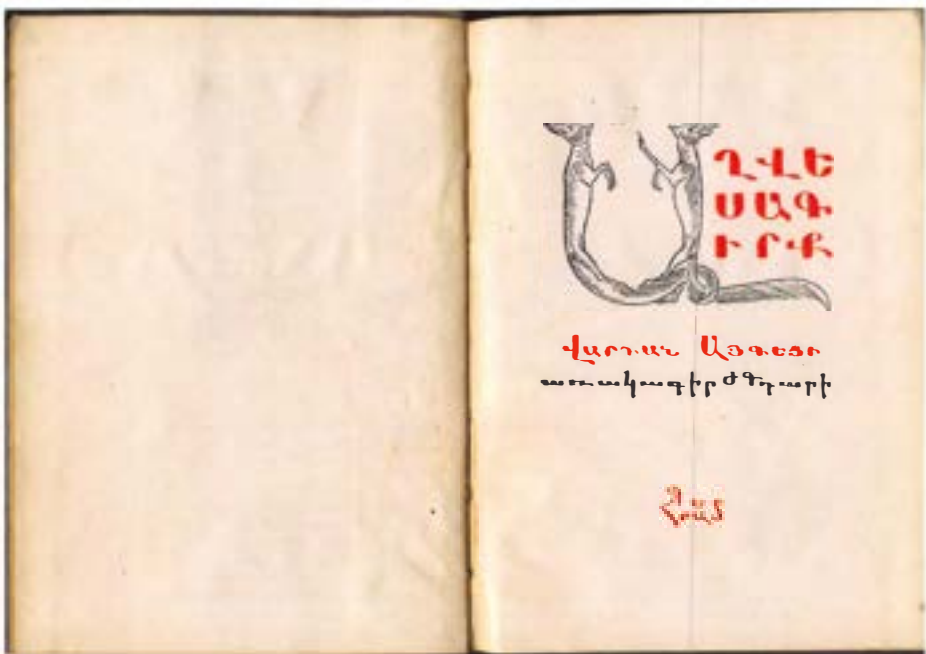


Plate 5



Plate 6

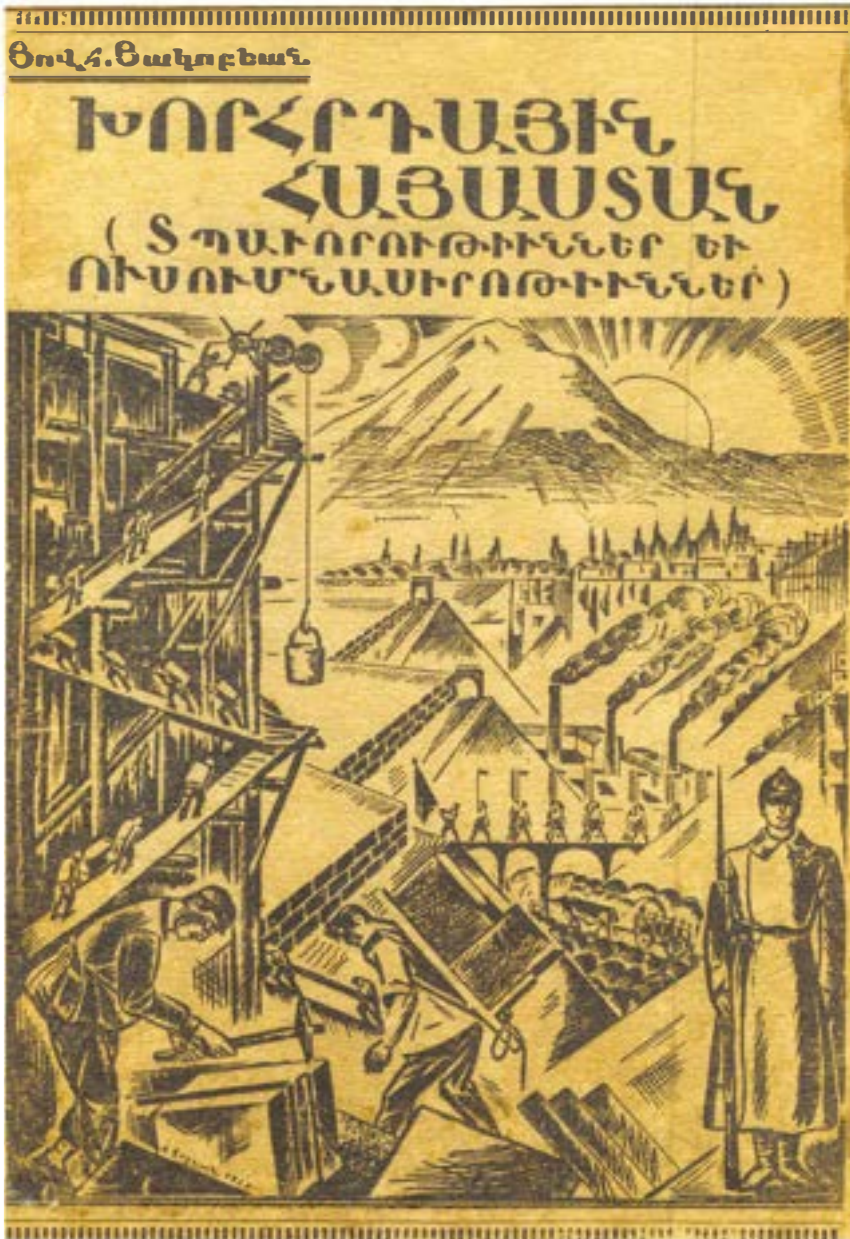


Plate 7



Գ Լ Ո Ւ Խ Ե

Խ. ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՃԱՐՏԱՐԱՐՈՒԵՍԸ

Plate 8



Գ Լ ՈՒ Խ ԺԱ.

ԿՐԹԱԿԱՆ ԵՒ ՄՇԱԿՈՒԹԱՅԻՆ ՀԻՄՆԱՐԿՆԵՐԸ

Plate 9



Plate 10

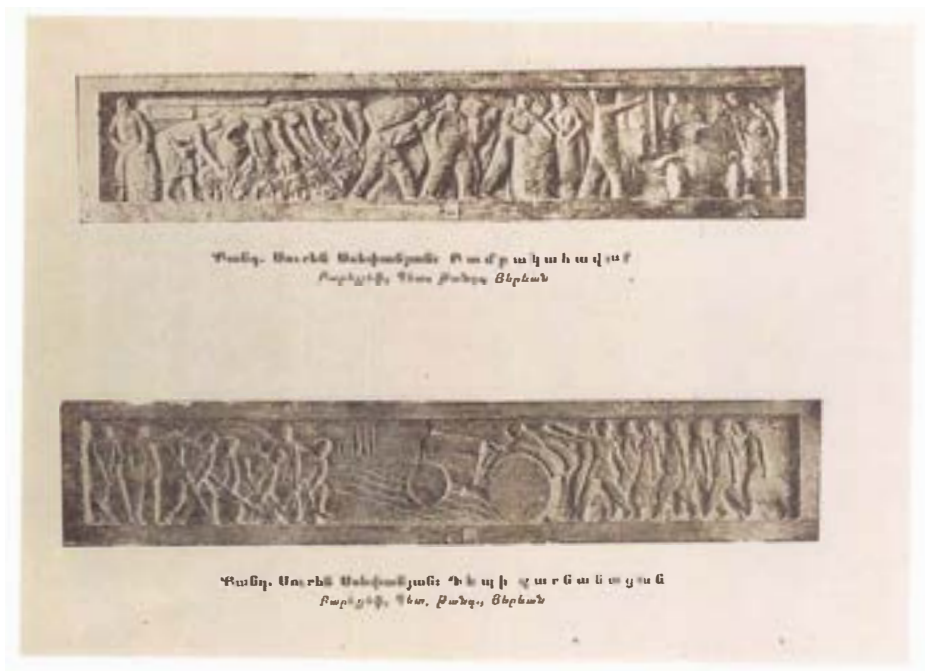


Plate 11





Plate 13



Plate 14



Plate 15



Plate 16



Plate 17

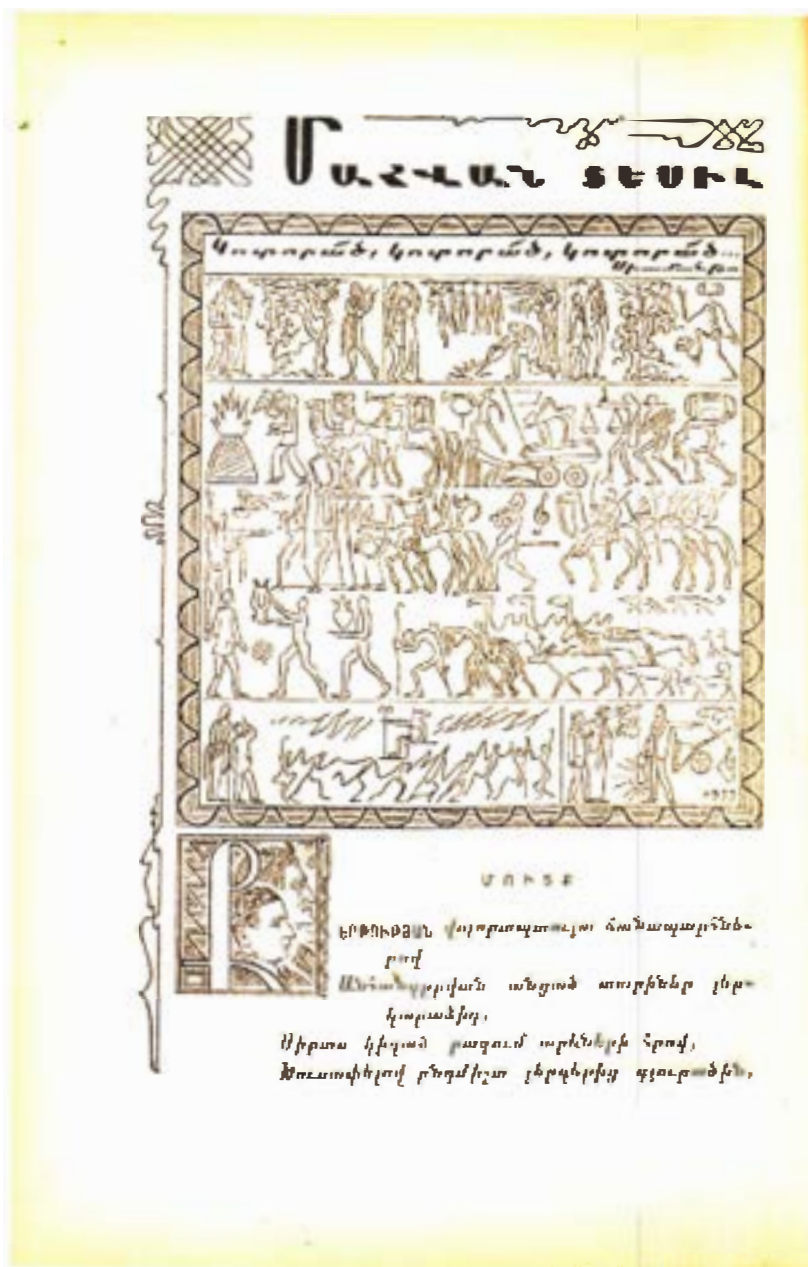


Plate 19

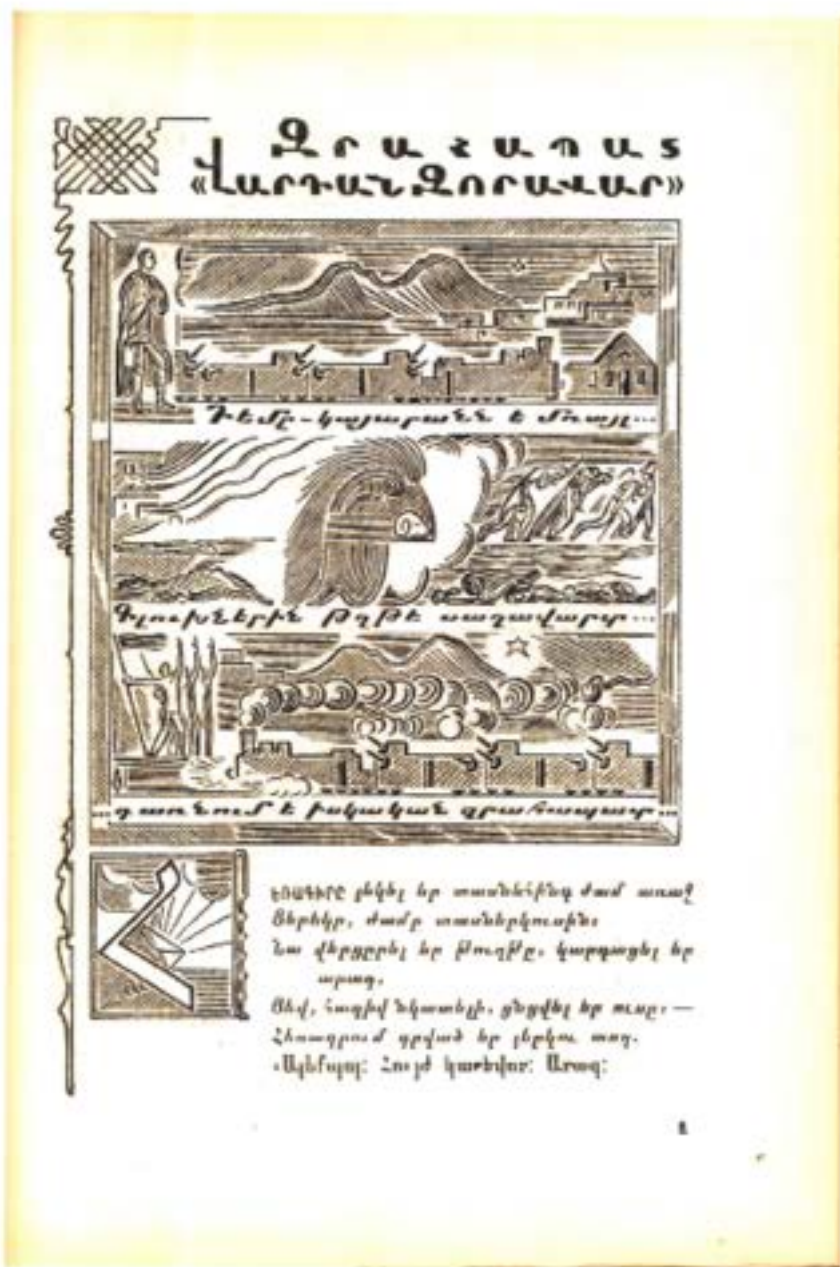


Plate 20



*Vartan Mamigonian & Ghevont Yeretz
Before The Holy Battle of Avarayr*

(451 A. D.)

St. Vartan Mamigonian
and St. Ghevont Yeretz
Defenders of Our Faith

Սբ. Վարդան Մամիկոնեան
և Սբ. Ղևոնդ Երէջ
Մեր Հաւատքի Պաշտպանները

www.gettyimages.com

Plate 21



Plate 22



Plate 23



Plate 24



Plate 25



Plate 26

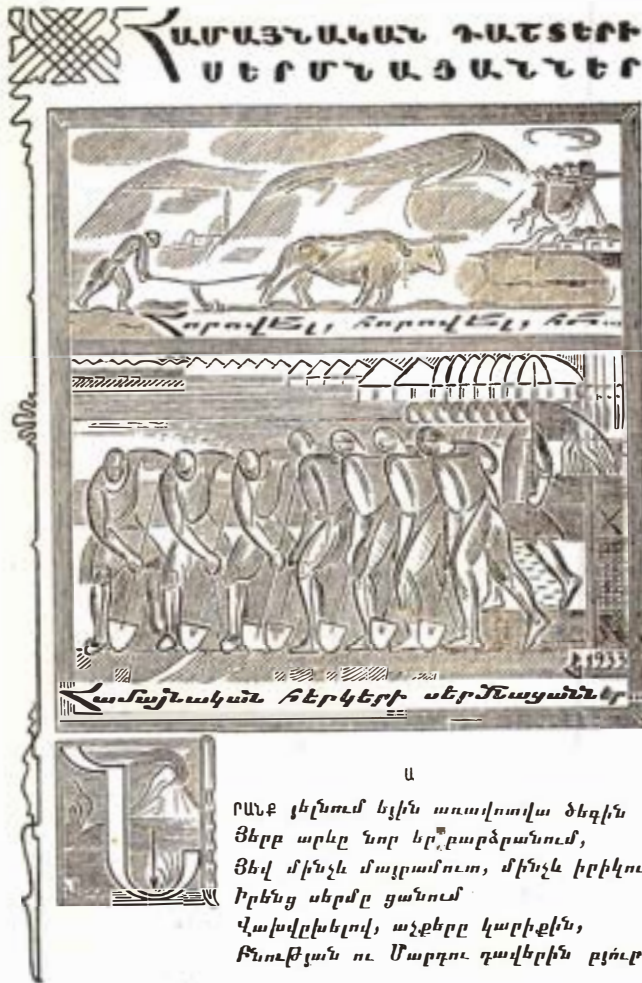


Plate 27

ԳՈՒԼԻ ԽԱՆՈՂԻ, ԳԻՆՈՒ և ԳԵՂԵՑԻԿ ԴՈՐՈՒԹՅԱՆ

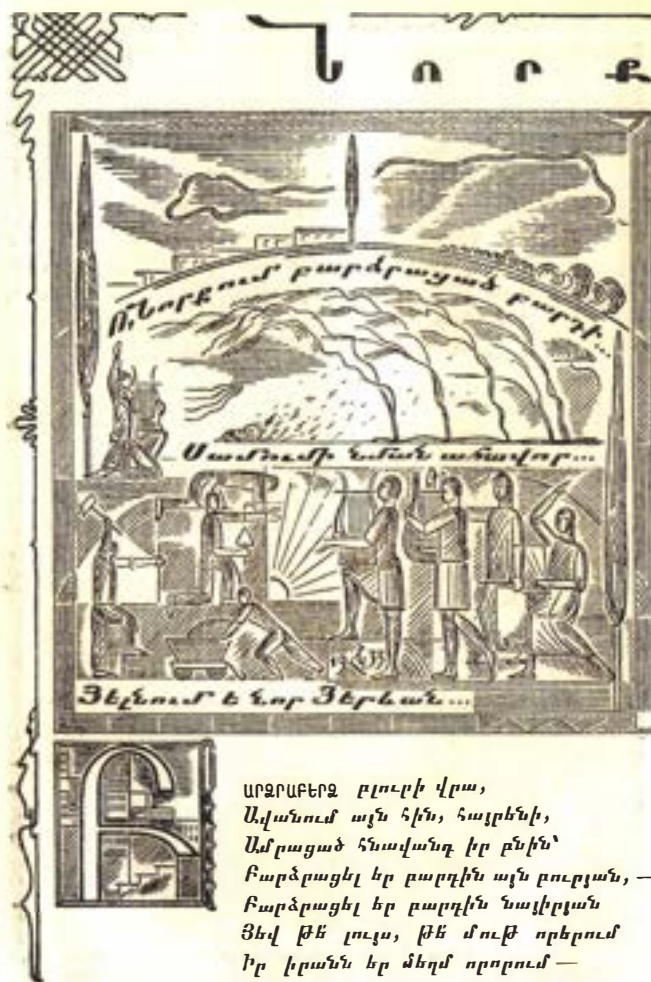


ԲԵՐԻՆԵՑ այս քերթ ու հոգնածեմ,
Յերբ շատաշում են բանալենք մեմ,
Յերբ Արարտաից մինչ րարձրարք
Հիմարայնքը այն լերկնանց
Յերած պալարար՝ շաշում են, տեա,
Դասակարգերի զորքերն չրկեզ,—
Վազեարությամբ պայծառառես
Յերգում եմ ահա այս գովքը լիս:

Plate 28



Plate 29



ԱՐՁԱՐԱԲԵՐՁ ԲՐՈՒՐԻ ՎՐԱ,
 Ավանում ալն հին, հայրենի,
 Ամրացած հնավանդ իր բնին՝
 Բարձրացել եր բարդին ալն բուրյան, —
 Բարձրացել եր բարդին նալիրյան
 Յեւ թե լույս, թե մութ որեւում
 Իր իրանն եր մեղմ որորում —
 Յեւ սիրում ելինք մինք նրան։

Plate 30



Plate 31

Frik

THE BRIDGE OF POETRY

James R. Russell

The middle and late thirteenth century – the generation or two after the Mongol invasion of the Near East around 1230 – was for Greater Armenia a cataclysmic period: the alien, Seljuk rulers of much of the land resisted the Mongols by main force and suffered defeat. The victors punished savagely any who had dared oppose them: clemency was not a Mongol policy, and Kirakos of Ganjak and others supply the gory details. The Mongols were not then Muslim, though; so the Cilician Armenian settler-state, an autonomous kingdom, perceived the opportunity for an alliance and responded with diplomacy instead of arms to the invasion. For Christians of Cilicia and the West, the change in the Near Eastern balance of power brought, at least at first, new political chances, commercial growth, and cultural change and enrichment. Het'um I (1226–69) pursued an alliance with the Mongols, in the hope that they might see Cilicia as a base from which to launch attacks against Muslim Syria and the Mamluks in Egypt. It was a time of literary, as well as diplomatic, creativity. This king's nephew, also named Het'um, traveled to the Mongolian capital at Karakoram and in 1307 dictated at Poitiers a memoir of his journey, in French: *La Fleur des histoires de la terre d'Orient*. It was a popular book, taking its place alongside the better-remembered accounts by William of Rubruck and Marco Polo: a translation by Richard Pynson into Middle English, titled *A Lytell Chronicle*, was published at London around 1520.¹ Het'um's uncle, Smbat the Constable, had translated the Assizes of Antioch into Armenian. One purpose of the invention of an Armenian alphabet by St. Mesrop Mashtots' early in the fifth century had been to turn the cultural orientation of Armenia westward. The power of the Sasanian empire, and the indifference or hostility of Byzantium, left Armenia after these efforts as a Christian island in a Muslim sea. Now, once more, the Armenians sought a Western European trajectory, and the book of "Haithon" in Britain seems a ghostly afterglow of what might have been. But once more, the configuration of power in the East – the conversion of Ghazan Khan to Islam in 1295 –

and the shortsightedness of the West – the failure of the Crusader kingdom of Outremer to follow the example of Armenian diplomacy – was to dash Armenian hopes and doom the nation once more to isolation in the Islamic world.

But the other side of the cultural equation is the Cilician Armenian encounter with the Mongol East. This may be exemplified by a striking monument of the visual arts. Matenadaran MS 979, the famous Lectionary (*Chashots'*) of Erevan,² was produced in 1286 for prince Het'um, three years before his coronation as the second Cilician king of that name. He was to be murdered by the fanatical Muslim Emir Bilarghu in 1307 – even as another Het'um was composing his chronicle in France. The sumptuous miniatures are anonymous, though many ascribe them to the great painter T'oros Roslin. The traditional headpiece of East Christian art, constantly developed and reinterpreted over the centuries as the Armenian *xorani*, now becomes (fol. 295) a successful fusion of naturalistic, Western-style portraiture and Mongol imperial symbolism: the lion, temple-dog, dragon, and phoenix of the Chinese court. How did such images actually reach Cilicia? Travelers mention East Asian silks and other imports, but a more direct source for both theme and technique might have been the sketchbook of a traveling artist. Villard de Hon-

¹ See Glenn Burger, ed., Hetoum, *A Lytell Chronicle* (Toronto, 1988), Richard Pynson's translation (ca. 1520) of *La Fleur des histoires de la terre d'Orient* (ca. 1307).

² See Sirarpie Der Nersessian, *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Century* (Washington, D.C., 1993), 1:124; vol. 2, pl. 516. See also D. Kouymjian, "Chinese Elements in Armenian Miniature Painting in the Mongol Period," in *Armenian Studies/Études Arméniennes: In Memoriam Haig Berberian* (Lisbon, 1986), 415–68. On contacts generally, see Priscilla P. Soucek, "Armenian and Islamic Manuscript Painting, A Visual Dialogue," in *Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Art, Religion, and Society*, ed. T. F. Mathews and R. S. Wieck (New York, 1998), 115–29, esp. 120 and n. 25.

necourt (a village south of Cambrai), who probably flourished in the mid-thirteenth century, has left one.³ The Turkish art historian Mazhar Ipsiroghlu has compared the swirls of drapery and contortions of the figures to the drawings of an anonymous Muslim artist who portrayed dervishes, real and fantastic animals, and scenes of everyday life in the Mongolian encampments, in a style that combines Persian and Chinese forms. He is known to posterity by a Persian title, *Ostad Muhammad Siyah Qalam*, Master Muhammad the Black Pen; and there is little reason to suppose he was not an Iranian by nationality. His lions are most like those of the *Lectionary*; the Armenian painter of the *Lectionary* might have seen drawings like his.

The Mongol conquest drove many Armenians into exile, too, even as it impelled others to undertake voluntary journeys like *Het'um's*; and the poet Frik seems to have fled from his native place, somewhere in the northeast of Armenia, in the mid- to late thirteenth century. He settled for some years in the relative peace and safety of the southwest, perhaps in Hajin – the place he calls by the name Harg in a poem. His works reflect the harsh realities of direct Mongol rule: he tells us that the burden of debt had obliged him to relinquish his own son as a hostage. This was one of the bitter experiences that impelled him to reflect upon the inherent tragedy of the human condition. He writes also of the devastation of his homeland, “*Ork'an k'aken ekeghet' / K'ani shinen pighc mzk't'ni*” (“How many churches they demolish – / How many filthy mosques they build!”) which reflects either Seljuk oppression in Greater Armenia or conditions after the conversion of Ghazan Khan. But Frik is most famous for his eloquent protests against human social inequality, which are somewhat rare in medieval Armenian poetry. Unsurprisingly, these made him popular in Soviet Armenian official literary circles, which presented him as a sort of proto-Communist: a small selection of his poems relevant to the theme, accompanied by ideologically tendentious introductory and historical essays, was printed in Erevan at the height of Stalin's purges.⁴

Mtok's yays banis veray
Shat aten i hogs em ankac:
Asem, t'e ays er lini,
Or zamen hawsar ch'e zugac.

In my mind I've brooded
Long in worry on this matter.
I say: Why is this
That He did not make all men equal?

He wrote also a satirical poem commenting on contemporary Mongol politics, and his most famous verses decry the injustice of Fate, for which he uses the Arabo-Persian term *falak*. Social protest, satire, and fatalism are all hallmarks of classical Persian literature, however unusual they may be in Armenian; and fatalism in particular is a stance popular throughout the medieval Islamic world, from Andalusia to Iran. Many nominally Muslim fatalists conclude by enjoining their audience to seize the ephemeral pleasures of the world – *carpe diem* – but Frik makes his personification of fate argue back that man's fortune is assigned through Divine decree, and is therefore ultimately just. This is a Christian conclusion to the theme, and a harmonious innovation, in that it is unexpected in the genre while predictable in the context of Armenian tradition. Despite his less-than-charitable characterization of mosques as spiritually unclear, this bridging of Muslim and Armenian Christian themes and ideas is characteristic of Frik's work. Though Armenian Christians responded with appropriate militancy to Muslim aggression and regarded Muhammad as a heretical madman, they still lived in and with Muslim culture and thought, and inevitably, it blended with their own.

Rather like a Sufi *zاهد* mendicant, Frik champions the ascetic mode of life, condemning material attachments and luxuries, and admonishes himself, “*Gna, t'ogh i bac' zamen, u eghir sirogh vanerun*” (“Go, leave everything behind, and become a lover of the monasteries”).⁵ In the twenty-fourth poem of the *Diwan*, he counsels his “little son” to become a *kama'awor aghk'at*, “willing pauper.” The phrase refers most likely to the popular Byzantine story of the prince Alexis who renounced both inheritance and nuptial bed: he is called Alek'sianos in medieval Armenian balladry.⁶ As a monk Frik would have addressed his fellows as brethren; but his compositions are written not in the late Classical id-

³ Theodore Bowie, ed., *The Sketchbook of Villard de Honnecourt* (Bloomington, Ind., 1959). Note esp. pl. 18, “figure of a half-crouching man.” One might compare the style of an English drawing of a century earlier which may have a Persian antecedent, of Luxuria dancing, British Museum Add. MS 24199, fol. 18, in Francis Wormald, *English Drawings of the Tenth and Eleventh Centuries* (London, n.d.), pl. 6(a). For the comparison of Villard to Black Pen, see Mazhar Ipsiroghlu, *Bozki Ruzgari: Siyah Kalem* (Istanbul, 1985), 19.

⁴ Frik (*zhoghovacu*), HXSH Patmut'yan yev grakanut'yan institut (Yerevan, 1937).

⁵ Abp. Tirayr, *Frik Diwan* (New York, 1952), no. 17.16.

⁶ See J. R. Russell, *Yohannes T'ikuranc'i and the Medieval Armenian Lyric Tradition*, Univ. of Pennsylvania Armenian Series (Atlanta, 1987).

iom of purely ecclesiastical literature, but in a highly colloquial Middle Armenian laden with Persian, Arabic, and some Mongolian loan words. He refers to some of his poems as *hay(e)ren*, meaning a lyric of about six to ten lines – the *tagh*, a lyric tending to be twice or thrice that length, is a genre found in both secular and Church poetry. Nahapet Kuch'ak, who lived two centuries later, was to be the master of the *hayren* – both he and his predecessors composed such pieces for oral performance, usually with musical accompaniment. This is the craft, not of the priest, but of the minstrel, the ancient *gusan* or medieval and modern *ashugh*, literally, “lover.” Frik addresses a poem that we shall examine in some detail to his “brethren,” *eghbark'*, and claims to have received the message of his verses as a revelation in a dream. The lyric poet Kostandin Erznkac'i was most likely his contemporary: he lived in a monastery, but, like Frik, writes in colloquial style. He, too, declares direct revelation – from a detailed vision of a solar being⁷ – to listeners he calls his brethren, who may be fellow monastics, or members of the secular brotherhood of the young men of Erznka, or a mixture of both. Erznkac'i's visionary poem bears this title: “Omank' ch'araxosen zinen vash naxandzu, t'e orpes xosi sa aypisi ban, zi vardapeti ch'e ashakertel: zi ayl e ashkhatiln ew ayl e shnorh'k'n i hogwoyn: zor es patmem dzez, yaghags teslean imoy, zor tesi zarmanali tesil, minch' i vank' kayi hngetasan amac'; zor tesi ayr mi aregaknazgest ew li lusov.” (“Some enviously slander me, saying, ‘Why does he say this kind of thing? For he has not studied with a priest-teacher.’ For work is one thing and the grace of the Spirit another. Which I will tell you, concerning my vision which I saw, a marvelous apparition, while I was in the monastery at age fifteen – I saw a man clothed in the Sun and full of light.”)⁸ It would seem that Frik lived in the latter part of his life in a monastery but had begun as a husband and father and minstrel – so his public, creative life existed in an area on the margin of ecclesiastical and secular life, in entertainments and at gatherings where both the clergy and the laity might be present.

Kostandin's parallel career may shed light on these circumstances, for Erznkac'i wrote another poem on Christian themes, which at the behest of “the Brethren” he phrased in a meter approximating that of the *Shahname* of Ferdosi. The Iranian epic, which is only nominally Islamic, celebrates the heroic code and its exemplar, Rostam, and its vigorous rhythm is well suited to its martial theme and to recitation during athletic training: it is still chanted in the traditional Iranian gymnasium, the *zor-khane*. Armenians, centuries before and after Ferdosi, recanted the cycle of the exploits of Rostam

Zal; so Erznkac'i's poem, it would seem, could be the composition of a monastic possessing a minstrel's gifts for a primarily lay audience already well acquainted with the epic cycle of Rostam as part of their own national tradition.⁹ Erznkac'i's entire oeuvre, as Prof. Theo Van Lint has demonstrated in his Leiden thesis, can be restored to its original order as a *divan*, a cycle of poems, in which the Christian cosmology is taught systematically in lyric. Kostandin uses the Persian conceit of the rose and nightingale in a poem on Christ, and in the very next poem of the *divan* makes the metaphor explicit, complaining that his hearers had taken him literally: it is not clear whether this is a didactic tactic for the unlettered that backfired, or a defensive response to the disingenuous malice of fellow monastics envious of his poetic gifts. Both Erznkac'i and Frik deny having had much schooling and stress the immediacy of their experience and wisdom: Frik also declares, “*Och' i hawre arel mirat'*” (“I took no inheritance from my father”). This may be the dramatic boast of the dervish, with his counterpart in the itinerant holy man of eastern Christendom, as well as that of the minstrel. The employment of the direct, untutored experience of the dream can be an effective literary strategy in another way. If it is from insubstantial dreams that one learns the truth about reality, then the experience of wakefulness is called into question as untrustworthy. This creates a tension in which the suspension of disbelief is heightened; and the poet's authority is strengthened. Life is a dream; the dream, life. Erznkac'i opens a poem on the contention of body and soul with a word culled from the Psalms that his listeners would have known well also as the beginning of a hymn for dawn of St. Nerses Shnorhali: “*Zart'ik' i yerazut, bac'ek' zach'erd, ov kayk' i k'un*” (“Wake from your dream, open your eyes, who are asleep!”). But by sleep he means this life; so dawn is the next, when darkness closes over our earthly eyes. It is a well-crafted surprise worthy of Plato's strategic reversal in the *Republic* of the intent of Achilles on Hades in

⁷ Such visions are not unusual in the literature of the ancient and mediaeval worlds; see J. R. Russell, “The Dream Vision of Anania Shirakac'i,” *REArm* 21 (1988–89): 159–70, for the Armenian and comparative evidence. For a study of the literary strategies of the dream vision in literature, see J. Stephen Russell, *The English Dream Vision: Anatomy of a Form* (Columbus, Ohio, 1988).

⁸ Armenuhi Srapyan, ed., Kostandin Erznkac'i, *Tagher* (Erevan, 1962), 187, no. 17.

⁹ See J. R. Russell, “The *Shahname* and Armenian Oral Epic,” forthcoming in the *Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Ferdosi*, Centre for the Great Islamic Encyclopaedia, Tehran, August 2000.

Homer, where the hero's dread of the underworld is made by the philosopher to refer to physical life.

It is evident from the foregoing that minstrel poems of Christian counsel are a kind of interface between popular minstrelsy, with its stock of imagery and vocabulary from the Muslim world and from the pre-Christian traditions of Parthian Armenia, and the ideology of the Church. I propose to examine aspects of a few of Frik's poems that demonstrate this mixture, this bridge of civilizations. By a bridge, I mean not the trite connection of two mutual aliens who want nothing to do with each other in fact, but a means by which one crosses over into new territory and is changed in the process, harmonized with a new landscape. Frik's is a Christian landscape, steeped in the already ancient Armenian Christian literary culture; and the first thing that strikes one in the twenty-fourth poem of the *divan* is the title, with its formal Classical Armenian style and its designation of the poem as a *ban*, or Logos: *Norin Frkann asac'eal*. This is, without doubt, modeled upon the titles of the consecutive *bans* of the mystic St. Gregory of Narek, such as *Ban ... norin hskoghi*, "Logos... of the same vigilant [monk]." His penitential poem thus assumes the mantle of Narekac'i, as a vernacular level of prayer and vision. Two images then invite our particular attention in this didactic poem. The first is that of the pearl at the bottom of the sea for which the poet's mind quests: "Zim mits loghnord ari - i covu yatak n i'uc'i / Vasn ayn margartin hamar, or covu yatak n lini" ("I made my mind a swimmer, made it descend to the bottom of the sea / For that pearl that on the ocean's floor will be," *Frik Diwan*, 24.55-56). It is Iranian at its source and has to do with the perilous profession of the pearl divers of the Persian Gulf. The Gnostic "Hymn of the Pearl," with its locus in Parthian Iran, is the most elaborate religious allegory on the theme, but the "pearl of great price" of the Gospel would have been known immediately to the most untutored Armenian Christian. The pearl is also a treasured religious image in the contemporary culture of its origin. Abp. Tirayr quotes, for instance, the third chapter of the *Golestan* of Sa'di: "Ghawas gar andishe konad kam-e nihang / Hargiz na-konad dorr-e garanmaye be-chang" ("If the diver thinks a bit about the shark / He'll never get the precious pearl in his grasp"). One is reminded of the explicitly mystical allegories of Hafez of Shiraz, for whom the risk of mysticism is often like submersion in the deep sea: "Gohari k-az sadaf-e kaun o makan birun ast / talab az gomshodegan-e lab-e darya mi-kard" ("[My heart] inquired of those lost on the shore of the sea / Where the pearl outside the shell of time and space might be").

Another image, linked intricately to that of the pearl of wisdom the poet seeks, has roots in the depths of Armenian and Indo-European poetics, as well as resonances, again, in Iranian mystical poetry. "Erku loysn i mi darjaw, gisherin inch'ur hasuc'i" ("The two lights became one, as I ripened it, by night," *Frik Diwan* 24.51-52), declares Frik of the work his mind did in planting a metaphorical paradise (*drakht*) of *hayrens*, whose flowers and trees are the wisdom embodied by the pearl discussed above, which is bestowed in a dream from supernal reality. He adds, expanding the metaphor, that he watered the paradise with his tears (the anglophone reader remembers Blake here) - a reference to the devotional and mystical practice of inducing tears that is recommended often by Narekac'i and his predecessors. The poet then compares his own eyes to the sea, and that simile serves as a transition to the image of the diver seeking wisdom's pearl in the depths. The line seems to mean on the face of it that Frik worked with such ceaseless energy that he did not notice when the light of the moon replaced that of the sun.

But it echoes also an old poetic paradox: Indo-European poetic traditions liken the eyes to the sun, but there are two of the former and one of the latter. The Prophet Zarathushtra in his revelatory hymns, the *Gathas*, second millennium B.C., saw the eyes of Ahura Mazda, the Wise Lord, as sunlike, and the ancient Armenian hymn of the birth of the Zoroastrian *yazata* Vahagn/Verethraghna, recorded by Movses Khorenac'i from an oral recitation, declares the god's "little eyes were suns" (*ach'kunk'u ein aregakunk'*). Pentheus in the *Bacchae* of Euripides, fifth century B.C., in the madness induced by Dionysus sees two suns in the sky: poetic fancies have become realities, even as Bacchus alters the reality of consciousness. In the *Shahname*, tenth-eleventh century, Tahmine mourns Sohrab: "Alas! My body and soul and eye and light."¹⁰ This looks at first like an enumeration of the multiple souls of Zoroastrianism, but the equation of eye and sun is related to them all. In Frik's age, Rumi exclaims, preserving Euripides's ecstasies shorn of their sinister, tragic aspect,

What a day this is, for there are two suns.
This day is outside and apart from days.
From the heavenly Wheel to earthly beings comes
a wedding invitation, and the voice crying out:
O you who are become your hearts, good tidings -
for this is your day!¹¹

¹⁰ *Shahname*, ed. Jules Mohl (Paris, 1838), II, 130.

¹¹ Shahram T. Shiva, *Rending the Veil: Literal and Poetic Translations of Rumi* (Prescott, Ariz., 1995), 16.

In the Ode of Nativity of St. Gregory of Narek, the eyes of the Blessed Virgin Mary take the homology a step further, fusing the opposites of sea and fire in a cascade of alliterative magnificence: "Ach'k'n cov i cov cı-caghakhıt cawalanayr yawarawtun erku p'aylakadzew aregakan nman" ("Eyes, sea into sea, laughter-dense dilated in the dawn like two suns of dazzling form").¹² And we have seen how Frik uses this additional homology, too, with particular reference to penitence – the principal theme of his poem – and as a transition. The complex symbol of dual sun-flower-eye-sea may be reflected in ancient Armenian figural art, as well.

A four-sided stele from Gamahovit, Armenia, dated to the fourth or fifth century A.D., has a strange bas-relief of a woman whose lower half seems to be a spreading plant (perhaps a fertility goddess, as in the nightmare of the Median king Astyages [Arm., Azhdahak], in the first book of the *Histories* of Herodotus). Or she is rising behind a plant. She holds aloft a trapezoidal frame or tray containing a pair of rosette-like disks. The symbol is enigmatic, and there is no inscription to explain its meaning, but the rose, too, is often a poetic equivalent to the sun (and Christ in devotional hymnology is equally the Sun of Righteousness and the "Rose ever blooming that from such tender root hath sprung"); so the whole is suggestive of fertility and of spring, of two luminous orbs carried aloft in harmony. Frik's poetic line draws together, in a deceptively simple metaphor of hard work in which day blends into night, a host of densely meaningful images. The homology of sun and eye invites one into a consideration of paradoxical realities, with the attendant tension between what we think we see and what really is – this resumes the theme of the dream vision introduced toward the start of the poem. And the uniting of two into one in a paradise signifies the resolution of the ruinous dualities that the Fall of Adam and Eve brought about. The waking of the soul in Christian wisdom is reentry into the Garden. Frik's listener will have recalled that Eden was believed to hover over Hark' in Greater Armenia: a party of monks saw it from afar and reported on it to St. Nerses Shnorhali. This was a legend that Frik, whose work reflects the influence of the poetry of St. Nerses, who died only about a century before, might well have known.¹³

Frik uses images with a resonance in Islam and gives them additional symbolic power culled from Armenian and Christian sources. He does the same with a whole Persian text. Persian was known in Armenia in all stages of its growth as a spoken language. The headmen of the Armenian villages through which Xenophon and his mercenaries marched at the end of the fifth century B.C. knew Old Persian. A millennium later, the contempo-

raries of Mashtoc' knew Middle Persian. Many Armenians, both clergy and laity, of the Middle Ages knew New Persian. In the late fifteenth century, Katholikos Grigoris I of Aght'amar composed a love poem with alternating Persian and Armenian lines.¹⁴ In the Cilician period, there was an active trade route from Tabriz in Iran to the ports of Cilicia, so Persian was often heard in the Mediterranean Armenian state. Some of Frik's listeners evidently knew Persian as well. At the end of the twentieth poem of Frik's *Divan* is a quatrain of Khaqani in Persian, which, as a great Soviet Armenian Iranist, the late professor Babken Chugaszyan showed, is rendered into Armenian in the twenty-first.

In love's kitchen they slaughter none but the good:
They kill not those of comely visage but evil nature.
If you are really a lover, do not flee the slaughter!
For anyone they do not kill – is mortal.¹⁵

¹² A. E. Housman, *The Name and Nature of Poetry* (New York, 1939), 11, cites a poem on the weeping Mary Magdalen that explores part of the image – in my view, disastrously: "Two walking baths, two weeping motions, / Portable and compendious oceans." A Victorian bathing machine totters over our Lord. A recent rehearsal of the theme by the early punk rocker Patti Smith is better: "The little boy's face lit up with such naked joy that the sun burned around his lids and his eyes were like two suns" (song "Birdlands" on the album *Horses*). Since on the same album "Go man go!" alternates with "Go Rimbaud!" it is apposite to note that in one of his most famous poems, in the cycle *Un saison en enfer*, the French poet declared (and he sincerely believed in alchemy and the *mysterium coniunctionis*), "Elle est retrouvée! / Quoi? l'éternité. / C'est la mer mêlée / Au soleil." Patti Smith's lover, Robert Mapplethorpe, loved Rimbaud, and an edition of *A Season in Hell* with photographs by the late artist was published by Little, Brown (New York, 1986). The interaction of light and water did not escape our poet. Frik, echoing (unaware, for sure) Virgil's metaphor of thought in the *Aeneid* as the reflection of light on agitated water striking ceilings and walls, writes, "Zinch' arewu shoghn i jrin / I mej hogwoys ku terveray" ("It darts through my soul / Like the sun's ray on water," *Divan*, 9.74).

¹³ See Nira Stone, *The Kaffa Lives of the Desert Fathers: A Study in Armenian Manuscript Illumination*, CSCO vol. 566, Subsidia Tomus 94 (Louvain, 1997), 82–87 and pl. 6.

¹⁴ See J. R. Russell, "An Armeno-Persian Love Poem of Grigoris Aght'amarts'i," *JSA* 6 (1992–93): 99–105. The object of desire is another male standard in Iranian literature, even for heterosexual poets, but rare in Armenian.

¹⁵ Compare with Rumi: "Your love makes the fire of youth leap up. / In the breast of the beautiful the soul leaps. / If you are killing me, kill me then! For you it's lawful. / Since when the Friend kills, life arises in result." Armenian Christian devotees of the great Sufi master marched at Rumi's funeral in Konya (Iconium), A.D. 1273.

Frik's Armenian lines are:

On the holy table they sacrifice none but the good.
When, brothers, would they ever accept for God
one emaciated, or weak?
If you are really loved, then act so they do not
reject you.
I know the firstling they do not sacrifice is useless.¹⁶

The Persian poem deals with the familiar Sufi theme of the devout lover (*asheq*) seeking annihilation (*fana*) in the divine Beloved (*dust*), employing the phantasmagoric paradox of death as the true life, similar to the one of dreaming as true wakefulness that we have already seen. The theme of death as life is familiar in Armenian literature, though from a Hermetic, not a Platonic source: the famous slogan *Mahn imac'eal anmahut'ian e* (Death understood is immortality) employed by Eghishe vardapet in his fifth-century *History* of the war of Vardan. But Frik has taken the Muslim poem and recast in Armenian Christian terms of great symbolic power: the sacrificial offering of the firstling (*matagh*) on the altar – the Paschal Lamb itself. So he has added to the metaphorical weight of the poem the Christian mystery of death become into the instrument of bodily resurrection, enriching the translation in a creative way: the message has crossed the bridge of the translator from Muslim to Christian territory, as it were.

Frik uses the Armenian *sireli*, "loved," in translating the Arabo-Persian *asheq*, an active participle whose primary meaning is "lover": it and the passive *ashuq* (Arm. loan word *ashugh*) can mean also, secondarily, "minstrel." Didactic poems are often confessional, too: Frik may well be admonishing himself with his brethren. *Sireli* may encode his name. The name Frik is rare, and cannot of course be attested in native writing before the introduction in the twelfth century into Armenian of a letter to represent the sound /f/, which had existed in dialects but not in the official literary tongue, where it becomes aspirated *p* (for which a letter based on Greek *phi* was employed). The introduction of the new letter coincides with a period in which the pronunciation and accurate recording of Western European terms with /f/ was necessary in the highest circles of society.¹⁷ Though neither the poet Frik nor others in the Middle Ages of the name were from Cilicia, it is generally accepted that the name is a typically abbreviated Armenian diminutive of a Western European name that would have been better known there than in the hinterlands of Armenia proper: Frederick Archbishop Tirayr (*Diwan*, 86) cites an edict of Lewon V with the Armenian name Ftrkay, in the dative. The French translation has "père Frédéric." This

name is similar, but not the same, as Frik; so the hypothesis, however reasonable, remains unproven. But the word Frik, translatable in the context of its language and tradition, is attested in a Sasanian inscription of the third century A.D., as the name of the satrap of Weh Antiok Shabuhr: it is Iranian and means "beloved," and a related form, Friyan, is popular in the Parthian Zoroastrian literature the Sasanians inherited – precisely the Iranian literature that the Armenians knew best, of course. Nor did the name vanish. In the form Ifrik, it survives into the early Muslim period as a girl's name in Iran.¹⁸ If my suggestion is right, then we now have the native Iranian appellation (alongside *gosan*, Arm. loan word *gusan*) of which the Arabic for "minstrel" would then be a translation.

My new explanation of this freakish (!) name is unprovable and maybe even unlikely. But it has in its favor two things the equally unprovable reconstruction of the diminutive from Frederick does not. First, the Iranian name is not a hypothetical form, but a real one that existed into the medieval period, with definite Arsacid connections that would thus have been particularly fa-

¹⁶ See B. Ch'ugaszian, "Frike parskeren karyaki t'argmanich," *Banber Matenadaran* 4 (1958): 111–19; also my subsequent comments in J. R. Russell, "On Armeno-Iranian Interaction in the Medieval Period," in *Au Carrefour des Religions: Mélanges offerts à Philippe Gignoux, Res Orientales* 7, ed. R. Gyselen (Bures-sur-Yvette, 1995), 235–38.

¹⁷ On such evolution, see Stanley Morison, *Politics and Script* (Oxford, 1972).

¹⁸ The inscription of Shabuhr I, Ka'abe-ye Zardosht (SKZ), line 62: MP. ply2ky (with the orthographical convention of -yw-), Pth. pr(y)/ak, Gk. FREIKOU: < *fryiaka-, cf. Av. frya- (Yt. 13.110, 119), family Fryana- (M. Back, *Die Sassanidischen Staatsinschriften*, Leiden, 1978, 247, 358). The Parthian riddle-text is *Joisht I Friyan*, "Youngest (Son) of the Fryanas." From Iranian *fri* "love," note also Elamite *Nebenüberlieferungen* of Old Pers.: Pirriyana = *Fryana-, Ampiriya = *Ham-friya- (cf. Skt. sam-priya- "loving each other"), Priyasba = *Fryaspa- "Hippophile" (see Mayrhofer, *Onomastica Persepolitana*, 8.1316, 8.56; E. Benveniste, *Titres et Noms*, 91; cf. Aristophanes's obscenely satirical Hippobinos, *Nephelai!*). The name survives in Iran into the Islamic period: Tabari mentions Ifrik, "die liebliche," slave-girl of Asad son of Marzuban (Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch* [Marburg, 1895], 141). The base *fri*- with preverb yields familiar Av. *afri-nami* "I bless," Arm. loan word *awrhnem*, with change of Mlr. -fr-> Arm. -hr- and metathesis. The -w- may be accounted for by Pers. fC > Arm. uC (see Hübschmann, Arm. Gr., 511, with refs. to Marr and Meillet). Colloquial Arm. has also the interjection, from Pers.-in-Tk., *afarin!*, lit. "blessing," with the meaning "well done, bravo!" Arm. shortens names to add the diminutive -ik: a relevant example from a name where /f/ had been changed in Classical times to *p'* is Ep'rik = Little Ephrem!

vorable for introduction into the old Armenian onomasticon (where it would have lain low in orality till the invention of the letter *f* facilitated its emergence into light on the written page). Second, it means *sireli*, "beloved," just the right moniker for an *ashluq*, the "beloved" minstrel, at home in the Cilician Christian Armenian and Muslim Iranian worlds of the Mongol age, who remains in some respects still as enigmatic as his name.

Diwan 24

Of the same Frik
recited
A *logos* of profit to the soul and good
concerning contrition.
(5) Brothers, heed this counsel on what befalls me:
I plummeted into gold's mirage and did not build a
house for my soul.
I said, I will make me forts and towns and palaces.
For years, brothers, I did hard time in Harg [Ha'in?]
(10) And said, I'll achieve greatness by dint of my
own efforts, without the Command.
They came to me in a dream and said, That image
may be seemly to you,
But day by day, what God has prepared for you,
will be!
Without God, brothers, whoever wants to attain
his bread
Will live out his days barefoot and naked in this life.
(15) But if he petitions God and stands in prayer
before Him,
God has the power to give whatever he asks,
to fulfill all.
Day and night, ponder as we might, all is blocked.
In our minds we fantasize many lovely things in
this life.
But whatever God does – and His will be done! –
(20) His word and thought are all complete, and
nobody can flee.
Little son, if you heed me and lend an ear to my
advice,
See you are not bold in vain, saying, Why must
all this be?
Heed the Gospel, learn what is there:
The first is last; the last, first.
(25) Where are the kings of the earth and the treasure
they hoarded?
Be a willing pauper [*kamawor aghkat*] – to small and
great be meek.
Distribute all you have here, lest you be pitiful and
bewailed.

Why are you so stubborn in your sins? You deceive
Adam's son [*adamordi*, cf. Tk. *adamoghlu*: "Man"].
You fell in love with the world and it appears sweet
to you:
(30) This life is but brass, though, that rots in soil to
verdigris.
Examine yourself well, if you possess a mind and soul.
If you do not comprehend this, brother, then you are
neither dead nor alive.
This evil lust made its dwelling in me: it carries
me away,
Contented with me, to deliver me to Satan as his slave.
(35) I said, I renounce the wicked and cease to be
hellfire's lot.
My sin weighs upon my shoulder, bears me down
[cf. the Muslim belief in good and bad angels on
either shoulder].
Frik, consider profit and harm and decide which one
you need.
If you want the kingdom, leave the world in haste.
But if it's darkness and torment you prefer, and
piteous slavery,
(40) Eat and drink all day, and act in any way you
please.
I said, I turn away from my many evil deeds.
I ate ashes as my bread, drank the water of my tears.
My body loved this world, I sinned anew,
And needed the wisdom to make a resolution this
very day.
(45) He gave me an answer, brother, which I heeded:
Why have you stayed for this like an ass in the mire?
Deafen your ear, blind your eyes twain-
When your body cries out, Enough! then of it your
soul is freed.
Many *hayren logoi* I planted, as a paradise within
the mind
(50) That I watered from the fountains of my eyes.
I consumed my own liver, brother, as bread, raising it.
The two lights became one by night as I ripened it.
I fell into a sea of cares when I recalled these things:
I took my eyes' measure, and that of the waters of
the sea.
(55) I made my mind a swimmer and plunged to the
floor of the sea
For that pearl which lies upon the ocean floor.
So much did I implore God that the eyes of my soul
be opened
And my five senses be cleansed of the rust of this
world.
You wanted something precious, Frik, and when it is
accomplished, you will know:
Holy will then be your nature, eyes and ears, and mind.

Diwan 20

By the same Frik
recited
Counsel.

Come, let us cast aside this cheating life, lest we be deceived.

(5) Let us go and seek the place where we hope to dwell.

Many have been deluded by this life, yet none has declared, Enough!

Strive to find a remedy in this world, lest you be condemned in the next.

The longer you live happily here, the more the next life will be bitterness and tears;

If you live in soft luxury here, many tortures are being saved for you there.

(10) Many have been deceived in this world and have become fuel for the fire in the next.

Once you free yourself, why recite your human needs?

You speak only injustice; you work boundless evil.

You make friends with every thief; you share the lot of dogs [*shun* means also "fornicator"].

Your mouth profanes My holy and awful name

[God is clearly speaking here: Frik may be reciting the colloquy of a vision].

(15) Am I like you – a fornicating, drunken dog?

Can't you see my angry gaze? I give the earth
[of your bodies] to the winds

That take them and heap them to the dark, ice-bound regions.

Till resurrection I keep you, and you are tormented

When the river of fire glints, and there you burn.

(20) Repenting on the morrow does no good, I tell you.
Heed me, Frik!

Whoever was rich is left dishonored and humiliated.

If you don't look at hellfire from far off and burn,
good sirs,

Muslins and royal purple won't save you later on.

Many years now you've been condemned in body
and soul.

(25) All is scattered to the winds, and you've been asleep.

Wake up, find a solution and do some good,

Fast, pray, do not do more evil, more sin.

What God gives you, share with the man whose need
is keen,

That on the day of resurrection you receive much
good in return.

(30) But if you live in a dissipated way, consorting
with the base,

You condemn yourself here, and there your tortures
are increased.

You must be like the wise virgins, ready:

And when the gate opens, do not be separated from
your companions.

Make sure that you do not find yourself among the
foolish ones.

(35) If you depart with a torch, you will be the friend
of the wise.

It is a wonder to me why you always condemn
yourself in this world, Frik.

You have no house or home, neither wife nor daughter
nor son.

With friends like fate and fortune, what more do you
need?

You run around the land and find all lies and empty
wind.

(40) How much treasure and finery and goods will
you hoard?

When you've enjoyed the world to the full for these
many years,

And still have given naught to the poor by your hand
and labored for your soul,

We reckon you a fruitless tree – [good only] for the fire,
as kindling.

Try to make a remedy for yourself: to this human life
naught remains.

(45) Your black has turned to white, the invitation's
come, if only you will heed.

If you've any sense stored up in your soul, Frik,
Shake the wine out of your head, and make your
homeland on the other side.

Listen to all equally, don't be jealous of the wicked.
Evil does not accrue for a man, so wish it on none.

(50) But if you are a source of good, then you win
double:

Here you acquire a good name; there, you attain bliss.

When your heart's ear is more attentive than your
head's,

Then you must listen, brothers. Don't be fooled in
this world.

Our Lord descended from heaven, preached to
Adam's sons:

(55) Set this life at naught, He said – that other one
is to be desired.

I pondered hard and begged: I have need of you,
And if you render me good counsel, I'll serve you
many a year.

He said, Flee evil, do good on earth,

Turn to your Creator, and say Enough! to sin.

(60) That man who is wise will find this advice
sufficient.

He heeds his heart, and keeps it many years.
 But if you are not helped by this word of mine, then
 reckon it as wind:
 When said among fools and the ignorant, it's not
 worth a handful of dung.

[Lines 64–67: the Persian quatrain from Khaqani.]

Diwan 21

By the same Frik
 recited.

[Lines 3–6: Frik's translation of Khaqani's quatrain.]
 You know this well, brother, that they'll summon you
 on the morrow.

Make provision that they won't sacrifice you there.
 If you have wits and sense and examine all profit
 and harm,

(10) Be the sacrificial firstling in this world, that they
 receive you in the next.

Whether it is good or evil that you do, day by day
 they write it down.

When the court is assembled, they bring forth the
 record:

They will accuse you then of every evil you've done
 to man,

So anyone who has intelligence will pay his debts
 off now.

(15) They compile here the record of your debts and
 present it on the morrow there –

Otherwise, when Easter comes, when all will eat
 and drink,

You'll be in a great prison, where those who wish
 you ill will string you up.

They will demand your works, and all that you've
 done in this life – they'll know.

JAMES R. RUSSELL

SASANIAN YARNS:
THE PROBLEM OF THE CENTAURS RECONSIDERED

This paper deals with the Indo-European mythical creature known to the Greeks as the *kentauros* and to the Indo-Iranians as the *gandharva* or *gandarəwa*: by comparison of its functions in different cultures that tend to treat archaic mythical themes in consistently particular ways I attempt to derive its root meaning, then to examine its treatment in a cycle of Iranian tales, and to follow several possible vectors of their likely diffusion far to the north and west of the Classical world. It is rather more than threescore and ten years since Georges Dumézil tilted his lance against “the problem of the centaurs”. On the face of it Centaurs are not a problem. They do not loom large any longer in literature: the centaur in John Updike’s novel of the same name is a sad, middle-aged schoolteacher in rural Pennsylvania. A few generations ago it might have seemed that even dragons had lost their old prominence in literature and the study of the symbolic and imaginative components of human culture, but J. R. R. Tolkien defended manfully the importance of these hapless creatures in his essay “Beowulf, the Monsters and the Critics”⁽¹⁾, striking a blow for winged worms and *Mischwesen* everywhere – the German taxonomical genius extends even into the realms of nonexistent genera, providing this useful term for “mixed beings” who are half-man and half-horse or half-goat, etc. They are quite respectable in mythological study. In other contexts centaurs are more of a pleasure than a problem, and this has long been the case, it would

⁽¹⁾ TOLKIEN 1984, pp. 5-48. The scholar of English literature, Frank Kermode, in a review of Seamus Heaney’s recent translation of *Beowulf*, summarizes the argument: Tolkien finds in the poem “a high seriousness, a grim understanding that monsters are evidence of what cannot be denied, the potential of evil in the world; they are the enemies of men and gods (and God). The poem is a celebration of the necessary of even the greatest human valor; the tragic truth of mortality...”. See KERMODE 2000, pp. 18-19.

seem: since the work of the sculptors of the Parthenon frieze and of Zeuxis the painter – who was the first, as it seems, to portray a family group of them, since they had been shown only as fully-grown males before him – they are not monstrous but beautiful, combining the nobility and power of equine and human musculature. They transform the wedding of Peirithous on the Elgin marbles⁽²⁾ into a brawl, a pitched battle- but then he knew them- they were his nephews- and still had invited them, since it seems Centaurs were a kind of catalyst to the successful consummation of a marriage, and the fight has nothing of distress in it, and infuses the art with the dynamic aspect that is essential to the loveliness of the Athenian culture, and in any case how many Centaurs are you likely to meet in a day? Nor were all Centaurs necessarily to be feared. Achilles' tutor in the arts of healing and of war, Chiron, exemplified the esoteric and powerful knowledge for which the Centaurs were also famous. By the time the Centaurs join portrayals of the Dionysiac *thiasos*, they are joyful, but no longer dangerous. There are paintings of aquatic *thiasoi* as well, and in these the whale, *kētos*, is strikingly similar to the Centaur⁽³⁾. These creatures will be seen to have figured in stories associated with tales of centaurs and like creatures- and they, too, once had a certain reputation for wreaking death and destruction. They, too, become innocuous over time. Where there is a known problem: the vexed etymological relationship of the name of the Greek *kentauros* to that of his undoubted cousin, the Indo-Iranian *gandharva* – Georges Dumézil⁽⁴⁾ came to doubt his own solution, and since it seems unlikely that on present evidence a satisfactory one will be found, what is there left to reconsider? In fact there is plenty.

First I will present as a test case for the method of mythological triangulation to be employed for centaurs, another mythological figure

⁽²⁾ For a full register of the Centauromachy on the south metopes and the most comprehensive recent discussion of the Parthenon see HURWIT 1999, esp. pp. 171-174.

⁽³⁾ See VON BLANCKENHAGEN 1987.

⁽⁴⁾ DUMÉZIL 1929 and NAPIER 1986, p. 63. Dumézil's attempt to connect centaurs and their relatives or analogues to rites of the beginning of the year, notably, in Europe, to Carnival as a survival of Lupercalia, has however gained general acceptance: see, for instance, DUMÉZIL 1988, pp. 28-29. I would tentatively suggest that the Greek word *kentauros* reflects devoicing from an original form like *gandarva*, not through a development within Indo-European, but by secondary borrowing from an old Anatolian language; cf. the Etruscan that has given us "catamite", from Greek Ganymede! On the latter topic, Centaurs were associated with pederasty, also, and the word could *mean* a pederast (BARTRA 1994, p. 29 and n. 51). There is a fresco, for instance, of Achilles and Chiron from Herculaneum, first century B.C., at the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, Napoli. Chiron's equine body kneels, and his human torso, adorned with a knotted cape, towers over the naked, beardless Achilles, who holds a lyre. FERNANDEZ 2002, p. 33 and pl. 24, finds the scene homoerotic.

who is slightly less complex. There is an Armenian mythological figure called the *t'ux manuk*, "black youth", a playful, seductive being who descends by mountain streams to the ruined chapels where women light candles and kindle incense for him as to a saint- the being has become Christianized. In classical Greece there is a similar black youth, Melanthos, who also comes from the edge of settlements, but who becomes one of the pivotal figures in a myth on the basis of which Athenian youths enacted a ritual of passage from boyhood to the status of adolescent citizens – that is, the mythologem is, characteristically, absorbed into the social and political concerns at the focus of Hellenic civilization. In India, to the east, there is another black youth – Sanskrit *Bālakrishna* – whose mischievous butter-thievery marks the passage from childhood to boyhood. He is also the object of an intense devotion, *bhakti*, that has as its metaphoric and actual source of vitality the erotic attraction between the sexes: Krishna and his *gopī* cowherdesses. The mythologem in India becomes a sophisticated meditation on the energy and nature of nascent human sexuality and of the erotic power of the devotion of the worshipper to his select divinity. By this comparison of three Indo-European cultures, which takes into account the distinct concerns of each, one proposed an explanation of what would seem to be a common, Indo-European, mythologem of awakening adolescence and of the sexual love that brings into being the first significant social relationships outside the family⁽⁵⁾.

In the case of the Black Youth in Armenia, there does not appear to be any tangible Zoroastrian component, though it is common for Indo-European and Urartean or other Old Anatolian mythological material transmitted in Armenian tradition or appropriated by the local Christian cult to have undergone secondary Iranization. In the case of the Centaurs, we are confronted by a more complex series of developments, in which an Iranian loan replaces whatever the original term for a centaur in Armenian might have been. The Armenian translation of Eusebius renders the name of the onocentaurs of Berossus – themselves Mesopotamian Sagittarii with no known genetic relation to the Indo-European creature⁽⁶⁾ – by the Iranian loan *yuškəparik*. The first part of the

⁽⁵⁾ RUSSELL 1998.

⁽⁶⁾ In the *Reallexikon der Assyriologie*, art. "Mischwesen", pp. 243-246, are discussed and illustrated several types of Mesopotamian centaur, from the Kassite period. All have the quadriped body of a horse, surmounted by human torso, arms, and head. One, winged, is a Sagittarius; another, without wings, flourishes a sword. These centaurs appear on *kudurrus* (boundary steles) and cylinder seals, and on Babylonian stamp seals of the Seleucid era. The beings are generally shown hunting: see COLLON 1988, p. 81 pl. 364 and p. 184 pl. 881.

word accounts for the Greek prefix, the “donkey”; and the *perī* is an evil supernatural being – but, in the Avesta, a female one, *pairikā*. Prof. Martin Schwartz has suggested her name means “coverer”, making her a sort of succubus, a seductress in deed and probably in word as well. (And one would add that the Arabic *jinn*, who in the *Qur’ān*, *sūra* 114, is associated with the whisperer of heretical lies to men, probably means the same thing, from a base **gmn-* “cover”). Irrespective of the asinine prefix, the term *yuškaparik* is used by Armenian writers of Peirithous’ Centaur also. Moreover, in Armenian art the *yuškaparik* is not an equine humanoid, but a bird with a woman’s head- a Siren. But in neither case need this be either late or entirely a misidentification, since the donkey-man Silenus is closely associated with the Centaur; and the Siren (called *ham-baru* in Armenian and mentioned in the Armenian version of the Biblical book of Isaiah alongside the *yuškaparik*- a juxtaposition that helped future authors to associate the two creatures) is seductive and disruptive, promising knowledge in her song. One recalls that the Centaurs had wisdom, too: Chiron was renowned for his knowledge of medicine.

Centaurs in Greek mythology apparently embody the potentially chaotic, anarchic power- mainly sexual- that is the catalyst to the beginning of social bonds- like marriages- if properly controlled. They are manifestly uncivilized, living in wild places and eating raw flesh⁽⁷⁾. The battle between Lapiths and Centaurs on the Parthenon frieze may convey, overtly, the message of the victory of human reason and restraint over bestial passion and unbridled license. But, since the sculptures show a contest, not a victory, the scene may also suggest, more subtly, that upon the Akropolis the temple of Athena Parthenos achieves the harmonious balance and tension of two forces, rational and animal, both of which are necessary to life. It is perhaps significant, also, that there is also a cavalcade on the Parthenon frieze: the Centaur is man-horse, a being, as the German Romantic poet Hölderlin observed, living in “the in-between time when the earth tries to give its own elements form, when the dry things congeal...”⁽⁸⁾. The new, human régime of the hunt-

Berosos, a priest of Marduk, probably at the Esagila temple in Babylon, who lived around the time of Alexander, wrote a history of Mesopotamia in Greek, employing for his account of Creation the *Enuma Eliš* and providing also an account of the story of Deluge like that in the epic of Gilgameš. Eusebius of Caesarea, ca. A.D. 260-340, summarizes citations of Berosos by other writers in his *Chronicon*, an epitome of world history which was translated, in unknown circumstances, into Armenian around the fifth century: see VERBRUGGHE-WICKERSHAM 1996, pp. 17-29.

⁽⁷⁾ See BARTRA 1994, p. 16.

⁽⁸⁾ See FRIEDMAN-CACCIARI 1996, p. 126. Cacciari offers his observations on the division of man and horse upon contemplation of Max Klinger’s engraving, “Verfolgter Centaur”

er is that of man and horse divided, moreover, of man as the master of his mount. The Greeks of the period hunted mostly on horseback- when Xenophon, in his *Cynegetica*, remarked famously that hunting is training for war, he meant hunting on horseback. So in a way the cavalcade on the Parthenon signifies the resolution of the conflict between centaurs and men – the dynamic mastery of his mount by the rider – in the context of a public ritual. It is certainly significant that the name of Peirithous' bride is Hippodamia, "tamer or subduer of horses"! The Greek treatment of the myth is, predictably, to recast it as a social metaphor; but as we shall see, Centaurs in Greek mythology are associated also with wisdom, with poison, and with water- all perennial features of the other Indo-European oikotypes of the mythologem.

In India, the *Satapatha-brāhmaṇa* derives *gāndharva* from a root *grdh-*, "to covet", especially women; and the form *gāndharva-* can mean either a marriage of mutual sexual attraction, or a sort of music. There is a custom according to which one marries after celibacy as a student, but for three nights husband and wife sleep separated by the "Gandharva staff": the Gandharva Visvāvasu is regarded as the husband's rival during these nights, and one must appease him, asking him to go back to his own wives, the Apsarases. At the end of the fourth night the husband touches his bride's private parts and pronounces the formula, "You are the mouth of the Gandharva Visvāvasu". According to the *Satapatha-brāhmaṇa* it is the *vājin*, a vigorous horse whose sexual energy is stressed, that carries the Gandharvas (the *haya-* bears gods; *asva-*, men); and this equine association with its sexual overtones, is continued. For a derivative from Gandharva is the *kinnara*, a being with the body of a

(fig. 7). The preceding figure, "Centaur mit Wäscherinnen", shows the creature talking seductively to village washer-women. Significantly, he is standing in a stream that descends from a wilderness to the village: it would be hard to find a better illustration of the itinerary and function of the Armenian *t'ux manuk*, who seems to display points of similarity to the centaur. (In connection with the stream it is worthwhile to note that Paul Kretschmer connected *kentauros* with Gk. *anauros*, "mountain torrent": see KIRK 1973, p. 155.) Klinger also did an engraving of centaurs fighting. In Classical art, as for example on a Lycian marble sarcophagus of the fifth century B.C. at the Istanbul Archaeological Museum, the composition of the scene is serenely harmonious and symmetrical, but Klinger's vision is of tiny figures in a bleak, snowy waste, echoing the painting by Arnold Böcklin of centaurs fighting- a scene, also in some barren upland, of bloody, stone-throwing barbarism (see LE RIDER 2001, p. 57, fig. 7). The painters of Viennese fin-de-siècle decadence capture the *horror antiquus* of the centaur as primordial monster. Both artists offer a critique, as it seems to me, of the Classical tradition, particularly of the manner in which the heirs of the Renaissance, such as Winckelmann, interpreted it. Their works cry out that violence cannot be tamed, that the grin of death cannot be an eirenic smile, that civilization cannot overcome human atavism (see figs. 1-4).



Fig. 1 – Lydian sarcophagus, fifth century B.C., Istanbul, Türk Arkeoloji Müzesi.



Fig. 2 – Arnold Böcklin, *Combat de Centaures* (1872-1873), Basel, Öffentliche Kunstsammlung/Kunstmuseum.



Fig. 3 – Max Klinger, *Verfolgter Centaur*.



Fig. 4 Maz Klinger, *Centaur mit Wäschereinnen*.

horse and the head of a human being, who sings and plays music (*Viś-nudharmottara-purāṇa*); and *kandarpa*, a Prakritization of Gandarva, is taken back into Sanskrit as a name of Kāmadeva, the god of love⁽⁹⁾. It is clear from the Indian data that Centaur and Gandharva are essentially the same mythical creature, with a similar, though differently stressed, meaning and function. The Indian Gandharva is an occult rival and third partner, both obstructing the wedding and, by his power, enabling coitus to occur; and his particular art is a kind of wisdom- music, with its non-linguistic appeal to our emotional sense of the meaning and order of life. Professor Alex Wayman has linked the Gandharva in Indian philosophy to the function of rebirth: so the being becomes the esoteric embodiment of a function of union and transition and of a branch of wisdom akin to passion- music. Passion is not a social issue in India. It's a god.

In Zoroastrian Iran, the *gandarəwa* is an aquatic monster whose participation in human affairs has been demonized entirely: he has given up seduction for the more direct and prosaic act of the kidnapping and eating of a hero's relatives and friends. It retains its association with major points of transition, though, since the hero Kərəsāspa – about whom more presently – slays it on the New Year's feast of Nō Rōz. The Avestan *gandarəwa* survived into the Middle and New Iranian languages, but the word is not attested in a borrowing by the Armenians, perhaps because the intervention of learned translations- Bible translations, Eusebius, the *Alexander Romance*, and Movsēs Xorenac'i- obliterated it. But an argument from silence is not necessary, since the portrayal of the *yuškariparik*/(ono)centaur in a vulgar late mediaeval text displays a typical process of Christianization of the creature's functions in a manner parallel to the treatment of the mythologem of the Black Youth.

The text, attested in one 17th-century manuscript, appears to draw indifferently upon a range of ill-digested superstition and mediaeval learning- that is, to represent to a certain extent the folk tradition of storytelling, of old oral tradition and not just Christian lucubration. It asserts that the *yuškariparik* was an aquatic siren, a monstrous Mischwesen compounded of dog, ass, crane, and woman, descended from Scylla⁽¹⁰⁾, Cain,

⁽⁹⁾ See WAYMAN 1997, who cites on pp. 39-40 the description of the rite of the Gandharva staff from P. K. N. PILLAI, *Non-Rgvedic Mantras in the Marriage Ceremonies*, The Travancore Devaswom Board, Trivandrum 1958, pp. 303-304.

⁽¹⁰⁾ There are several features of the monster relevant to the centaur. She has an aquatic association, and one with poison, and with seduction, and with cannibalism: the sea-god Glaucus loved her but could not win her, so he asked the witch Circe to enchant her. But

and Satan. Persian sea captains snared it and Iranian kings fornicated with it: it became the mother of heresy, bearing the inventor of the Pepuzian heresy. From her in turn were begotten other heresiarchs and sectarians- Mani, the Tondrakites, the Armenian Sun – and poplar – worshippers (that is, the late Zoroastrian *Arewordik*’, “Children of the Sun”), Simon Magus, and Šidar, the latter a being linked to the imprisoned apocalyptic hero-king Artawazd⁽¹¹⁾. Several features of Christianization of the primordial mythologem stand out in this narrative. The disruptive action of the Centaur-creature comes at the inception of Armenian Christian sacred history instead of at some other beginning- Greek wedding feast or Indian nuptial bed or Persian New Year. And it employs its powers of seduction to pervert men’s minds to heresy. So, this is the pattern of treatment of the myth of the Centaur-creature across a wide geographical area, essentially East-West, in which three or four important test-cultures are examined. Now let us consider how the myth, in a fully-developed form- embedded principally in a cluster of Iranian adventure stories adhering to the figure of a hero- might have spread, on a South-North axis, in one case possibly coloring another narrative of similar character with which it could have come in contact.

Persian sea captains, the Armenian story says, captured the Yuška-parik for their kings. It is a yarn with roots in the Sasanian era, like those of Sindbad in the Thousand and One Nights. Yarns can travel in clusters, showing up singly or together in new environments; so let us now consider the cluster of episodes to which the Iranian Gandarva tale belongs, and its possible route of migration. It was a very popular one, cited in several Avestan sources and repeated and elaborated in the Pahlavi texts. The Avestan hero Kərəsāspa once landed on what he thought was an island and cooked his midday meal. But the island was in fact a huge sea-monster- Aži Srvara, the Horned Dragon, the frightful (*sima-*), spitting poison (*višō.vaēpa-*), devourer of men and horses (*nərə.gar-, aspō.gar-*). The fire burned the beast, who reared up; and the hero slew him (Ys. 9, 9, etc.). He killed also Gandarəwa the golden-heeled (*zairi.pāšna-*), the submarine (*upāpa-*) monster, who rushed forth with

Circe loved Glaucus herself, so she poisoned the spring where Scylla used to bathe, and the poor girl became a monster with six dog-heads. Now a rock between Sicily and Calabria, she lures sailors with her voice, and then eats them. Scylla and her sister Charybdis personify greed and excess- again, cf. the Indian association of the *gandharva* with greed (and Grendel, too, *infra*): see Ovid, *Metam.* 14.17-74. In the Armenian text, we encounter a curious mixture of Classical learning in the author’s source, assuming that in mentioning Scylla he knew the details of her story, and folkloric naïveté.

⁽¹¹⁾ See RUSSELL 1993.

open jaws to devour the living world; then he slew all nine of the brood of Pathana. (One notes juxtaposition of Gandarəwa and serpent: in India the two are related also, for after Pārvaṭi's curse the Gandharva Citraratha falls from heaven to become the dragon Vrtra⁽¹²⁾). He slew also the stone-fisted young monster Snavidhka, who had boasted that he would yoke God and the devil to his chariot and drive round and round the world as soon as he grew up (Yt. 19, 35-44)⁽¹³⁾. Angra Mainyu created a *pairikā*, Xnathaiti, who clave unto the hero (Vd. 1, 10). The Pahlavi texts expand upon these themes: Kərəsāspa was immortal, but because of his disregard for the Religion a Turanian, Nihag, wounded him with an arrow while he slept, in the plain of Pešyansai, where he now slumbers till the New Year's day, Xurdād rōz of Fravardīn *māh*, at the beginning of the millennium of the savior Sōšyans, when he will wake finally to slay the arch-monster of Avestan and later Persian lore, the dragon-man Aži Dahāka (Bdh. 29.7-9, 33)⁽¹⁴⁾. In Armenian learned tradition the epithet of the latter, Biwraspi, lit., "of the myriad horses", is considered identical to the name of the Centaur at Peirithous' wedding. If indeed Centaur and Gandarva are related, then this collocation may be linked to another: in the *Šāh-nāme* of Ferdōsi it is none other than one Ganderev or Kondrov who is master of ceremonies at the court of Zohhāk, i.e., Aži Dahāka⁽¹⁵⁾. Kondrov sees Farēdōn seated on

⁽¹²⁾ See O'FLAHERTY 1976, pp. 110-111, citing the *Bhāgavata* and *Skanda Purāṇas*.

⁽¹³⁾ This absurd boastfulness seems a parody of hubris, and there are echoes in later Persian literature, in the *Šāh-nāme*: when at the drinking after a feat Esfandiyār (maybe, like the Centaurs, he has got too drunk) ... *az ān mardī-ye xōd hamī kard yād*, "kept on memorializing his own valor", Rostam rebukes him: *ma dān xwēš-rā bartar az āsmān*, "Do not think yourself higher than heaven!". See DAVIDSON 2000, pp. 99-121.

⁽¹⁴⁾ See EDULJEE 1983 and SKJAERVO 1989 for useful surveys of the sources in translation. In his 36th Letter, the Armenian scholar Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni (990-1058), expanding upon material known from Movšēs Xorenac'i, writes, *Gitem ew zBiwrasp i leārn Dabawand, or ē Kentorosn Priwdeay: oē' morac'ayc' zSpandiarn i Sabalanin kalow lerin, kam zmern Artawaz i cayrs Ararad i Masek'ohn* "I know Biwrasp in the mountain Dabawand, who is the Kentoros of *Priwdeas: I will not forget Spandiarn standing in the mountain Sabalan, or our Artawaz at the edge of Ararad in Masek'oh". Biwrasp is Bewarasp, "of ten thousand horses", an epithet of Aži Dahāka/ Aždahak/ Zohhāk known to Armenians as Biwraspi. He is believed to have been imprisoned by Farēdōn in Mt. Demavand. Xorenac'i renders the Arm. of Peirithoos in the gen. sg. as *Perit'eay*, and claims *Piwrīday* is the correct form of *Biwraspeay*, as he found "in a Chaldaean book". AMBARTSUMYAN 1998, 114, suggests *asp-* is to be understood as "Centaur"; and *biwr-*, by *piwr-*, with a patronymic *-id[ēs]* added. But the explanation of THOMSON 1978, p. 127 n. 7 is to be preferred: in the Arm. version of the *Alexander Romance* of Ps.-Callisthenes Piwrid is killed in the battle of the Centaurs and Lapiths. It seems to me the expression could be understood also as "the Centaur of Peirithoos", with an alternate form of the latter name perhaps confused with the name of the strongest of the Centaurs at the battle, Eurytion.

⁽¹⁵⁾ On Ferdōsi, see DUMÉZIL 1929, p. 75.

Zohhāk's throne, enjoying the company of the maidens Arnavāz and Šahrnāz. He serves a feast to the usurper, but later on mounts his horse and goes off to inform his master. So here, too, *mutatis mutandis*, the Centaur-figure is introduced in the context of feasting and of usurped and illicit love⁽¹⁶⁾.

The story of the Gandarw (Phl., *gndlp*) is elaborated in the Pahlavi *Rivāyat*: it dragged Kersāsp to the sea and he fought it for nine days. After he bound it and went to sleep, exhausted by the combat, it extricated itself, returned, and dragged his friends and family into the sea⁽¹⁷⁾. The same text relates that Kərəsāspa slew giant highwaymen (*rāhdār*)-they were so tall the sea came up to their ankles. This episode could have assisted the introduction of Kərəsāspa, named by his familial epithet Sām, into the apocryphal *Book of Giants*, on which more below. It is not clear what the Iranians thought the creature looked like; but in Sogdian the *ghantarf* (*yntrw*) was a sort of water sprite; in Šuyni, it means a monster, dragon, or werewolf.⁽¹⁸⁾ the latter, at least, a Mischwesen somewhat like the Greek Centaur, but more sinister. This werewolf type will reappear in the myths about the Slavic Centaur-being, Kitovras.

Kərəsāspa's adventure with the horned dragon corresponds to a well-known folktale type: sailors think a large sea creature to be an island and light a fire on its back, waking it. Most relevant to Iran is the story of Sindbad and the whale-island; to diffusion westwards in the Sasanian period, the narrative of Bar Ḥana in the Babylonian Talmud, to be considered presently. In the Parthian period, it is known in the Armenian area- to Lucian of Samosata, the father of science-fiction. It shows up later, with suitable permutation, and far to the northwest, in the legend of St. Brendan⁽¹⁹⁾. In the latter case it is possible that the basics

⁽¹⁶⁾ See BANU 1957, lines 2043-2142. In the commentary to this section of the *Šāh-nāme* the editors comment (p. 615: I translate from the Russian): "Kondrov- limping, lame, that is, going down the wrong path, incapable of distinguishing between good and evil. It is possible that we have to do here with a distortion of the primary name Kunderav, which can be associated with Indic Gandharva, Greek Kentauros, and Slavonic Kitovras. In some Armenian sources [I have not seen these and they do not specify them- J. R. R.] the name Kunderav is related to Zohhak. In this manner the demon who in ancient traditions fought against the Sun with Zohhak could have gradually receded into the background to become Zohhak's assistant- his housekeeper".

⁽¹⁷⁾ See WILLIAMS 1990, Ch. 18.

⁽¹⁸⁾ See SKJAERVO 1989 citing Morgenstierne.

⁽¹⁹⁾ In THOMPSON 1955, vol. 4, p. 143, under the category "The Wise and the Foolish: Absurd Misunderstandings: One Thing Mistaken for Another", is sub-heading J 1761.1: "Whale thought to be an island. Sailors light a fire on his back", with ref. to Dov Neuman [Noy] on the Talmud. On "Sindbād le marin", see CHAUVIN 1892-1922, vol. 7, p. 7, no. 373,

of the narrative migrated from the central regions of Christendom, since we deal with the hagiographical genre, and mingled with the existing Celtic oikotype.

In the Babylonian Talmud, there are several tall tales about the desert and the sea attributed to Rabba (bar Bar Ḥana), third century A.D., who lived in Sasanian Babylonia but also spent much time in the Land of Israel- that is, in the vicinity of the Mediterranean coast, where such stories might conceivably start their journey out through the Pillars of Hercules and north to the Celtic world. He might have acquired some of his gifts as a raconteur from his own teacher, R. Yohannan, who said he had seen the jewel-studded box in which the purple threads for the garments of the righteous were kept. The box is presumably in the sea, since it is guarded by the fabulous *karesa* fish⁽²⁰⁾. The latter is reminiscent of the Avestan *kāra* fish that guards the Tree of All Seeds. And Rabba's tales also have an Iranian flavor and locus: in *Seder Neziqin* of Tr. *Baba Bathra* he relates that he saw *Hormiz the son of Lilith running on the parapet of the wall of Maḥoza, so fast that a rider galloping on a horse could not overtake him. Why Lilith? Probably this has to do with the syncretism of religious images in the beliefs reflected in the practical magic of late Parthian and Sasanian Mesopotamia, where the king of the demons in one text on a magic bowl is the Iranian Bagadāna, "place of the gods". The latter would be holy, not demonic, to Zoroastrians (an Armenian temple-city, Bagaran, bears the name)⁽²¹⁾; so the evocation of Ahura Mazdā as the child of the most prominent demoness of the magicians – the child-stealing witch Lilith, against whom

with synopsis and references to Lane's tr. of the Thousand and One Nights, 79-85; and Lucian, *Hist. véritable*, I. See also BURTON 1934, vol. IV, pp. 2014-2016 (night 538). Sindbad and his companions land on an island where trees grow. But it is a beast, and their cooking rouses him. Sindbad is saved by jumping into a floating tub. In the next tale (night 539), Sindbad washes up on shore with a noble mare. The grooms of the place, who serve king Mihrjān (i.e., Mihragān, a Zoroastrian name, making the locus, again, pre-Islamic Iran), come when they hear their own horses neighing. Sea-stallions come out of the water to mount these mares. This latter theme, of the *babri*, or merhorse, mating with a terrestrial mare, is a standard fixture of the folklore of the Iranian peoples (see THACKSTON 1999, p. ii, and the Tale of King Ahmad, pp. 81-85, which interweaves the theme of Hippolytus- or Yusuf and Zuleika if you prefer), and provides the opening episode of the great *Kōroghlu* epic. I heard in June 1997 a local version of the tale in isolation told by a resident of Šahbayi, on the shore of lake Van, about the "king" of that town and the "king" of Gevaš on the lakeshore opposite Aht'amar island near ancient Armenian Ostan, which really did have its Arcrunid king once.

⁽²⁰⁾ See PATAI 1998, pp. 125, 127.

⁽²¹⁾ See RUSSELL 1999, p. 114 and n. 7, with refs. to S. Shaked's study of the magic bowl and to the Armenian sources.

talismanic texts are produced to this day – is not surprising in context, though that would not make it any less appalling to an Iranian. Another interesting aspect is that Hormiz (as a demon) is named by his mother, not his father. This is an Iranian feature: Ažī Dahāka is so named, and in Persian the greater child-stealing witch is called *mādar-e Āl*, mother of the demoness of puerperal fever (the Armenian folk-tales follow the convention, deriving it from Iran); and presently we shall consider a northern monster and his mother.

Rabba also saw a frog the size of Hagronia fortress (near Nehardea): a snake swallowed it; then a raven swallowed the snake and sat on a tree. This series of creatures devouring each other, with a hint of a monstrous evil, reminds one of the common folk pattern seen, in moralizing form, in the Passover hymn *Ḥad gadyā* (“One kid”) and in other Near Eastern traditions. He also said, “We travelled once on board a ship, and saw a fish whose back was covered with sand out of which grew grass. Thinking it was dry land we went up and baked, and cooked, upon its back. When, however, its back was heated it turned, and had not the ship been nearby we should have been drowned”⁽²²⁾. He speaks of another giant fish called the *gildānā*, whose name sounds as though it might be Iranian; but in view of the general setting of Rabba’s stories, it seems reasonable to suggest a Middle Iranian version of the legend of Kərəsāspa reached him.

In later Jewish tradition, Rabba’s story of the island came to be interpreted by Eastern European Jews as symbolic of the instability of life in the Diaspora: they think themselves settled on dry land, but the plain is a fish, their cooking fires disturb it, and it dives⁽²³⁾. Their Slavic neighbors seem to have adopted the theme from them, and it is perhaps partly through memory of the tradition that in recent times the rhyming name of the great fish, *Chudo-yudo-ryba-kit*, has come to be explained as “the miraculous Jewish fish of a whale”. But the sense of existential insecurity is, understandably, absent: the whale’s back sup-

⁽²²⁾ See SIMON-SLOTKI 1935, pp. 190-191 (= 73a-b, 74a-b); text in Moses GASTER, *Beiträge zur vergleichenden Sagen- und Märchenkunde*, «MGWJ» (1880-1881), pp. 1-107, repr. in Vol. II of his *Studies and Texts*, London 1928, repr. GASTER 1971, pp. 53 (1239)-57 (1243): “VII. Ein Fisch als Insel”.

⁽²³⁾ R. Samuel Edels, 17th cent., Poland, cited a Rabbinical tale: the Jews wander in the depths of the metaphorical “sea of exile” (*be-‘imqē metsulōt yam ha-galūt*) and come upon a great plain, where they settle, thinking the place to be an island, “for they thought they had found dry land and forgot they were in exile” (*sevūrim hēm de-yabāšā hava veleika galūtā*). But it turns out to be the back of a beast, and their fires disturb it. It rears up and throws them off. See GOBERMAN 2000, p. 27, citing HESCHEL 1985, p. 40.

ports a dreamy Russian village⁽²⁴⁾. In these two Eastern European cases, the type of *Kərəsāspa* and *Aži Srvāra* probably merged with the related motif, best known in the West from the book of Jonah but attested also in the Indian *Kathāsaritsāgara* and in Lucian, of an inhabitable whale, within whose belly there can be even whole cities and countries⁽²⁵⁾.

There is another narrative in Slavonic tradition meriting discussion at this point. We have seen how *Kərəsāspa*'s encounter with *Aži Srvāra* is followed by his battle with *Gandarəwa*. In Old Slavonic is attested *Kitovras*, a being whose name certainly derives from *Kentauros*, with contamination by the Greek loan *kit*, "whale". In a 14th-century apocryphon it is related that when Solomon ruled in Jerusalem, his brother *Kitovras* reigned at a place called *Lukor'e*, a (human) king by day, but transformed into a beast every night. Here is a *Mischwesen*, and one close to the modern Eastern Iranian sense of a *Gandarva* as a werewolf. This *Kitovras* decides to kidnap Solomon's comely wife, and sends a ship with a magician on board to accomplish the task. The latter gives the woman a sleeping draught. Solomon, thinking her dead, buries her; the mage exhumes her and absconds. Solomon learns of the deception, attacks his brother's realm, and secretly makes his way to his wife, who betrays him to *Kitovras*. Solomon is imprisoned and sentenced to death, but he gets word to his army, who free him. *Kitovras*, his wife, and the wizard are hanged on the gallows meant for him⁽²⁶⁾. Here is a tale of uncontrolled sexual passion, kidnapping, and violation worthy of the wedding of the *Lapiths*. Poison plays a role in myths about Centaurs: *Herakles*, after a similar pattern of erotic betrayals, is killed by the poisonous blood of the Centaur in which his shirt has been soaked⁽²⁷⁾. The

⁽²⁴⁾ The story, retold by P.P. Yershov in *Konyok-gorbunok*, was much loved by Pushkin, and illustrations and sculptures of the whale-village are very popular in Russian folk-art and children's books: see SOLOMATINA 2001, figs. 237, 250, 252.

⁽²⁵⁾ See PENZER 1924, vol. II, p. 188 (ch. 25.29): in the Story of the Golden City, the Brahmin *Shaktideva* is swallowed by a big fish after a shipwreck. He comes alive to the island of *Utsthala*: the natives catch the fish and out he comes. Penzer (p. 193 n. 1) cites Lucian- a fish swallows a ship, and the sailors find whole countries within. As to Jonah, there seems little doubt that this wry, Hellenistic Jewish satire was constructed on the armature of a sea story- likely as not an Indo-Persian one- and it is pleasantly ironic that piety has made a 360-degree turn to the sources: BICKERMAN 1967, pp. 3-4, observes that "in modern times exegetes have often tried to vindicate the episode by quoting sailor yarns".

⁽²⁶⁾ VESELOVSKII 1872, pp. 140-141.

⁽²⁷⁾ This aspect of the Greek myth was known to Christians, including Armenians, from the Scholia to the first Invective against Julian of Gregory Nazianzenus. *Nessos*, one of the *hippokentauroi*, fell in love with *Deianeira*, the wife of *Herakles*, and wanted to sleep with her. *Herakles* shot *Nessos*, who when dying gave some of his blood to the woman, saying it was a love-charm: if *Herakles* ever loves another, she should smear his clothes with it. The

Avestan dragons exude poison (*viš*); it is possible that the word for an aquatic monster that becomes the general term in Armenian for a dragon, *višāpa*-, contains the term for poison, though the etymology is disputed. Veselovskii suggested that the Greek original of the text on Kitovras was carried north into the Slavic world by Bulgarian Bogomil and Armenian Paulician sectarians; and in its origins the tale looks like a Jewish *midrash*, concluding on a necessary note of vengeful justice, itself reminiscent of the fate of Haman and his sons in *Esther*. It would have been based originally upon a Greek tale, with rich Oriental admixtures. And the introduction of Solomon is to be expected: the storied king, in the *Antiquities* of Josephus and elsewhere, accretes the exotic and adventurous as a magnet attracts bits of iron to itself.

Veselovskii's suggestion that sectarians in particular liked such stories is sound, and is strikingly borne out by the treatment of it in a work of the sectarians *par excellence*- the Manichaean version of the *Book of the Giants*. In the Avesta, Sāma Kərəsāspa bears the epithet *naire.manah*-, "manly-minded", and in later literature he is named often by his clan-name, as Sām, the epithet Narīmān hypostatizing into another hero. So in the text of the *Book*, known in Middle Persian and Sogdian, the combat of the Kərəsāspa cycle becomes the struggle of the hero Sām (who takes the place of Ohya/Ogias the dragon-slayer) against Leviathan⁽²⁸⁾ – here the Iranian hero keeps his name but the sea monster gets a Biblical Hebrew one.

There is another Slavonic tale, attested at least from the 14th century, in which king Solomon seeks out Kitovras, who alone knows about and is able to help the king to catch the *shamir*, a creature of Midrashic literature by whose help alone the stones of the Holy of Holies may lawfully be cut. Here Kitovras lives in the desert and is caught with iron chains inscribed with a spell bearing God's name. Throughout the story, Kitovras demonstrates uncanny foresight and proverbial knowledge.

hero later fell in love with Iole, so she smeared the blood on his shirt, to return his love. But it was man-killing, and the garment burst into flame as he put it on. He threw himself into the river but succeeded only in heating the water as he died, giving Thermopylae its name (See BROCK 1971, p. 84, where the Gk. *hippocentaurōn*, gen. pl., is Syriac *qnt'rw*; the Arm. is *kentaurosac'n*, see MANANDIAN 1903, p. 246). Another version has Nessos ferrying travellers on his back across the river Evenus. When she is his passenger, the Centaur tries to rape. Deianeira midstream, and Herakles shoots him (BARTHA 1994, p. 15). In the latter story the Centaur retains an aquatic association. The ironic, nasty trick with the blood has one specifically Iranian association in Greek literature: the spiteful gift of the deserted Medea to Jason's new wife.

⁽²⁸⁾ See W. SUNDERMANN in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. 10, pp. 592-523, and SKJAERVO 1995, pp. 198-199.

But he is also very dangerous: when released from his bonds, he strikes Solomon once with his wing and sends the king flying to the very boundary of the Promised Land, after which Solomon commands sixty strong youths to guard his bed⁽²⁹⁾ – apparently he fears Kitovras will attack him as he sleeps. The tale, which plays, like the previous one cited, upon the famous, perennial theme of Solomon's perilous occult activities and control of demons, stresses the Centaur's indispensable wisdom. This aspect is not present in the Kərəsāspa cycle, where Gandarəwa is wholly demonic, but we have seen it variously refracted through the Greek, Indian, and Armenian treatments. A familiar feature to the Iranian type, though, is the nocturnal danger Kitovras poses, a feature we will return to presently in the consideration of another text.

Rabba's original source was probably Iranian, and his narrative shows how the Avestan and then Pahlavi story could travel as part of a cycle of salty yarns told in the sea of the text of the Talmud. And the Jewish *midrashim* of Late Antiquity, by direct transmission amongst migrating Jews and indirectly, through Greek translations employed by Christian sectarians, moved far north, into the mediaeval Slavic world. Another powerful and likely vector for the further transmission of the story of the fish-island would have been the popular *Alexander Romance* or narratives derived from it and clustering around it, where the "monstrous races" and fabulous beasts of legend are especially popular. In the Greek text the fish-island the Macedonian conqueror sees on his travels is called *aspidokhelōnē*, "shielded tortoise" – hence the *Aspadoklōni* in an Ethiopic *Physiologus*. In the Ethiopic version of the *Romance* the "beast of the monsters of the sea" is to be found in the sea of Prasiake (from Skt. *pārasika*-, "Persian"?), or Yōmēda, in India⁽³⁰⁾. The locus is right; and perhaps a barbarian deformation of the name yields *Jasconius*, the whale-island of the *Navigatio Sancti Brendani Abbatis*. If the name is barbarous, the creature is not: Brendan's companions pull up on a black and treeless isle in the mid-Atlantic, they light a cooking fire, and of

⁽²⁹⁾ *Skazanie o tom, kako yat byl Kitovras Solomonom*, from the Kirillo-Belozersk collection No. 11-1088, of the scribe Efrosin, 15th century, with a lacuna filled from No. 68-1145 of the same collection, in *Izbornik* 1969, pp. 370-375 and note, pp. 746-747. This story was popular as part of a cycle about Solomon by the 14th century in northeastern Russia. In a retelling of the story by the 20th-century Russian writer Alexei REMIZOV 1947, Solomon eats too much at a *Persian* supper. There are Masonic touches- the architect Hiram is mentioned specifically, and the pillars Jachin and Boaz are described- and Arab, Armenian, Persian, Indian, and Chinese captives at the court of the Israelite king lend added Oriental exoticism to the tale.

⁽³⁰⁾ See BUDGE 1896, vol. II, p. 143.

course the island starts to move. St. Brendan explains to his frightened men that it is the fish Jasconius. Years later they land on it again, but have the courtesy to prepare a cold picnic lunch. The appreciative fish returns to them the iron pot they had abandoned in their previous flight⁽³¹⁾. It is all very Franciscan. In the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance*, the island is called simply *kitos*, i.e., a whale⁽³²⁾. The *Alexander Romance* contains also an episode (III, 17) in which people tell Alexander there is an island with an ancient king's tomb, full of gold. But the island turns out to be a monster, and it dives: this incident perhaps combines the myth of the horned dragon with another about treasures guarded at sea – cf. R. Yoḥannan's box, above.

The Greek Centaur, Indian Gandharva, Armenian Yuškparik, and Iranian Gandarōwa are differently treated in the contexts of their respective cultures, in a manner consistent with and parallel to the various treatments of the mythologem of the Black Youth, for example, in India, Armenia, and Greece; and in the present case also the Centaurs and Gandharvas seem to go back the same Indo-European mythological creature. The attestation of the Centaur in Greek mythology and art is functionally complex and rich with associations to other beings, indicating that it figured in a series of tales; and in Iran the battle with the Gandarōwa forms an incident in a series of adventure tales that cluster around the hero Kərəsāspa. One of these latter tales belongs to the prominent type of the big fish thought to be an island; and from the altered versions of this Persian oikotype that entered the Talmud, the Jewish Midrashim at the point of origin of the Slavonic Kitovras cycle, and the extra-Biblical, sectarian *Book of the Giants*, it appears that from the Iran of the Sasanian period these tales travelled as a series of which this or that element appears in the texts. As seamen's yarns, too, they are in the Persian Sindbad cycle. Localized to India and Persia in the *Alexander Romance*, the fish-as-island motif may make its way, with permutation, to the Celtic hagiography of Brendan. Note that the vexatious problem of the etymology of the name Centaur or Gandharva, perhaps insoluble, does not materially affect the plain and obvious identity of the two creatures on a primordial level of their mythological development; and still less would the right solution of that problem matter in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages, when the facile similarity of

⁽³¹⁾ See ELLIS 1996, p. 193.

⁽³²⁾ See SIMONYAN 1989, pp. 282-284: the barbarous Indian ichthyavores who tell Alexander of the fish-island are illustrated, with the Macedonian hero, in Venice Mxit'arist MS. 424, p. 186 (= fig. 52 in MACLER 1928), but there is, disappointingly, no whale shown.

names would be sufficient for the identification of a creature whose name was heard in a foreign tale with another known at home whose subsequent visage in literature might then be altered in the context. So the present reconsideration of the Centaur problem is now to encounter a poem whose locus of composition was Denmark- also to the north of the Irano-Greek world, and midway between Russian Kitovras and Irish Jasconius. It contains a monster very like the *gandarəwa* of Kərəsāspa as described in the Pahlavi literature of the Sasanian period, who has a somewhat like-sounding name.

The Arabs of Andalusia, who knew their Vikings, called the Scandinavians *majūs*- Magi. Nobody knows why. Was it their alien religion, their commercial contacts with Persia, a confusion based on a Celtic word for a town, or simply a known designation, reapplied to Western circumstances, for a society without the Book with which Moslems came into contact?⁽³³⁾ But the Danes sang a poem about a hero, Beowulf. He had killed nine⁽³⁴⁾ sea-monsters in single combat off the Finnish coast before coming to Hrothgar's hall, Heorot, which the aquatic monster Grendel would stealthily attack by night. And it is just the hall he attacks, not private houses, say, or boats: the hall, in Germanic society, is the equivalent of the institutions of guest-friendship and marriage into which Greek Centaurs erupt. The monster is part human, like the Centaur, but he lives outside the artificial construction of society exemplified by the hall. In his ferocity he can invade it, but he cannot be part of it. His very matrilineality- a feature I have noted above, and one which may be a Near Eastern aspect- makes him functionally alien to patrilineal human society⁽³⁵⁾. But back to the story. Beowulf comes, engages, and fatally wounds the half-human marauding cannibal, a real *Mischwesen*, which slinks back to its mere to die. Praise songs begin

⁽³³⁾ See GABRIEL 1999, p. 41; and PRITSAK 1990, on Celtic toponyms. The functional explanation I cite last, though, seems to be the best, and was argued by Roberto SCARCIA 1992. I am indebted to the author's proud father, Prof. Gianroberto Scarcia – one of the enduring and delightful memories of the Rome conference will be the pleasure of making his acquaintance – for bringing this important study to my attention.

⁽³⁴⁾ Note that in the *Zam Yazad Yašt* (Yt. 19), verses 38-44, Kərəsāspa kills *all nine* of the brood of Pathana.

⁽³⁵⁾ DUBOIS 1991 compares the Centauromachy to the Amazonomachy- a matriarchal society was in the Greek imagination uncanny and dangerous in many of the same ways Centaurs were. One notes the locus of the Amazons in both the Iranian East (or Irano-Scythian Northeast) and barbarous West. The latter placement was, I think, later, and reflects the same kind of process of transference that, *mutatis mutandis*, led Arabs to call Vikings Magi, or, indeed, relocated the ancient Eastern City of Bronze in the *Thousand and One Nights* to the Maghreb (see RUSSELL 1984).

immediately: you are still in the Indo-European world, though it is the land of the midnight sun, not the realm of the Parthian *gōšān*⁽³⁶⁾. Their joy is premature – Grendel's mother attacks while Beowulf is away resting and the Danes in Heorot are *asleep*. (We have been here before!) But he returns and defeats her. Any etymological association of Grendel and Gandharva is, according to de Vries, "lautlich unmöglich"⁽³⁷⁾, and explanations of the name tend to the base *grand-*: a meat-grinder, maybe a storm-drain⁽³⁸⁾ – the creature is a kind of nightmare combination of Moulinex and Jacuzzi. The Grendel family have a particular feature that links them with Centaurs, beyond their aquatic haunts and propensity to invade and disrupt the ceremonies of civilization: their blood makes swords melt- a feature which one Germanist finds not particularly Germanic. He cites Pliny, who claims, helpfully if we are looking for a Centaur, that equine blood is corrosive⁽³⁹⁾.

The *mother* of Grendel seems slightly odd in a Germanic context but normal in an Iranian and Near Eastern one, where there is not just the *āl*-monster but the *mādar-e āl*, the Ferdosian *mādar-e fōlād-zareh*, etc. But the poet helpfully provides the genealogy of the Grendel brood: they are descendants of Cain. Or of Ham- the two names sound alike in Latin, and the two characters are both outcasts, one for his violence, the other for his base lewdness- and that was enough for the mediaeval popular and exegetic imagination to fuse them⁽⁴⁰⁾, which is probably also what happened when stories of Centaurs and Gandarvas enjoyed reunions. And how did Cain get there? Christianity, happily, did not come to Britain without its accumulations of apocrypha. There is a 25-

⁽³⁶⁾ The praise song is performed by the bard before Beowulf's peers- that is, in the same hall that was under attack by the monster. It is precisely social acclaim, conferred thus, that is of greatest value in the "shame" society of the Indo-European heroes, ensuring that the hero will receive not only immortal fame, but the lion's share of monetary reward, out of which the *aidos* is to be paid. The song fulfills a part in the tripartite cycle as well: The hero performs his deed (1), the bard sings his praise (2), and the hero receives the acclaim and wealth enabling him to pay the bard his reward (3), ensuring that the cycle will be repeated. In this connection, it is significant that in Ossetic the same word, *kuvd*, is used both of "prière" and "banquet", probably through semantic contamination, rather than etymological identity: banquets were the occasions where the bards sang the praises of the exploits of the Nart-heroes (see CHRISTOL 1998).

⁽³⁷⁾ *Altmordisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 1929, s.v., cit. by LIBERMAN 1994, p. 22. I am grateful for this reference, and for a very enjoyable afternoon talking about *Beowulf*, to my Harvard colleague, Prof. Joseph Harris.

⁽³⁸⁾ LIBERMAN 1994, pp. 141, 162.

⁽³⁹⁾ WHITMAN 1977, p. 276, citing Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* 28, 41 and *Beowulf* 1605-1617.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ See QUINONES 1991, p. 53, on the confusion of Chaym (Cain) a dñHam (Cham) in *Beowulf*.

line fragment of Enoch in Latin, probably from eighth-century England. It concerns the Giants already familiar to us. They are cannibals, blood-drinkers, corporeal beings and evil spirits, and their names have the Hebrew theophoric suffix *-el*⁽⁴¹⁾. This could conceivably have been thought (wrongly, to the linguist; but usefully, for us) by the anonymous author of *Beowulf*, who muses on the Old Testament theme of the war of the Giants against Heaven, to explain the ending of Grendel's name. One recalls the Armenian Centaur, Yuškaparik, is descended from Cain, too. So even if Grendel was a purely Baltic monster, it would seem that Persian stories of sea-monsters, wafted north on the vector of Enochian books, and in the yarns of traders and seamen, reached the receptive ears of a people whose Germanic culture was, after all, distantly kindred to India and Iran. A *Centaur-el (!) might have seemed to them an echo of their own Grendel; the descent from Cain, in a poem that took final shape in a society in the first flush of Christianization, echoes Armenian developments. And in *Beowulf* the epithets *graedig* and *gīfre* "greedy" are associated with the race of Cain, Grendel's race. It does no harm that, next to Grendel, they are nicely alliterative, or that Jerome and Isidore both glossed the Hebrew Cain as "possessio"⁽⁴²⁾. All of it is grist for greedy Grendel's mill; and one recalls the Indian gloss of Gandharva from a root meaning "to covet". Gandarvas and Centaurs are lusty- they are greedy.

There is another aspect of *Beowulf* that may display fertilization from a source that is ultimately Sasanian. I have noted that Kərəsāspa's adventures form a series: the contests with the fish-island Aži Srvāra first, then with the humanoid monsters Gandarəwa and Snavidhka, and, at the end of the world, with Aži Dahāka. There is a triad in both the Iranian and Germanic epics, and even if episodes from the former have remotely influenced the latter, then it must still be admitted that such a tripartite division of exploits, even of the ages of man, must have been implicit in both poetic traditions *ab initio*- facilitating fertilization, perhaps, by a kindred cycle, but also making it more difficult to assert that the influence has occurred. *Beowulf* does battle with whales and other sea-monsters first, then with Grendel and his dam, and finally with a dragon. This third combat, though successful, brings his death- like the storied third wave that makes storm-tossed ships founder, that drowns sailors. And it is a salient feature of Germanic epic that the conclusion is frequently pessimistic. For Zoroastrian Iran this cannot be the case,

(41) See MELLINKOFF 1979 and KASKE 1971.

(42) See AMSLER 1979.

though, so Kərəsāspa's last combat, against the direst dragon of them all, is transposed to a time after his personal death- to the age of the resurrection. In the Pāzand Jāmāspī, Aži Dahāka (Bewarasp) emerges from his long imprisonment in Mount Damāvand and offers Kərəsāspa friendship. The hero responds by offering the dragon-man the Good Religion of Mazdā-worship, so that they may rule the world together, but Bewarasp refuses. Kərəsāspa smites him, and the villain begs him to stop, since they can yet rule the world together, but the former shuts his ears to temptation and slays him. This Zoroastrian formulation of the episode recapitulates, in a kind of cosmic ring-composition, the same temptation of the Prophet Zarathuštra himself in the *Vīdēvdāt* by the archdemon Angra Mainyu (who mentions Aži Dahāka as Vadagana, the latter's *matronymic*, significantly). Temptation did not work at the beginning, nor does it at the end, and, thanks to this religious recasting of an earlier epic narrative, Creation is saved from evil. There is a variant in the *Jāmāsp-nāme*: Kərəsāspa makes his offer thrice, and at the third asking the arch-monster accepts the Mazdean creed and evil vanishes. This variant reflects the same ambiguity that pervades Zoroastrian eschatological doctrine: what appears to be the earlier teaching affirms that the souls of the wicked will be utterly eradicated at the end of time. Later, when Zoroastrianism had become a national faith with no propensity to seek converts, one could scarcely condemn fairly to eternal damnation adherents of other religions who had never been given a chance to follow the truth, so a later doctrine holds that their souls will at the end be purified and redeemed, if painfully. It is typical of the conservatism of the Iranian faith that the two, mutually contradictory, doctrines, were both kept in texts.

Perhaps before its treatment within the Zoroastrian tradition, the Kərəsāspa cycle had concluded with the killing of Aži Dahāka and the death in that last, greatest, battle- the third of his cycle- of the Iranian champion. This hypothetical ending of the cycle in the early period of Indo-Iranian poetry would, then, have been most similar to the actual ending of *Beowulf*, at the end of the living age of the Indo-European oral heroic poetic art, at the opposite extremity of the Indo-European world. So I suggest that the Pahlavi Kərəsāspa cycle current in Sasanian times might have enriched the character of Grendel specifically and the analogous structure of *Beowulf* itself generally, providing incidents such as the attack during the hero's sleep to a tale with ancient Indo-European roots of its own in which key Centaur-like features and a similar deep structure were already present.

The oikotypes of the rich and polyvalent mythologem of the Centaur meet and mingle, change in transmission, become endowed with Biblical trappings, travel far. In the Mediterranean world of early Christendom, the Centaur seems to have succumbed to the power of the Nazarene. Jerome in his *Life of St. Paul* recounts St. Antony's journey through the desert in search of the Apostle. Around midday he sees a *hominem equo mixtum*: "the fancy of poets name this creature a hippocentaur", explains Jerome. The Christian asks it for directions; and though it can utter only "barbarous sounds" – the Logos has, plainly, made nonsense of the old pagan speech that once imparted the secrets of natural wisdom to Achilles and Prometheus⁽⁴³⁾ – it points the way with its right hand, flees, and vanishes. A satyr appears later on, also – but all these creatures have been reduced to mere signposts and pets by the holy men of God who have made of the desert a city. The Centaur has become, in the formulation of Patricia Cox Miller, a "hyper-icon of the desert"⁽⁴⁴⁾. Except as a sort of monastic accessory, the Centaur in the climes of its birth is mute, and powerless.

But not everywhere: it survived long, in the northern parts whither this investigation has pursued it. In the early twentieth century, Nikolai Klyuev addressed a love poem to that most amorous, anarchic, and Centaurish of seductive singers and heretics, the fallen angel, Sergei Esenin, where the Centaur is no pallid hyper-icon, but a real one, gleaming with the golden light of erotic energy: *Belyi tsvet Serezha,/ S Kitovrasom skhozhi,/ Razlyubil moi skaz!// On prishelets dal'nii, Serafim opal'nyi,/ Ruki- sviitki keryl./ Kak k prichast'yu zvony,/ Maminy ikony,/ Ya ego lyubil.* "Shining white Seryozha,/ Who art like unto Kitovras,/ Lovest thou my song no more!// He is a wanderer come from afar,/ A Seraph fallen in disgrace:/ His hands, pinions furled./ And as the clanging Communion bells chime,/ My mother's icons' golden shine,/ So once he was the true love of mine"⁽⁴⁵⁾. And that warm, wistful image of the powerful creature is a good one with which to part from him.

⁽⁴³⁾ This is perhaps their nadir; and by the time Dante heralds the rejuvenation of the Classical heritage, Chiron and his company are, though serving as guards in hell, articulate once more (*Inferno* XII.64 f.).

⁽⁴⁴⁾ See MILLER 2001.

⁽⁴⁵⁾ KLYUEV 1977, pp. 334-335, from the cycle "Poetu Sergeyu Eseninu". MOSS-KARLINSKY 1997, p. 151: Klyuev, born 1887, was a peasant poet, and gay. He courted Esenin, who committed suicide in 1925, and was himself arrested and exiled in the great purge of 1937. After his death his ex-lover Nikolai Arkhipov kept his unpublished poems and letters, but these were lost when Arkhipov was arrested also. Esenin had dedicated some poems to Klyuev. They broke up at the time of the October Revolution of 1917.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AMBARTSUMYAN 1998 A. A. AMBARTSUMYAN, *O zagadochnom imeni Kentavr Pyurida*, «Vestnik Vostochnogo Instituta» 2(7), Vol. 4, St. Petersburg 1998, pp. 91-119.
- AMSLER 1979 Mark AMSLER, *Literary Onomastics*, «Names» 27 (1979), pp. 106-116.
- BANU-LAKHUTI-STARIKOV 1957 Ts. B. BANU, A. LAKHUTI, A.A. STARIKOV (ed. and tr.), Firdousi, *Shakhname*, Vol. 1, Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, Moscow 1957.
- BARTRA 1994 Roger BARTRA, *Wild Men in the Looking Glass: The Mythic Origins of European Otherness*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, MI 1994.
- BICKERMAN 1967 Elias BICKERMAN, *Four Strange Books of the Bible: Jonah, Daniel, Kabeleth, Esther*, Schocken, New York 1967.
- BROCK 1971 Sebastian BROCK, *The Syriac Version of the Pseudo-Nonnos Mythological Scholia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1971.
- BURTON 1934 Richard F. BURTON, *The Book of the Thousand Nights and a Night*, 4 vols., Heritage Press, New York 1934.
- CHAUVIN 1892-1922 Victor CHAUVIN, *Bibliographie des ouvrages arabes ou relatifs aux Arabes publiés dans l'Europe chrétienne de 1810 à 1885*, 12 vols., Imprimerie H. Vaillant-Carmanne, Liège 1892-1922.
- CHRISTOL 1998 Alain CHRISTOL, *De la parole à la prière (Oss. kuvyn)*, in *Studia Iranica et Alanica (Festschrift V.I. Abaev)*, Serie Orientale Roma, Vol. LXXXII, Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente, Rome 1998, pp. 35-43.
- COLLON 1988 Dominique COLLON, *First Impressions: Cylinder Seals in the Ancient Near East*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1988.
- DAVIDSON 2000 Olga M. DAVIDSON, *Comparative Literature and Classical Persian Poetics*, Mazda, Costa Mesa, CA 2000.
- DU BOIS 1991 Page DU BOIS, *Centaurs and Amazons: Women and the Pre-History of the Great Chain of Being*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, MI 1991.
- DUMÉZIL 1929 Georges DUMÉZIL, *Le problème des centaures: étude de mythologie comparée indo-européenne*, Annales du Musée Guimet, Bibliothèque d'études, t. 41, P. Geuthner, Paris 1929.
- DUMÉZIL 1988 Georges DUMÉZIL, *Mitra-Varuna: An Essay on Two Indo-European Representations of Sovereignty*, Zone Books, New York, 1988.

- EDULJEE 1983 H. E. EDULJEE, *The Legend of Kərəsaspā*, «Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute» 50 (Bombay 1983), pp. 32-86.
- ELLIS 1996 Richard ELLIS, *Monsters of the Sea*, Knopf, New York 1996.
- FERNANDEZ 2002 Dominique FERNANDEZ, *A Hidden Love*, Prestel, Munich 2002.
- FRIEDMAN-CACCIARI 1996 Massimo CACCIARI, *Posthumous People: Vienna at the Turning Point*, trans. by Rodger FRIEDMAN, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA 1996.
- GABRIEL 1999 J. GABRIEL, *Among the Norse Tribes*, «Aramco World» (Nov.-Dec. 1999).
- GASTER 1971 Moses GASTER, *Studies and Texts*, 3 vols., New York: Ktav 1971.
- GOBERMAN 2000 David GOBERMAN, *Carved Memories: Heritage in Stone from the Russian Jewish Pale*, Rizzoli, New York 2000.
- HESCHEL 1985 Abraham Joshua HESCHEL, *The Circle of the Baal Shem Tov: Studies in Hasidism*, ed. by S. H. Dresner, Chicago 1985.
- HURWIT 1999 Jeffrey M. HURWIT, *The Athenian Acropolis: History, Mythology, and Archaeology from the Neolithic Era to the Present*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 1999.
- Izbornik* 1969 *Izbornik: Sbornik proizvedenii drevnerusskoi literatury*, Moscow 1969.
- KASKE 1971 Robert KASKE, *Beowulf and the Book of Enoch*, «Speculum» 46 (1971), pp. 421-431.
- KERMODE 2000 Frank KERMODE, *The Goat of Goats*, «The New York Review of Books» (20 July 2000).
- KLYUEV 1977 Nikolay KLYUEV, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy*, Sovetskii Pisatel', Leningrad 1977.
- LE RIDER 2001 Jacques LE RIDER, *Arnold Böcklin ou le retour à l'antique de la modernité*, «La revue du Musée d'Orsay» 48/14 (Paris, Automne 2001), pp. 50-57.
- LIBERMAN 1994 Anatoly LIBERMAN, *Word Heath*, Vol. I of *Selected Writings*, Il Calamo, Rome 1994.
- MACLER 1928 Frédéric MACLER, *L'enluminure arménienne profane*, Paris 1928.
- MANANDIAN 1903 Agop MANANDIAN [Yakob Manandean], *Die Scholien zu Fünf Reden des Gregor von Nazianz*, «Zeitschrift für Armenischen Philologie» I (1903).
- MELLINKOFF 1979 Ruth MELLINKOFF, *Cain's Monstrous Progeny in Beowulf*, «Anglo-Saxon England» 8 (1979), pp. 143-162.

- MILLER 1996 Patricia COX MILLER, *Jerome's Centaur: A Hyper-Icon of the Desert*, «Journal of Early Christian Studies» 4/ 2 (1996), pp. 209-233, reprinted in her *The Poetry of Thought in Late Antiquity: Essays in imagination and religion*, Ashgate, Aldershot, UK 2001, pp. 75-99.
- MOSS-KARLINSKY 1997 Kevin MOSS, Simon KARLINSKY (eds.), *Out of the Blue: Russia's Hidden Gay Literature, An Anthology*, Gay Sunshine Press, San Francisco, CA 1997.
- NAPIER 1986 A. David NAPIER, *Masks, Transformation, and Paradox*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles 1986.
- O'FLAHERTY 1976 Wendy Doniger O'FLAHERTY, *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology*, Motilal Banarsidass, Delhi 1976.
- PATAI 1998 Raphael PATAI, *The Children of Noah: Jewish Seafaring in Ancient Times*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ 1998.
- PENZER 1924 N. M. PENZER (ed.), *The Ocean of Story* = C. H. Tawney (tr.), Samadeva, *Kathā Sarit Sāgara*, Chas. J. Sawyer, London 1924.
- PRITSAK 1990 Omeljan PRITSAK, *Did the Arabs call the Vikings 'Magians'?*, in *Atti del 12o Congresso internazionale di studi sull'alto medioevo, The Seventh International Saga Conference, Spoleto, 4-10 settembre 1988*, Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo, Spoleto 1990, pp. 463-477.
- QUINONES 1991 Ricardo J. QUINONES, *The Changes of Cain: Violence and the Last Brother in Cain and Abel Literature*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, NJ 1991.
- REMIZOV 1947 Alexei REMIZOV, *Où finit l'escalier: récits de la quatrième dimension, contes et légendes*, Éditions du Pavois, Paris 1947.
- RUSSELL 1984 James R. RUSSELL, *The Tale of the Bronze City in Armenian*, in T. J. SAMUELIAN, M.E. STONE (eds.), *Medieval Armenian Culture*, (University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 6), Scholars Press, Chico, CA 1984, pp. 250-261.
- RUSSELL 1993 James R. RUSSELL, *The Mother of All Heresies: A Late Mediaeval Armenian Text on the Yuškapparik*, «Revue des Études Arméniennes» 24 (Paris 1993), pp. 273-293.
- RUSSELL 1998 James R. RUSSELL, *The Armenian Shrines of the Black Youth* (t'ux manuk), «Le Muséon» 111/3-4 (Louvain-la-Neuve 1998), pp. 319-343.
- RUSSELL 1999 James R. RUSSELL, *Iran and Israel in the Armenian Epic of Sasun*, in Shaul SHAKED, Amnon NETZER (eds.),

- Irano-Judaica IV*, Israel: Makhōn Ben-Tsvi, Jerusalem 1999, pp. 111-121.
- SCARCIA 1992 Roberto SCARCIA, *L'Islām e i 'magi' d'Occidente*, «Islām, storia e civiltà» a. XI, 38/1 (Jan.-Mar. 1992), pp. 23-32.
- SIMON-SLOTKI 1935 Maurice SIMON, Israel W. SLOTKI (tr.), *The Babylonian Talmud*, Soncino Press, London 1935.
- SIMONYAN 1989 Hasmik SIMONYAN (ed.), *Patmut'iwn Atēk'sandri Makedonac'woy*, Armenian Academy of Sciences, Erevan 1989.
- SKJAERVO 1989 P. O. SKJAERVO, *Aždabā*, in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Vol. 3, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1989, pp. 192-193.
- SKJAERVO 1995 P. O. SKJAERVO, *Iranian Epic and the Manichaean Book of Giants, Irano-Manichaica, III*, «Acta Orientalia» 48/1-2 (Budapest 1995), pp. 187-223.
- SOLOMATINA *et al.* 2001 Nataliya SOLOMATINA *et al.* (eds.), *Skazka v Rossii*, Palace Editions/ Gosudarsvennyi Russkii Muzei, St. Petersburg 2001.
- THACKSTON 1999 Wheeler THACKSTON, *Kurdish folktales*, «International Journal of Kurdish Studies» 13/2 (1999).
- THOMPSON 1955 Stith THOMPSON, *Motif-Index of Folk Literature*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN 1955.
- THOMSON 1978 Robert W. THOMSON (tr.), *Moses Khorenats'i, History of the Armenians*, (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 4), Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA 1978.
- TOLKIEN 1984 J. R. R. TOLKIEN, *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*, Houghton Mifflin, Boston 1984.
- VERBRUGGHE-WICKERSHAM 1996 Gerald P. VERBRUGGHE, John M. WICKERSHAM, *Berosos and Manetho: Native Traditions in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, MI 1996.
- VESELOVSKII 1872 A. VESELOVSKII, *Slavyanskije skazaniya o Solomone i Kitovrase i zapadnye legendy o Morol'fe i Merline (Iz istorii literaturnogo obshcheniya vostoka i zapada)*, St. Petersburg 1872.
- VON BLANCKENHAGEN 1987 Peter H. VON BLANCKENHAGEN, *Easy Monsters*, in Ann E. Farkas *et al.* (eds.), *Monsters and Demons in the Ancient and Medieval Worlds*, Verlag Philipp von Zabern, Mainz-on-Rhine 1987.
- WALLIS BUDGE 1968 E. A. WALLIS BUDGE (tr.), *The Ethiopic Alexander Romance*, 1896, 2 vols., repr. E. Blom, Bronx, NY 1968.
- WAYMAN 1997 Alex WAYMAN, *The Vedic Gandharva and Rebirth Theory*, in *Dr. Prabha Joshi Memorial Lecture*, 2nd series,

- no. 40, Bhandarkar Institute, Poona [Pune, Maharashtra, India] 1997.
- WHITMAN 1977 F. H. WHITMAN, *Corrosive Blood in Beowulf*, «Neophilologus» 61/2 (April 1977), p. 276.
- WILLIAMS 1990 Alan V. WILLIAMS, *The Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg*, «Royal Danish Academy of Sciences, Hist.-Fil. Meddelelser» 60/1-2 (Copenhagen-Munksgaard 1990).

SOLOV'I, SOLOV'I...

James R. Russell

The Old Persian text of the inscription of Darius I at Behistun, in which the new king seeks to justify his seizure of power with the claim that he has quelled illegitimate uprisings in all the satrapies of the Achaemenian Empire, contains a genealogical passage in which the royal line is described as *duvityaparana-*, “having two wings”, and the rather defensive assertion is made that the family have been kings since the memory of man runneth not to the contrary. Darius belongs, as one might expect, to the branch that has not yet held power.

The Pythagoreans disliked the number two, as a departure from sturdy unity—a mathematical expression, as it were, of the fall of nature. Many epic heroes, and some kings, find virtue in mixed parentage: Digenes Akrites, the “Two-born Border-lord” of a Byzantine epic that took shape in the region of Melitene (Tk. Malatya), is part-Greek, part-Arab; Antiochus, king of Commagene, who lived a few miles away and a millennium before, boasted of two ancestral lines, Achaemenian and Macedonian. But dual parentage seems to make its progeny unusual, too—to set them apart from the common run of man, from straight lines. This paper has two wings; but at least there is one bird, the nightingale, between them—and both parts have to do with that bird’s particular feature and virtue, his voice. “Rose is a rose is a rose,” said Gertrude Stein famously of things that are the same and different; and this expression should shade and alter the intention of my title, which means “Nightingales, nightingales” and is culled from the first line of a famous Russian song of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945. The singer pleads with the bird not to torment the soldiers with longing (*toska*) with its song. But as we shall see, the nightingale’s voice can have all kinds of powers even as it sings its ever-altered songs; and that, indeed, is what poetry is about. A nightingale is a nightingale is a nightingale.

The first part of the essay deals with an Armenian spell, an East Mongolian shaman's chant, and a Russian heroic ballad. The first two texts deal with eagles—supernatural ones whose most prominent aspect is their powerful voice. I will suggest the common origin of the spell and chant in Indo-Iranian mythology, and trace then its transformation in Russian tradition, where a bird whose voice is its main feature is most likely to become a nightingale: the *Solovei-razboinik*, “Nightingale-robber” whose disastrous encounter with the folk hero Il’ya Muromets is the subject of one of the most popular and oldest of the *byliny*.

The second part considers this Russian nightingale further. Its song is seen as analogous to human poetic speech, in particular to the kind of speech—heroic epic—that confers glory on both the bard and the men of whom he sings. I will approach this fame-conferring nightingale through the 12th-century *Slovo o polku Igoreve*, or “Song of the Campaign of Igor” and the intricate work of its most gifted translator and interpreter, the 20th-century Russian-American poet and writer Vladimir Nabokov.

ARMENIAN SPELLS

The first text here to be examined is a spell for healing, the first part of which is a historiola. It is fairly common in Armenian *hmayils*, or magic scrolls, about which a few general remarks are in order. These are generally several yards long and two to six inches wide, depending on their intended use: the smaller ones were made to be worn on one's person; the larger ones, to be kept at home. They contain diverse prayers; since one of the most frequent texts is the narrative of the conversion of Cyprian of Antioch, *hmayils* printed as booklets at the present time by Armenian Church publishers and others usually bear the title *Kiprianos*. Veneration of the Holy Cross is a particularly conspicuous feature of Armenian worship; so pronounced, indeed, that other East Christians unkindly disposed toward Armenians were wont to decry this propensity as idolatrous. *Hmayils* generally contain a prayer consisting of an invocation of the power of the hundreds of elaborately-carven stone crosses

(*xačkars*) that mark sacred sites across the vastness of the Armenian highlands. This text is frequently written out in the form of cross-hatchings that form innumerable crosses all by themselves.¹ Another important text in these scrolls, and one that is frequently, though crudely, illustrated, is the spell against the child-stealing witch Lilith, called *Al* or *Ēpta* in Armenian.

The spell to be considered here is directed against a demonic eagle: four versions are given below. The first comes from a MS. of 1453, the *Atoṭagirk* [Prayer Book] of V. Marafači, with the title “Atoṭk amenayn čel xoči” [Prayer against every kind of wound].²

*Caṛ mi kayr i mēj tiezerač,
Oč čiwł uner ew oč tak ew oč terew.
Arciw mi nster i veray noray,
Oč otn uner, oč fēw ew oč glux:
Tesanein tiezerk, lsein ararack, hiačan hreštakk...*

*Kalan kapečin zna ew asen,
Ov es du?
Ase, es em or ertam mtanem yazgs mardkan,
zMisn utem, zariwnn ccem, erku ačāčn xawar berem...*

*Ase čna hreštakn, erd! [sic] yanvayr vayri daštn,
Ur oč goy hawu jayn, nist i veray višapin gagatann,
zMisn ker, zariwn cce, erku ačāčn xawar ac,
Ew oč mardkan: čunis išxanutīwn merjenal
I caṛays Astucoy...*

¹ On Armenian veneration of the Cross and its reflection in modern literature see now J.R. Russell, *Bosphorus Nights: The Complete Lyric Poems of Bedros Tourian* (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 10), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006, tr. and discussion of the poem *Manukn ar Xač*, [The Child to the Cross].

² Partially cited by Fr. Vardan Hačuni, *Երկամուկ չին Հայոց մէջ* [Spells in Ancient Armenia], Venice: S. Lazzaro, 1932, 216-217. Given the misspelling of imperative *ert*’, “go!” as *erd*, with the letter *da* pronounced *t*, it is most likely the text was copied in Western Armenia or Cilicia.

There was a tree in the midst of the universe
 That had no branch, no bottom, and no leaf.
 An eagle sat upon it
 Who had no foot, no wing, and no head.
 The universe saw, the creatures heard, and the angels
 marveled...

They seized and bound him and said,
 "Who are you?"
 He said, "I am the one who comes and goes among the
 races of men;
 I eat their flesh, I suck their blood, and bring darkness
 upon their eyes twain..."

The angel said to him, "Go to the plain in the place of
 no place,
 Where there is no voice of a bird: sit upon the dragon's
 brow
 And eat his flesh, and suck his blood, and cast darkness
 upon his eyes twain— but not on men's.
 You have no power to come nigh this servant of God..."

The second text comes from the first Armenian printed
 book (Venice, 1512), the *Urbatagirk* [Friday Book], which is a
 collection of prayers and spells.³

³ The book was reprinted at S. Lazzaro, Venice, in a facsimile edition, in 1975. The font, as one might perhaps expect of a first effort, is primitive; and the meaning of the printer's device, an orb and cross with the letters DIZA, remains a mystery. Indeed, following the printing of a collection of lyrics [*Tataran*] and a treatise on the calendar [*Parzatomar*], the press seems to have entirely ceased to function. Nor was it run, it would seem, by men of very high learning: the word *čiwł*, [branch] is given as the dialect form *čel*; and the factitive *pakasečucanem* [I cause to diminish] is given as the semi-colloquial *pakasečnem* (without the marker *kě* of the present and past continuous verb of Western Armenian).

*Gir am[enayn] čel gani: Aṛ pawṭpat danak: ereḵ
beweṛen [sic]: ew t[earn]nagrē i v[e]r[ay] virin: ew
ase zaṭ[awts?].*

*Caṛ mi kayr i mēj erkri
Or oč čel [sic] uner ew oč terew: ew oč armat.
Arciw mi nsteal er i v[e]r[ay] Nora:
Or oč glux uner: ew oč few: ew oč otk.
Harčunk elen arciwn ayn ew asen:
Or nsteal es i caṛd, or oč čel uni: ew oč terew: ew oč
armat.*

*Ase arciwn ayn peṭc. Ertam nstim i glux mardun:
zMisn utem: zeleṭn cecem: začič loysn pakasečnem.
Lsečin zayn hreštakk ew hreštakapetḵ:
Hramayečin ew asen: Kapemḵ zkez CCC ew LXV
srbovkṇ:
Or kan i sirt aregakann:
Or oč hreštakk giten: ew oč hreštakapet: bayc miayn
hayr.
Ew darjeal asen: kapemḵ zkez CCC ew LXV srbovkṇ:
Or kan i mēj covun:
Or oč hreštakk giten: ew oč hreštakapet: bayc miayn
hayr.
Ew darjeal asen: kapemḵ zkez:
I knarn dawfi:
I matanin sołomoni:
I taxtakn movsesi [sic]:
I patmučana [sic] aharoni:
I dastaṛakn k[ristos]i:
I kaṭčr kaṭn s[ur]b kusin:
I čoro [sic] bewerḵn k[ristos]i: or t[ear]n areambn
mkrteal er.*

*Kapem [sic] zkez kapanawkn petrosi: ew pawṭosi:
Aylakerpuṭ[eam]bn k[ristos]i or i tapawr lerinn:
Ereksrbean lusovn: or erewečaw i v[e]r[ay] anmah
gagaṭann k[ristos]i.*

*Čunis išxanuti[wn]: or ačis ew niwtis: ew zawranas ew
xstanas.*

Ayl čoranas: čikes: ew i čikk dařnas:

Baniw t[eař]n meroy y[isus]i k[ristos]i:

zGirs es kardam: deř y[isus] k[risto]s lini amen...

A written spell against every kind of affliction.
Take a steel knife and three nails, and make the
sign of the Cross over the wound, and recite this
*prayer.

There was a tree in the midst of the earth
That had no branch, and no leaf, and no root.
An eagle was seated upon it,
Who had no head, and no wing, and no feet.

They put questions to that eagle and said,
“Who are you, seated on that tree,
Which has no branch, and no leaf, and no root?”

That foul eagle said, “I go and sit upon the head of man.
I eat his flesh, I suck his marrow, I lessen the light of his
eyes.”

The angels and archangels heard that. They
commanded, saying:

“We bind you by the 365 angels who are in the heart of
the sun,

Whom neither angels nor archangel know, but only the
Father.

And again we bind you by the 365 angels who are in the
midst of the sea,

Whom neither angels nor archangel know, but o
Father.”

And again they said, “We bind you

By the harp of David,

By the ring of Solomon,

By the tablet of Moses,

By the robe of Aaron,

By the napkin of Christ,

By the sweet milk of the Holy Virgin,
By the four nails of Christ that were baptized by the
blood of the Lord.

I bind⁴ you by the binding of Peter and Paul,
By the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor,
And by the thrice-holy light that shone on the immortal
brow of Christ.

You do not have power to grow and conceive,
To grow strong and harden.
But dry up, vanish, turn to naught by the word of our
Lord Jesus Christ.”
I read this writing; Jesus Christ is the medicine. Amen...

The third version comes from a talismanic scroll a little over three inches wide and four yards long, “on heavy paper of considerable antiquity”, that was tightly rolled so as to be worn by its owner. The early-20th-century American armenologist Jane Wingate obtained it, at the instance of Prof. Frédéric Macler, from Prof. V.H. Hagopian of Anatolia College, Marsovan, in 1913: Hagopian, she notes, died a martyr’s death a few years later on a death march⁵ in the Armenian Genocide.

⁴ *Kapem*, 1st pers. sg., is probably a typographical error for pl. *kapemk*.

⁵ It is to be remembered that these texts belong to a folk culture that was within living memory almost entirely erased from the face of the earth. Since one is to discuss presently some recent methodologies and constructions of culture with reference to the case of the Armenians, it is relevant to recall how Prof. Hagopian—and perhaps 1.5 million other Armenians—died. In 1915, using the war as a cover and pretext, the Turkish nationalist government of the Ottoman Empire executed its plan to exterminate the Armenians. Armenian civilians in central and western Anatolia were killed by being driven on long marches, without shelter, nourishment, or protection from bandits, into the Syrian desert. Those who did not perish on the road or drown in rivers were left in the empty wastes of the Deir ez-Zor district to die, or were herded into caves and burnt alive. Young men were generally drafted into the Ottoman army and killed through slave labor or simply by being dispatched with blunt instruments. On the Pontic coast, Armenians were herded onto barges, which were dragged out to sea and torpedoed. In the east, where there was some

Wingate does not provide the Armenian text, so only her English translation is cited here:⁶

Another writing concerning a devil.
 In the land there was a tree
 which had neither branch nor leaf
 nor root. And upon it was seated
 an eagle having neither head nor
 feet. Questions were asked the eagle, saying,—
 Why art thou sitting upon a tree
 which hath neither branch nor leaf nor root?
 The fowl eagle said:—I go and sit
 upon the head of a man, devour his
 flesh, suck his brain, put out
 the light of his eyes.
 The angels and the archangels,
 hearing him, said:—Satan, we do
 bind thee by the three hundred and
 sixty-five Saints who are in the
 heart of the earth, whom neither

possibility of escape to Russian Armenia or of rescue by the Christian army of the Tsar, swifter and more drastic measures were taken to assure the extermination of the Armenian people, such as the herding of the population into barns, which were then set on fire. Turkey received assistance from its German allies: one 16-year-old soldier named Höss evidently remembered his youthful training a generation later, when he served as commandant of the Nazi concentration camp at Oswiecim/Auschwitz. Raphael Lemkin coined the term “genocide” with reference to what was happening to the Jews in the Second World War and what had already happened to the Armenians, in the First.

⁶ [Mrs.] J.S. Wingate, “The Scroll of Cyprian: An Armenian Family Amulet,” *Folklore* 41/2 (30 June, 1930), 169-187. Both Macler and Wingate were pioneers in the study of Armenian medieval vernacular literature, oral heroic epic (the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, Belmont, MA, possesses an unpublished typescript of the translation by Wingate of the Sasun Epic), folklore, folk religion and magic. My articles on the magical text *Vec' hazareak* [Book of the Six Thousand], the *tukh manuk* (the “Black Youth” of the lists of Crosses in *hmayils*) and similar topics owe much to these great scholars of the past. See J.R. Russell, *Armenian and Iranian Studies [=AIS]* (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004.

the angels nor the archangels do know, but only the Father. And, again, we bind thee by the three hundred and sixty-five Saints who are in the sea, whom neither the angels nor the archangels do know, but only the Father.

And, again, they said:—We bind Thee by the Harp of David, by the Ring of Solomon, by the Tables of Moses, by the Robe of Aaron, by the Napkin of Christ [which covered his face at his burial and upon which his features were imprinted], by the Sweet Milk of the Holy Virgin, by the Four Nails of [the Cross of] Christ, which were baptised with the Blood of the Lord.

We bind thee by the Bonds of Peter and of Paul; by the Transfiguration of Christ upon Mount Tabor; by the Tri-Holy Light which shone upon the Immortal Head of Christ.

Thou hast no power to grow nor to contrive wicked things, but thou shalt wither away; thou art naught and thou shalt turn to naught.

Upon whomsoever, or in whatsoever house this writing shall be found thou shalt remove [thyself] forty houses [away], and shalt not approach unto the servant of God, Elisabeth, nor to her sons, nor to her daughters. Through the prayers and the intercessions of all the Saints, Amen.

So let it be, and so let it be.

A longer version of the spell in a finer Classical Armenian than that of the *Urbatagirk* was published, with facing-page French translation, by Feydit.⁷ It includes a miniature (fig. 89, from the Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. 102 in Feydit's discussion on 13) of an angel confronting the wingless bird on its branchless tree: the artist gamely attempted to depict these enigmatic creations, and his effort surely deserves a place in the texts of art history as a literal exercise of negative capability.

Ałotk or ē Urbatu Girk

Car mi kayr i mēj erkri or oč čiwł unēr ew oč terew ew oč armat. Arciw mi nsteal er i veray nora or oč glux uner, oč tew, oč otk. Harcin čna hreštakk ew hreštakapetk ew asen: Ov pilc, zinč es? Ay, pilc, ayd inč e or oč glux unis ew oč tew ew oč otk ew nsteal es i card or oč čiwł uni, oč terew ew oč armat? Ase arciwn: Es em mayrn amenayn čareac, ertam nstim i gluxs mardkan, zmisn utem, zetełn ccem, začac loysn pakasečucanem. Lsečin zays hreštakk ew hreštakapetk, hramayečin ew asen: Ov pelc, kapemk zkež CCCLXV srbovkñ or kan i mēj covun or oč hreštakk giten, oč mardik, bayč miayn Hayr barjreal. Kapemk zkež CCCLXV srbovkñ or kan i sirt aregakan or oč hreštakk giten, oč mardik, bayč miayn Hayrn Astuac. Kapemk zkež anuambn anelin ew amnahin, čorekkerpean aforov Astucoy hreleni. Kapemk zkež serovbeiwk ew kerovbeiwk, išanuteamb[k] ew teruteamb[k]. Kapemk zkež knarawn Dawfi, mataneawn Solomoni, taxtakawn [kareleniw, gawazanawn] Movsisi, patmučanawn Aharoni, dastarakawn Tearn meroy Yisusi Kristosi, kačr katamb morn Tearn meroy srboy Kusin Mariamu. Kapemk zkež amenayn pelc dewk ew čawk XXIV margareiwkñ, erkotas anakełovkñ, LXXII ašakertok, CL hayrapetok,

⁷ Frédéric Feydit, *Amulettes de l'Arménie Chrétienne*, Venice: San Lazzaro, 1986, text CXXVII, 340-345.

čors bewerawn Prkčin meroy or terunakan areamb mkrteal en, i bann zor asač i veray xačin: Eli, Eli, lama sabaktani. Kapem zkež kapanokn Petrosi ew Połosi, aylakerpučeambn Křistosi or i taborakan lerinn. Kapem zkež ereksrbean lusov or erewečaw i veray anmah gagatan Křistosi. Kapeal es ew čunis išxanufiwn or ačis ew zoranas ew xstanas ayl čoranas ew čik dařnas baniwn Teařn meroy Yisusi Křistosi. Zgirs es kardam: deł ew bžškuřiwn Těrn mer Yisus Křistos eliči. Kapem zkež pařokn Adamay, vayelčuteamb draxtin. Kapem zkež kenazěn xačiwn Křistosi. Kapem zjez CCCLXV pelc čaw ew axtažet or ayl oč ews erewis...

Prayer Which Is the Book of Friday

A tree stood in the midst of the earth which had neither branch, nor leaf, nor root. An eagle was seated on top of it, who had neither head, nor wing, nor foot. Angels and archangels questioned him, saying: "O foul one, what are you? Hey, foul one, why is it that you have neither head, nor wing, nor foot, and are seated on that tree, which has neither branch, nor leaf, nor root?" The eagle said, "I am the mother of all evils; I go and sit on the heads of men, I eat their flesh, suck their marrow, and put out the light of their eyes." The angels and archangels heard this and commanded, saying: "O foul one, we bind you by the 365 saints who are in the midst of the sea, whom neither angels know, nor men, but only the Father on high. We bind you by the 365 saints who are in the heart of the sun, whom neither angels know, nor men, but only God the Father. We bind you by the name of the uncreate and immortal, by the tetramorphic throne of God the fiery. We bind you by the seraphim and cherubim, by the dominion[s] and power[s]. We bind you by the harp of David, the ring of Solomon, the [stone] tablet [and staff] of Moses, the robe of Aaron, the napkin of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the sweet milk of the

mother of our Lord the Blessed Virgin Mary. We bind you all, foul demons and pains, by the 24 Prophets, the twelve Apostles, the 72 Disciples, the 150 Patriarchs, the four nails of our Savior that were baptized in the blood of the Lord, and by the word which he spoke upon the Cross: *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani*. I bind you with the bonds of Peter and Paul, and by the Transfiguration of Christ on Mount Tabor. I bind you by the thrice-holy light that appeared upon the immortal brow of Christ. You are bound and you have no power to grow and strengthen and harden; but you will dry up and turn to naught by the word of our Lord Jesus Christ. I read this writing; may our Lord Jesus Christ be medicine and healing. I bind you by the glory of Adam and by the comeliness of paradise. I bind you by the weapon of life, the Cross of Christ. I bind you, 365 foul and deleterious pains, that you not appear again”...

The second, third, and fourth versions of the spell are substantially the same, though Feydit’s text is the longest and is composed in the purest Classical Armenian. The eagle there names (her)self as the mother of all evils [*mayrn amenayn čareac*].⁸ One is reminded of another text about a siren (Arm. *yuškaparik*, a loan from Iranian) who gives birth to all the heresies of Christianity.⁹ But it is the first text, however, the one cited by Hačuni, that is sufficiently different as to belong to

⁸ This would suggest the eagle, like the Al, is female, unless “mother of...” is just an Armenian usage of the common Near Eastern expression for a superlative. Iranian spells against the child-stealing witch call the Al the *mādar-e āl*, “mother of the Al”. It is to be noted that in some Armenian narratives the Al feeds human entrails to her children; in the Russian texts on the Nightingale-Robber, the latter also has a brood. Russian *solovei* [nightingale] is of masc. gender, and the character has the masc. patronymic (*O*)*dikhmant’ev syn* [son of Odikhman(t)]; so even if the creature was originally female and underwent a sex-change in its russification, it is a father.

⁹ See J.R. Russell, “The Mother of All Heresies: A late mediaeval Armenian text on the *yushkaparik*,” *Revue des études arméniennes* 24 (1993), 273-293, repr. *AIS*, 509-523.

another branch of the textual tradition, one far closer to the ancient prototype than the last two, which betray features of subsequent simplification by copyists.

In Hačuni's text, the tree upon which the eagle (which is called neither *piłc* [foul], nor Satan) sits is in the middle of the universe [*tiezerk*], not just of the earth [*erkir*]; it is without bottom [*tak*] rather than merely without root [*armat*]. In its cosmic setting, the eagle elicits the angels' awe rather than their contempt. The creatures *hear* it; and the angels command it to go to a place where there is no [other] *bird's voice*. Its power seems, thus, to be connected to its voice: this feature is entirely absent from the other two texts. In the latter, it is merely banished; but here it is assigned to attack the dragon or serpent (Arm. *višap*), not man. It is apparent that it is to do so by means of its voice, since no other bird sings where the dragon lives.

The bird of the Hačuni text seems to be a mythological creature with an Indic analogue that was, as we have seen, gradually demonized by its refraction in Christian Armenian folk belief and ritual. The Indic creature is Garuda, the king of the birds and vehicle of Vishnu, who dwells in heaven and is as radiant as the fire-god Agni: when the thunder-god Indra struck Garuda once with his lightning-bolt, the *vajra*, a single feather dropped from Garuda into the atmosphere, after which he acquired the epithet *suparna*-, "of good feathers". One may recall here the feather of the similar Iranian *senmurw* or *simorgh* (originally a kind of eagle), which is given to a hero to summon aid in time of need, and which in the Islamic period acquires *magical* connotations—cf. the Armenian development. On his way to the realm of the gods, Devaloka, the Garuda rests on a fig tree named Subhadra. Most important, he eats *nagas*, serpents: the scene of Garuda standing victoriously over the prostrate body of a defeated *naga*, or holding the creature in its beak, is to this day one of standard iconographic depictions of the creature in Indo-Tibetan and Southeast Asian Hindu and

Buddhist art. The Garuda has a human torso and the head of a bird.¹⁰

A MONGOLIAN SHAMANIST INVOCATION WITH A GARUDA

Now let us consider a text where the Garuda is explicitly named, which bears a structural and thematic relationship to the Armenian spell considered above. This is an invocation, recorded in 1944, of a Mongolian female shaman [*ekener böge*], Tungchinggarbu.¹¹ The substratum of the text, notably in the final section on the otherworldly land of the shamans where the Garuda is mentioned, belongs to the pre-Buddhist Mongolian shamanist tradition; there are also appeals to the Buddhas and enumerations of the monasteries of the Tibetan Buddhism that became in the Middle Ages the Mongolian state religion. The prayer begins with invocations of the paradise Sukhavati, the Samvara Buddha, and Manjushri. With offerings and the burning of incense, the shamaness proceeds to purge the world of demons and pestilence. She invokes Khan Hormuzta Tengri, i.e., the Lord (*khan*, presumably translating a Sogdian form of Persian *khoda*) God (*tengri*, again translating a Sogdian equivalent of older Iranian *baga* or *yazata*) Ahura Mazda of Zoroastrianism—a borrowing of the pre-Buddhist period.¹² The concluding part of the prayer is worth citing in its entirety:¹³

Our land of the Shamans,
Of the four groups of Shamans is
A place unreachable to man,
The realm of death, our country.

¹⁰ See Vettam Mani, *Puranic Encyclopaedia*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1984, s.v.; and B.C. Olschak and Geshe Thupten Wangyal, *Mystic Art of Ancient Tibet*, Boston: Shambhala, 1987, 158-159 and figs. 184-186. I am indebted for both references to my Tibetologist spouse Dennis E. Cordell.

¹¹ Walther Heissig, "A Contribution to the Knowledge of Eastmongolian Folkpoetry," *Folklore Studies* 9 (1950), 153-178.

¹² *Ibid.*, 174, line 83.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 175, lines 117-138 (end).

North of Kōl kōkū
 The low plain west of Kūnji yamen
 Is the place of the desert's guardian ghosts.
 A very high peak
 And grown in front of it,
 Eighty-thousand branch-shaped,
 Forty-thousand leaf-shaped,
 Forty-thousand root-shaped,
 The Ongghot¹⁴ of each leaf of
 The single tree.
 Around its central branch a poisonous serpent is rolled,
 On its top bird-king Garudi is chanting.
 [Oh,] Lords of the nine passages,
 Mounted on nine white horses,
 With steel riding-crops,
 Accompanied by ferocious tigers:
 Begone all who entered from outside,
 Adversaries and grief!

The affinities of this section of the Mongolian prayer to the Armenian spell are striking: the shamaness is performing a ritual to rid her client of demonic affliction and disease. To accomplish this she invokes the power of the Buddhas themselves and of an impressively numerous array of Buddhist and pre-Buddhist Mongolian sacred sites and beings; cf. the Armenian invocations of Christ, the Virgin, the Apostles, several assemblages of 365 saints, and diverse holy objects such as the nails of the Cross and the napkin of Christ. In the text from the *Urbatagirk*, the healer is instructed to have actual nails on hand for the ritual: one is reminded of the various objects the shaman utilizes in his performance dramatically to evoke the presence of the otherworld beings and objects described in his song. A magician's client, once he believes in the supernatural origin of disease in the first place, will be psychologically

¹⁴ This is a word for a kind of spirit, metal images of which are stitched onto a shaman's robe.

strengthened and in a better position to be healed when he is assured that his healer's arsenal is both powerful and large.

Shamanic songs in northern Asia generally contain a narrative also of the shaman's journey to the otherworld: this part of the text partakes of the genre of the heroic tale. For the shaman must traverse great distances, often at preternatural speeds, overcoming dread obstacles, in order to gain the object of his quest. This is either a powerful supernatural being who will aid him, or one who has in thrall the patient's soul and must be overcome by force or guile. Though the shaman himself accomplishes these tasks, assuming the hero's role, he often has, in addition to his magic arsenal (cf. the hero's talking steed, lightning sword, and so on), helpful associates in the spirit world. For the Mongolian shamaness, these are *ongghots*, *tengris*, and the armed divine horsemen-guardians; the Armenian Christian healer is assisted by a band of angels and archangels. The number of these is significant: the shamaness mentions nine horsemen; and the otherworlds of Siberian and Mongolian shamanism are often stacked levels numbering multiples of three—9, or 27. The 365 Armenian saints "known only to the Father" correspond in number to the members of the body and, of course, to the days of the year. Without the five intercalary days, one has 360, the good and literally round number of the degrees of a circle, the days of the duodecimal year, and the even the windows around the Zoroastrian world-mountain Terag.

If one attempts a restoration of the original Armenian text from the imperfect versions cited, these occulted saints would inhabit three worlds neatly stacked in three vertical levels, too: sun, earth, and sea. The reason this cosmic symmetry is important is that magical rituals have to be performed with precision to be effective, with the presumption that the worlds and beings they affect operate by discoverable rules. The best way to represent a cosmos ordered by rules is to impose upon it mathematical symmetry. Roman magicians were called *mathematici*; the difference, though, between the magico-religious point of view and the scientific is that the former imposes a preconceived and partially arbitrary "intelligent design" upon the universe; the latter seeks to discover such rules

and patterns as may exist, through repeated observation and experimentation.

The shamaness emerges at the end of her song into the land of the dead, to which shamans have special access. In the midst of it is the unimaginably great tree upon which sits the Garuda, *chanting*, with a *poisonous serpent* coiled below. This is evidently a dangerous creature, but a sacred one, with whom the shamaness can parley to accomplish her mission of healing. It dwells in the realm of death, but it can kill the poisonous serpent that represents, perhaps, fatal disease. Its chant is not described, and may be presumed to be of corresponding power to do good or ill. Significantly, chanting is the only activity of the Garuda mentioned. The shamaness' narrative would seem to be an Indo-Iranian spell, recast in the environment of Mongolian shamanism, in which a powerful bird on a cosmic tree in the otherworld is bidden to destroy the dragon or serpent that personifies disease. As we have seen, the Mongols had contact not only with Buddhists, but with Zoroastrians as well; so the earliest form of such a spell might have reached them from a region where both Vajrayana Buddhism and the religion of Ahura Mazda flourished. The Central Asian East-Iranian realm of Sogd¹⁵—whose script, through the intermediary stage of Uighur, became that of classical Mongolian—seems the likely candidate, given the propensity of Sogdians to travel long distances on business. And Buddhist Sogdian texts, being kindred to the Vajrayana tradition, are rich in spells.

The Sogdians, a people of the Iranian periphery, enjoyed a plethora of religions and a correspondingly rich artistic culture entirely unaffected by the iconoclasm of their Sasanian

¹⁵ Sogd, Sogdiana, Sogdia derive from a word meaning "burnt" (cf. Pers. *sokhta*), i.e., "purified, holy". The principal cities of the country were Samarkand and Bokhara; the language, close to Bactrian, now survives only amongst the few speakers of a language bearing the name of the "Ice river": Sunny and Shady Yaghnobi. Though never many in number, Sogdians were anciently everywhere. Sogdian merchants were numerous and culturally influential in 6th-century China; and the town of Sudak in the Crimea was originally Sughdak—a Sogdian settlement. The old name of the Sea of Azov, Surozh, most likely also derives from the name Sogdian.

neighbors. Unlike the Sasanians and again like the Armenians, their noble houses, rather than a centralized state, largely determined the distribution of power. It is reasonable that Sogdia and Armenia, though separated from each other by thousands of miles and by profound differences in cultural milieu, should nonetheless produce parallels such as this spell—if indeed there was a Sogdian prototype inspiring or even underlying the Mongolian text considered above. In Armenia, such a spell would have come, not from Sogdia of course, but from Parthian Iran of the Arsacid period. The dogmatic rigor of the Christian faith would have altered the text—and re-evaluated the role of the Garuda—far more than was the case in the Buddhist culture in which modern Mongolian shamans operate. And indeed we have observed these changes, which are in keeping with the general pattern of the transformation of mythological types in Christian Armenia.

What might the creature in the Parthian spell have looked like? Zoroastrian lore is rich in birds: the *karshiptar*, “black-wing”, i.e., raven, conveys religious messages to the other world from this; in Armenian heroic epic, it is a talking raven [*agʻaw*] who guides *Ħokʻr Mher* [Mithra the Younger] to the cave in *Agrawuʻē Kar* [Ravens’ Rock], at Van, where he is to pine in immortal confinement till Doomsday. This is obviously the *Corax*, “Raven”, of the initiatory grades of the Roman mystery religion of Mithraism that had its beginnings in the Armeno-Iranian world, in Anatolia. The raptor called in Avestan *vareghna-*, literally “ram-smiter”, might be the original of the heraldic bird of the Armenian *naxarar* house of the Mamikoneans: bas-reliefs at *čaxacʻ Kar*, Gomer, and Geghard, for instance show an eagle-like bird *en face* gripping in its talons a ram or sheep. The divinely-bestowed, luminous glory, Avestan *khvarenah-*, Armenian loan-word *patʻ(ē)*, sometimes takes the form of a bird. But the *senmurw/simorgh*, mentioned above, seems the best candidate for the magic bird of the spell, given its prominence over time in Persian literature and in magical tradition. There is even some suggestion of secondary demonization: the fifth-century Armenian writer Eznik of Kolb writes in his *Refutation of Sects* that the archdemon Ahriman, desiring to show that he was able to create but chose not to out

of mere spite, made the peacock. The Armenian word for this bird is *siramarg*, an alternate form of *simorgh*: the supposed vanity of the male peacock's beautiful tail feathers, together with his ugly feet (Satan can be very handsome, but his ugly feet give him away), have made him in Christian lore, too, a bird associated with evil. And for the Kurdish practitioners of the Yazidi religion in Armenia and nearby countries, *Malak Ta'us*, the Peacock Angel, is a hypostasis of Satan, albeit a repentant character in their mythology. In Iranian epic, Rostam, a character subsequently endowed with mystical features, is closely associated with the *simorgh*; but other magical types include the Avestan hero Thraetaona (Middle Iranian Fredon, Persian Faredun, and Arm. Hfuden, the latter Hellenized to Rhodanes in the *Babyloniaka* of Iamblikhos) and the first man, Gayomard. The use in the Armenian spell of the evocative, marked term *vilap* indicates that we have to do, not with any kind of snake, but with a truly dangerous, powerful serpent—like a Sanskrit *naga*. The Parthian prototype might then have involved a hero such as Fredon seeking through an invocation the magical assistance of a *senmurw* against a dragon or other monster.

In the Armenian Christian text, it would plainly not do to have such a mythic bird of the pagan past, morally neutral and very powerful, described in laudatory detail or portrayed as perched on a majestic tree adorned with thousands of helper-spirits or the like. Christian dualism admits no moral neutrality: the creature, if an angel is to conjure it, must be a fiend, otherwise the angel's intervention would be superfluous. So the eagle's perch is transferred in successive versions of the spell, as I have suggested, from the midst of the universe to a less exalted locus at the middle of earth. In the universe, at first, it astonishes angels; on the earth, the latter call it "foul" and "Satan". To evoke its uncanny, otherworldly quality without endowing it with glamor, the Armenian author resorted at some point, rather ingeniously, to a kind of apophysis—a detailed description of what eagle and tree are *not* and do *not* have. The Armenian bird is without wings, head, or feet; its tree, without branches, leaves, or roots.

It is clear that in doing this the author was resorting to the language and genre of the riddle: What tree has neither branches, nor leaves, nor roots, but grows? The phallus, I should think, would be Dr. Freud's answer. What bird has neither wings, nor head, nor feet, but sings? The answer to this riddle is the same, but easier. In the *Decameron* of Boccaccio, that wingless *uccello* is the nightingale, for the latter is a colloquial euphemism for the penis: a girl tells her parents she wants to sleep on the balcony to hear the nightingale sing. The song is nocturnal intercourse with her boyfriend: when her parents discover the young lovers fast asleep together one morning, they decree marriage, and after that the nightingale sings at all hours. These solutions to a presumed riddle are of some relevance, perhaps, for demons depicted in antiquity are often ithyphallic; and sexuality, for Christians, always has a little of the devil in it. But that is not strictly necessary to our argument, which asserts only that the Christian who reshaped the spell employed the rhetorical strategy of apophasis, and the wording of the genre of the riddle came to him, ready made.

But the pleasant digression to Boccaccio is useful in another way: when a bird is best known for its song—particularly if that song has some emotional affect, or complexity sufficient to liken it to speech—then tradition, experience, and imagination will evoke the nightingale. In Armenian, the bird is known as *saxak*, a word Hübschmann convincingly derived from a hypothetical Northwestern Middle Iranian form—Middle Median or Parthian—from the base *sah-*, “speak”: “the speaking [bird]”.¹⁶ Persian does not preserve this word: the apparently onomatopoeic Arabic loan *bulbul* replaced long ago whatever native term designated the nightingale. Part of the newer word's resilience must derive from the pleasing alliteration *gol o bolbol*, “rose and nightingale”, for a standard theme of Persian lyric.

¹⁶ A.G. Perikanyan, *Materiāly k etimologičeskomu slovarju drevnearmyanskogo jazyka*, Part I, Erevan: Izd. NAN Respubliki Armeniya, 1993, 85: with the hypothetical form **sakhva-vaka* > *sokhak*, “speaking a word”, note the Gk. expression *epos eipein* “idem”, and cf. Sgd. *zandwāch* (*mergha*), “nightingale”, lit. “story-telling [bird]”, Tk. l-w *sandawach*, New Pers. *zandwaf*, *zandkhvan*.

Gol, "rose", derives from *vard*, the Iranian loan for "rose" preserved by Armenian, which, however, often uses the loan *bulbul* in lyrical pairings of bird and rose rather than *soxak*, even though the phrase has no alliterative quality. It is its voice that defines the nightingale, rather than any other feature: Greek *khelidón*, "nightingale", derives from the Proto-Indo-European base **ghel-*, "call", from which, indeed, comes also Germanic *nahti-gala*. Greeks would have heard the name for the nightingale, too, in the word **klewédón*, "call": this derives from another PIE root, **k^hleu-ik^hlú-*, "hear", to which belongs Greek *kleos*, "fame, glory", as well as Sanskrit *śhravas-* and Russian *slava* "idem".¹⁷

The latter terms are of extreme importance to our investigation because of their cultural resonance and particular importance to the genre of epic poetry, with which these invocation-texts overlap. As is well known, both Greek, at the western side of the ancient Indo-European family, and Sanskrit, towards its eastern extremity, preserve in their respective traditions of heroic poetry the same expression, from the same verbal base, "immortal glory" (*kleos aphthiton*): this is what bards confer and heroes obtain. In the same genre, both Olympian and Vedic divinities imbibe the same "death-repelling" potion, called *durosha* in Sanskrit and *nektar* or *ambrosia* in Greek. Philologists came to the conclusion, from these and similar collocations, that there was a common stock of Indo-European poetic expression and thematics (notably the dragon-slaying quest, in the latter category) that predated the wider geographical dispersion of the various speakers of the earliest Indo-European dialects. In this dossier, the nightingale emerges as the Indo-European speaking/singing bird *par*

¹⁷ Julius Pokorny, *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Bern: Francke, 1948-59, 428, 605-606. In Armenian, the base **k^hleu-* is realized as *lu-*, the aorist base of *lsem*, "hear", which contains the extension **-sko-*. Arm. *lur*, the equivalent of Gk. *kleos*, might once have had the poetic importance of the latter, but the Iranian term for glory discussed above, *khvarenah-*, a word of uncertain etymology perhaps related to *khvar-*, "sun" (cf. Sanskrit *śurya-*, etc.), replaced it long ago. Christian Greek replaces *kleos* with *doxai*; and Arm. *parē* mechanically translates the latter.

excellence. In that respect it is a good candidate to replace, at some remove from an ancient source, the more muscular eagle of a myth, when the main point in the tale has to do not with talons, or wings, but with a powerful voice. And that brings us to our next text, which, as will be seen, is related, *mutatis mutandis*, to the Armenian spell.

IL'YA MUROMETS AND THE NIGHTINGALE-ROBBER

There are a number of heroic ballads in Russian whose reciters called them *stárinny* or *starínki*—songs about olden times. The term I will use here, though, since it is used now universally for them in scholarly studies, is *bylina*. It is, however, artificial, anachronistic, and inaccurate: its employment with reference to a ballad dates only from the 1830's, and was drawn from an expression "the *byliny* [i.e., *actualités*] of this time" in the epic *The Song of the Campaign of Igor'*, about which we shall have much more to say presently. The oldest of the *byliny* go back to 1619-1620; systematic collections date back to the 18th century. *Byliny* are important not only to the study of folklore, but also to that of modern Russian literature, which really began with Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837). The poet, who was fascinated by Russian folklore and wrote a number of ballads and romances based on stories culled from it, read and treasured the collection made by the Cossack Kirsha Danilov, published in 1804.¹⁸ M. Sokolov has noted that "with especial frequency we

¹⁸ M. Sokolov, *Russian Folklore*, New York: Macmillan, 1950, 291-293; B.N. Putilov, ed., *Byliny* (Biblioteka Poeta, Bol'shaya Seriya), Leningrad: Sovetskii Pisatel', 1957, Introduction, Edward L. Keenan, *Josef Dombrovsky and the Origins of the Igor' Tale* (Harvard Series in Ukrainian Studies), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003, 159 and n. 74, observes that the only naturally-occurring and otherwise-attested word *bylina* in Slavic means "steppe grass". The word occurs at the very beginning of the Igor' Song, in the second sentence: *Nachati zhe sya t'i pesni po bylinam sego vremeni, a ne po zamyshleniyu Boyanyu*. "Let us, however, begin this song in keeping with the happenings of these times and not with the contriving of Boyan" (Vladimir Nabokov, tr. and comm., *The Song of Igor's*

encounter in [the earliest transcriptions] the *bylina* of Elijah of Murom (i.e., Il'ya Muromets—J.R.R.) and Solovey (Rus. *solovei*, “nightingale”—J.R.R.) the Robber.” This is the most frequently attested prose tale in manuscripts for which a recitation in the form of a *bylina* also exists.¹⁹

There are a number of variants of *Il'ya Muromets i Solovei-razboinik*, but for our present purpose it seems adequate to establish a composite version whose particulars can be analyzed in discussion:²⁰

1. Il'ya Ivanovich is born in a village of Murom, Karachaevo/Karacharov or Laptevo. He dreams of a roan horse, and his father buys it for him; so it would seem he foresees his career as an errant knight. But for the first thirty years of his life he is lame, and lies ill on the stove in the family hut.
2. Then two strangers come and in gratitude for his parents' hospitality give their son a drink that enables him not only to walk but to acquire immense physical power—far too much, in fact, for him to remain down on the farm without endangering everybody around him. Though he is praised with the standard epithet *molodec*, literally “[brave] young man”, Il'ya is also always called a *staryi kazak* “old Cossack”—this means more than “good ol' boy”. He has started his knightly career late, after crippling illness. But the ethos of knighthood still comes effortlessly to him: when offered the choice of wealth or the strength and stature of a knight [*bogatyr*'], he properly scorns the former and chooses the latter, and embarks at once upon suitable exploits.²¹

Campaign: An Epic of the Twelfth Century, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1960, 29, lines 6-10).

¹⁹ Sokolov, 292.

²⁰ For this purpose I employ the edition of Putilov noted above and the prose [*poves'*] versions in A.M. Astakhova, ed., *Il'ya Muromets*, Moscow-Leningrad: Izdatel'stvo Akademii Nauk SSSR, 1958: nos. 60-64, pp. 355-376.

²¹ For the knightly exploit Russian generally uses the word *podvig*. This (and the telling of it) is the way one attains glory, *slava*. Vladimir Nabokov often

3. One day he decides to travel by the straight way to the royal capital, Kiev, there to serve Vladimir Vseslavich. The journey is to be accomplished between matins and vespers; and since the day is Easter in some variants of the narrative, Il'ya vows to avoid *boi-draka-krovolitie*, "battle, fighting, and bloodshed" on the way.
4. However at Chernigov (most often; in some narratives it is Sebezh-grad or Kineshma) he encounters a vast infidel horde [*silushka poganaya*] led by three Tatar princes besieging the city. He "violates the great vow" [*narushaet zapoved' velikuyu*] and fights. Il'ya defeats them and the grateful townspeople implore him to stay as their commander [*voevoda*], but he refuses: *Ne dai, Gospodi, delat' s barina kholopa/ S barina kholopa, s kholopa dvoryanina/ Dvoryanina s kholopa, iz popa palacha/ A takzhe iz bogatyrya voevodu*. "God forbid a master should be made a slave;/ A master, a slave; a slave, a nobleman;/ A nobleman of a slave; an executioner from a priest;/ Or also a commander, of a knight."²²

thought and wrote of what it might be like to return to Russia under Soviet rule. In one poem, *Razstrel* [Execution by Firing Squad], the first stanza reads, *Byvayut noch': tol'ko lyagu/ v Rossiya poplyvyot krovat' i vot vedut menya k ovragu/ vedut k ovragu abivat'* "There are nights: as soon as I lie down/ The bed sails off to Russia/ And now they're leading me to a ravine/ Leading me to a ravine to kill me." (Berlin, 1927; see Vladimir V. Nabokov, *Stikhotvoreniya* [Novaya Biblioteka Poeta], St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii Proekt, 2002, 186). The poem was sufficiently important to its author that when Edmund Wilson asked Nabokov to incise a line of his own in the window glass of the critic's guest bedroom, he chose the first two lines. Now, Nabokov had written a novel, *Podvig*, about a young émigré in Berlin who returns to Russia and disappears. The title Nabokov preferred for the English translation of that book is *Glory*; we will see in the second part of this essay the relevance of this theme attaching to glory in his work, to the poem he actually entitled *Slava*.

²² V. Ya. Propp, *Russkii geroicheskiĭ epos*, 2nd ed., Moscow: Gosudarstvennoe izdatel'stvo khudozhestvennoi literatury, 1958, 249, interprets these lines as Il'ya's refusal of a change of class. One might further observe that the hero Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita* refuses to fight, not only because he would then have to kill relatives, but also because war would lead to the confusion of caste and the collapse of society.

5. Il'ya asks directions and is told that the straight road to Kiev goes through the Bryansk forest, the Smarodina river, Kalinov bridge, and the *Gryazi chornye*, a swampy black waste land. Neither bird, man, nor beast has used this road for thirty years, though, since the *Solovei-razboinik*, "Nightingale-Robber", [*Odimant'ev syn* "son of Odiman[t]"], who sits on two oak trees (the number varies, but the implication is that he is very large) and kills with his whistle all who try to pass his roadblock [*zastava*]. This noise is repeatedly described in tripartite fashion: *Kak zasvishchet Solovei po-solov'inomu/ Zakrichit, sobaka, I po-zverinomu/ Zashipit, proklyaty, po-zmeinomu* "When the Nightingale will let forth his whistle, in the manner of a nightingale/ And holler, the dog, like a beast/ And hiss, the accursed one, like a serpent...."²³ Notably, the creature, though he kills birds, beasts, and *men*, makes a noise like a bird, beast, and *serpent*. This may be a telling relic of the substratum of the narrative—as I would suggest—which dealt with a man-slaying bird forced to kill serpents instead.
6. Il'ya proceeds: the Nightingale's whistle spooks his horse, whom he collects. He fights and defeats his enemy, shooting him in the right temple with an arrow. The wounded Nightingale pleads for his life and is spared. In the *skazka* ["folktale"]-forms of the narrative, Propp notes, Il'ya asks the Nightingale at this point about his treasure; in the *byliny*, never. Il'ya puts his captive in a bag for fowl, having bound its *ruchki belye*, "little white hands", and hangs it from his right stirrup. One notes confusion here: Il'ya has again violated his vow, and one would have expected an arrow to the brain to have killed his foe, but it has not. So probably in the original version Il'ya defeated the Nightingale by a spell or prayer.
7. Il'ya rides on to the village of Kutuzovo, where the twelve (or nine) sons of the Nightingale live. They offer Il'ya food, but he refuses it; they offer to buy him off, but he will not

²³ Putilov, 77.

take their gold—so, seeing that he holds their father captive, they do not fight him.

8. So he arrives in time for vespers at Kiev, where Prince Vladimir's courtiers scoff at his claim to have traveled there in a day. They do not believe his story about the Nightingale, either. Prince Vladimir commands the bird to whistle, but it retorts that it will obey only Il'ya, its master. He duly gives the order, and the Nightingale whistles with all its might, terrifying Vladimir and killing his entourage. Il'ya asks the Nightingale why it has let fly with all, instead of half, its might: it replies that it was bound and feared death. Il'ya takes it off to Kulikovo field—the site of the Russians' epic battle with the Mongols—and beheads it. The poor Nightingale had been loyal to its new master; this cruel, sad *dénouement* seems to me to be an interpolation: the *Drachenkampf* requires not a defeated, but a dead dragon (cf. *Jabberwocky*: "He killed it dead/ and with its head he went galumphing back.") Originally, *Solovei-razboinik* would presumably have been usefully employed killing poisonous snakes with its uncanny screech. But all ends well for the good ol' Cossack: his liege lord grants the beamish Muromets honor and riches.

Though the *bylina* has been illustrated numerous times,²⁴ there is really no description of the appearance of the Nightingale-Robber. On the one hand, he is very big; on the other, he can be put in a bag for fowl (though Il'ya has grown to larger-than-life stature himself). He is a bird; but he acts and speaks at times like a man. So he is shown in a woodcut [*lubok*] noted above as a bird-man of human size: the image summons recollections of eagle and siren. Putilov comments on the tale:

²⁴ *Ibid.*, opp. 80, reproduces a 19th-century *lubok*, or folk woodcut; see also the illustrations by Vladimir M. Konashevich, 1940, and Nicholas K. Roerich (who was later to become famous for his paintings of the Himalaya, Tibet, and Mongolia, and his yogic teachings), 1910, in *Skazka v Rosni*, St. Petersburg: Gosudarstvennyi Russkii Muzei, 2001, 134 pl. 149 and 162 pl. 156.

The heroic character of the *bylina*, as well as the presence in it of social motifs (the peasant Il'ya's clash with the prince and the boyars), are entirely clear. The difficulty inheres in understanding the meaning of the quest accomplished by Il'ya. In this context the image of the Nightingale-Robber is of fundamental interest. This image is contradictory and, in many respects, enigmatic. The Nightingale's outward appearance is not revealed in the balladic variants: there are both monstrous and wholly human features. It is apparent that in the history of the epos this form is a transitional one between monstrous foes who belong to another world and the historical enemies of the Kievan state. Nor is the character of the actions of the Nightingale altogether clear: he is neither oppressor nor conqueror....²⁵

One hopes to resolve the contradiction sensed in the latter remarks by showing that the story is a magical historiola, with its roots in Indo-Iranian mythology, that was recast in the terms of a martial quest. V. Ya. Propp also finds that the tale fails, strangely, to conform fully to earlier or later types, and regards it as a degenerated and therefore late form of the folktale type of the heroic quest involving a battle with a monster—the type to which the *Drachenkampf*, or battle with a dragon, belongs—and argues:

V razvitii epasa nastayot moment, kogda geroicheskaya skhvatka s chudovishchem uzhe ne mozhet polnost'yu udovletvorit' khudozhestvennye zaprosy naroda. Skhvatka s takogo roda chudovishchami nachinaet teryat' svoi geroicheskii kharakter. Ona nachinaet priobretat' kharakter avantyrno-zanimatel'nyi. Imenno eto nablyudaetsya v byline o Solov'e-razboinike.

²⁵ Putilov, 452.

In the development of epic the moment comes when the heroic combat with a monster is already unable entirely to satisfy the aesthetic prerequisites of the folk. Combat with monsters of this kind begins to lose its heroic character. It begins to acquire an adventurous and entertaining character. Precisely this is observed in the *bylina* about the Nightingale-Robber.²⁶

Some objections may be raised to Propp's thesis. First, variation of the quest narrative does not necessarily imply a linear process of degeneration. It is equally possible for the existing themes of the quest and the combat with a monster to be employed in other, synchronic types of narrative. In another context, I have argued that the Gnostic *Hymn of the Pearl* is a poem intended to preach Manichaeism that employs the themes of quest and dragon-combat while reversing the heroic and social values implicit in these, with the aim of surprising the conventional expectations of an audience. The Gnostic text is thus a deliberate fusion of two different genres and views of life: the written religious treatise or sermon and anti-cosmic mood of the Manichaeans, and the oral epic and life-affirming heroic quest.²⁷ In the case of the tale of Il'ya Muromets and the Nightingale-Robber, it seems to me we are dealing with a magical narrative that possessed from the beginning some aspects of the heroic tale; but as the story was absorbed into Russian folk culture, these heroic features became most pronounced, conditioned by the environments of the genres of *skazka* and *bylina* that received it. Propp speaks of a process of degeneration; yet surely one must consider the antiquity of this very tale, relative to others in which that supposed process of degeneration has not occurred.

One might, therefore, compare more usefully the Russian tale to the Armenian spell and Mongolian shamanistic chant discussed earlier. The visit of the two strangers to Il'ya's home,

²⁶ Propp, 243.

²⁷ J.R. Russell, "The Epic of the Pearl," *Rearm* 28 (2002), 29-100; repr. *AJS*, 1261-1332.

and their blessing of healing by way of thanks for his parents' hospitality, should remind one immediately of the visit of the three strangers to the welcoming abode of the patriarch Abraham. The three are angels; and in Christian exegesis they prefigure the Holy Trinity. One of the most famous Russian icons, the Old Testament Trinity of Andrei Rublyov, depicts them seated at table. It is also relevant that in the story of the pursuit and capture of the child-stealing witch Lilith reproduced in talismans against childbed fever in Byzantium, Armenia, Russia, the Jewish Diaspora, and elsewhere, three armed angels chase the demoness. Il'ya's quest takes place on Easter: one recalls that the Armenian spell discussed above is part of a ritual of healing to be performed on Friday [*urbat*]. This is an unlucky day because of what is euphemistically called "Good" Friday, the day of Christ's crucifixion; and on it supernatural forces of evil are least constrained, requiring therefore the exercise of the most potent magic.²⁸ Il'ya's Paschal vow not to fight or shed blood may have to do, then, with magic: on this marked day he must employ other powers to overcome his uncanny foe.

It is also possible that the substrate was not wholly a borrowing from the Mongolian refraction of an Indo-Iranian text, but partook also of an ancient native tradition—a pagan Slavonic narrative closely cognate to, rather than merely derivative from, the Indo-Iranian material. In such a case, if indeed some or most of the material reshaped as a ballad came from an ultimate Indo-Iranian source through an intermediary

²⁸ Arm. *urbat* derives from Hebrew 'arvit, "evening (service)", i.e., 'erev Shabbat, the eve of the Sabbath. Arm. preserves the latter word, too, for Saturday: *šabat*—Sunday bears the Greek name *Kyriakē*, Arm. *Kirakī*, i.e., "the Lord's day". When I was a student of Armenian at Columbia College, my instructor, Dr. (now the Very Rev.) Krikor H. Maksoudian, who had studied at the Armenian seminary in Jerusalem, related that a priest got drunk one Good Friday: when others warned him that God would see and punish him, he retorted in all seriousness that this was the one day a person might sin with impunity, since God was—temporarily—dead. Such beliefs are not uncommon in Christendom: *mayomberos*, practitioners of black magic in the larger context of the Afro-Cuban religion of Santería, nourish their *egungas*, or skull-vessels, with the fresh blood of animal sacrifices on Fridays.

Tatar-Mongol transmission, it would have found a ready-made niche in the kindred mythological conceptions of the Slavs themselves. The prophet Elijah (Rus. Il'ya) is considered to have assumed in Christianized Russian folk belief the functions and personality of the pagan thunder-god Perun. The prophet, whom people invoke for rain, is imagined riding across the sky in a fiery chariot (flying without wings?), smiting with his thunderbolts unclean forces. Perun, who lived atop the world-tree, was believed to struggle with the serpent-being Volos, who lived at the tree's base: Volos was a chthonic deity, the guardian of cattle and other wealth. He presided over oaths, and was a god of the dead.²⁹ In a precursor of the *bylina*, then, the roles would in the drama have been distributed thus: A human Elijah comes to a bird-like Perun and by his divinely-granted prophetic verbal power forces the latter to serve him and fight Volos rather than harm mankind. This pattern would conform to the Armenian and Mongolian types, though the latter two mention *vīšaps* and *nagas* for the Garuda to kill, whereas in the Russian text the Nightingale-Robber becomes only Il'ya's servant.

If we deal with a magical text from which armed force is excluded, what, then, of the notable interlude at Chernigov? Il'ya fights a whole war there. In the scheme of a heroic quest, this episode is necessary: the overgrown and impassable straight road from Murom to Kiev, a line bisecting the heart of Rus', is blocked by both human and supernatural foes, and a proper hero must confront and conquer both. He is also, as we have seen, tempted at Chernigov to become a *voevoda*—an office that a prince, not a knight, generally held—which would require abandoning both his sacred choice of the calling of a knight-errant and his vow to go directly to Kiev and to offer fealty to Prince Vladimir. Note that wealth was an option at the moment of his choice; and in the episode at Kutuzovo this temptation, offered by a dozen *soloveichiki*, is also successfully turned aside. As students of the tale have long ago noticed, Il'ya experiences the standard Indo-European *triad* of obstacles or adventures on

²⁹ See Linda J. Ivanits, *Russian Folk Belief*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1990, 29-31, citing V.V. Ivanov and V.N. Toporov.

his way. I might add that one has to do with religious matters (the supernatural *Solovei-razboinik*); one, with nobility (the office of *voevoda*); and one, with possessions and food (the *Solovei-razboinik*'s sons). Priests, warriors, herdsman: this is the standard tripartite division of the ancient Indo-European castes or classes, the mixing of which Il'ya quite traditionally wishes at all costs to avoid. It has been argued whether the battle for Chernigov is an interpolation, a later addition, but this construction of the matter misses the point. It is an organic component of a standard heroic quest narrative; and even if it contradicts Il'ya's determined vow not to use weapons or draw blood (a vow he breaks thrice), it has to be there. The story consists of two overlapping genres, heroic epic and magical tale, and if the encounter necessitates some inconsistency, that is nothing too grave in literature.

For Il'ya does not kill the Nightingale in combat, though he shoots it and will kill it later on: in confronting what in an *Ur-tale* would have been a supernatural adversary to be overcome only by magical means, he keeps his vow. Though variants of the story differ in describing the manner in which Il'ya vanquishes the Nightingale, and all imply some violence, the point seems to be that the battle is a mental one: when the Nightingale whistles and terrifies Il'ya's horse, the knight keeps his wits about him and calms his steed, too. That makes sense if the substratum is a spell or shamanic song: one must deploy spiritual power to control an otherworld opponent. In the case of the *Song of the Pearl*, the young Parthian prince defeats the dragon, not with a sword, but by "Magian" chanting—i.e., the recitation of spells or mantras. The Mongolian shamaness in her song manages to enter, thanks to her office and gift, the land of death where she can gain access to the powers of the Garuda, seated on his tree. The angels and archangels, when they meet the headless eagle, Mother of All Evils, on its branchless and bottomless tree at the center of the universe, rely upon the diverse spiritual powers of Jesus Christ to force it to use its power against dragons and other very big, poisonous snakes (*višaps, nagas!*) rather than men. Correspondingly, Il'ya does not kill the Nightingale; he defeats it and becomes its master. Its

whistle is now at his service; he, at Prince Vladimir's—and its powers are thus turned to good and holy ends.

A Tataro-Mongol source has long been surmised for the *bylina*: it seems that a shamanic song of the kind we have examined above would be the best candidate. The ballad is a third way the story can be told of how to make a large, powerful bird endowed with human speech and uncanny song use its powers to help mankind. I have proposed an Indo-Iranian source for the root narrative spell and suggested a path of transmission from Sogdia to Mongolia, and from Parthia to Armenia. In both cases the host cultures accommodated the material within existing genres and systems of belief, altering it accordingly. The same thing seems to have happened in transmission of the tale from Mongolia to Rus': it was partially reshaped in accordance with the Christian heroic epic form where it found reception. As we have noted above, the actual appearance of the Nightingale-Robber remains a point of ambiguity, and perhaps this must be so, since although eagles can carry off rams, babies, and even, in one case, a fetching Phrygian teenager named Ganymede who was tending his flock when Zeus, *patér andrón te theón te*, decided to enjoy recreation instead of procreation for a bit, nightingales do not get all that big. A Garuda-size nightingale would look decidedly ungainly to a rose. Why the apparent substitution?

THE SONG OF IGOR'S CAMPAIGN AND ITS DISCONTENTS

The Russian word for nightingale, as we have seen, is *solovei*, a word displaying the usual East Slavic lengthening (*moloko* "milk" instead of *mleko*, etc.). The Old Church Slavonic form is, accordingly, *slavii*, "*Nachtigall*, [Gk.] *aédón*", a word which Vasmer understands to refer to a color, "*gelblichgrau*", from a base **solv*. He adds, "*Den berühmten Solovei-razboinik der russ. Volksdichtung wollte O. Mollerts mit einem mächtigen Mordwinen (17 Jhdt.) bei N.-Novgorod*

identifizieren."³⁰ Vasmer and subsequent investigators, including Keenan, regard the derivation of the word for nightingale from the same base as *slavo* and *slava* as *Volksetymologie*, and there is little doubt they are right. Recent scholarship has put forth the suggestion that another base, meaning to hop or jump, might be the origin of *solovei*.

As to the discussion of the *bylina*, greater misgiving must be expressed. While it is possible that the tale of Il'ya Muromets and the Nightingale-Robber might have reminded some Russians of a particularly morbid Mordvin (the name has been thought to be Iranian, from a form related to Pers. *mard-khor*, "man-eater"), the tale was already in existence early in the 17th century; and it seems to this writer special pleading to relocate the Nightingale-Robber from his comfortable perch somewhere between Chernigov and Kiev all the way back, east of Moscow, to Nizhnii Novgorod and to force what is evidently at its root a supernatural tale into the procrustean bed of an eminently forgettable historical incident. Vasmer in his entry on the nightingale has nothing approving to say of the hugely important literary and semantic connection of *slavii/solovei* to speech and fame. Though he was not, strictly speaking, obligated to do so by the exigencies of linguistic examination, the omission is troubling: ancient Russian literature has explicitly linked *slavii* to *slava*, everywhere and always, and never to **Gelblichgraulichkeit*.

In recent decades historians of scholarship have devoted critical scrutiny to the role deeply ingrained prejudices can play in the study of other cultures than one's own. This is a legitimate undertaking, though writers pursuing a disingenuous political agenda of their own have abused the exercise. Western Christian students of the Arab and Islamic world may have expressed bias, but very often it was explicable, even justifiable, on the grounds of the behavior of Islamic states towards both

³⁰Max Vasmer, *Russisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1953, II, 690-691. Keenan, 217 n. 300, rejects the etymology of *slavii/solovei* from *slu-*, "hear", as mistaken, but, as will be seen below, recognizes the immense poetic importance of such an interpretation of the bird's name.

Christian subjects and European countries.³¹ But might one suggest that in the case of German study of the Slavs, we encounter a less ambiguous pattern of scholarship at the service of political malfeasance? German scholars, who have led the way in Slavonic as in other branches of philology, have exercised considerable ingenuity to derive the term Slav, not from the base cited above that produced *slovo*, *slava*, but from *sklavos* "slave" (or even more demeaning bases still). Though there is no evidence any *slavyanin* ever meant by thus designating himself that he was a *mamluk*, as it were, they propose this partly on the grounds that Slavs formed a considerable part of the human cargo of the Pontic slave-trade, from the Byzantine age down through the Ottoman period.³²

³¹ I have in mind the egregious *Orientalism* of the late Edward Said, a scholar of modern European literature with no professional training in Oriental studies. Said proposed that European scholarship on the Near East, beginning essentially in the late 18th century, has been marred by an unjustifiable bias against Islam in general and against Arabs in particular. In a note above on the scroll provided by Prof. Hagopian of Marsovan, one found it necessary to review concisely the circumstances of the latter's death: he was murdered in the first genocide of modern times, which was carried out ostensibly in the name of Islam. The culprit was the only Near Eastern political entity, holder of the Caliphate, whose military power and geographical proximity for half a millennium had made it a concern to Europe, and whose mistreatment of its Christian minorities had for decades enraged public opinion. One recalls that the Turks occupied all the Christian lands and peoples of southeastern Europe—Greeks, Serbians, Bulgarians, and others—and had attempted to take Vienna. That oppression culminated, for the Armenians, in the Genocide of 1915 noted above, in the course of which Jane Wingate's informant, the learned and generous Prof. Hagopian, met a hideous death. This was not an Arab empire—though it ruled most Arabs. It was Ottoman Turkey. But of the Turks, and of the reasonable fear and dislike their political and religious policies inspired, and of the Armenians, and of a Genocide carried out from the shores of the Aegean to the mountainous frontiers of Iran, Said has nothing to say. Armenian history stands as a demonstration of the essential mendacity—and cold inhumanity—of his argument.

³² One must recall that, not even a decade before the publication of Vasmer's dictionary, Heidelberg was an enthusiastic bastion—as was every other German university—of an ideology that consigned the Slavs to the status of *Untermenschen* and exploited all the means of the philological and other sciences to justify the extermination of the Jews and the enslavement and

The German philologists and their followers evidently find of slight relevance to their investigation the common Slavic designation of the Germans themselves, *nemets* ["dumb, unable to speak"]. The latter is obviously a term meant to contrast a neighbor speaking a harsh and unintelligible tongue with one's articulate and glorious self. This was a well-known neighbor; and the closer one is to an alien neighbor, the worse the enmity. Thus, although Russian acquired useful words we have seen like the title *knyaz'* ["prince"] and the name of that title's bearer, Vladimir, from Germanic, Russians also say, *Chto russkomu khorosho, nemtsu smert'* ["What's good for a Russian is death for a German."]

So if indeed the main thing about the nightingale that the early Slavs noticed was its drab color—a suggestion rather uncomplimentary in its implication that the *sklavoi* were either deaf or boorish, and one which I am strongly inclined to take *cum grano salis* despite the general approbation with which this etymology has been received—then that perception sets them apart from nearly every other nation and language, for whom the nightingale, as we have seen, is pre-eminently the bird who sings varied songs, the bird of poetry, the bird of incantation. That is also the main feature of the eagle of the Armenian spell and the Garuda of the Mongolian shamanistic chant; and one suggests that this feature of powerful speech dictated the transformation of the bird in Russian reception into a nightingale. But the Armenian and Mongolian birds are also powerful raptors, which the nightingale decidedly is not; so the

gradual extirpation of the Slavs. It is interesting that even today it seems *de rigueur* in Western scholarship to deny to the Slavs an antiquity of their own on the grounds that the term Slav is first attested in writing after an arbitrary cut-off point of the fifth century A.D. We know that the Finns call Russians *Venäläinen*, and ancient references to the Venedi by Tacitus and others probably have to do with Slavs, but since the latter term is not used—even though it is also argued that it means "slaves" and cannot therefore have been an original self-designation, *slavyanin* as "speaking, articulate, famed" being a latter misunderstanding—then Venedi will not qualify for discussion of the self-evidently very ancient language group to be designated as Slavic. This is a circular argument in which the Slavs are set up to be the losers; and it is impossible to suppose that it is not motivated by a deep-seated prejudice.

epithet *razboinik*, meaning a robber or highwayman, would have been added to modify the name. (Vasmer would see it differently, following the Mordvinian hypothesis: "Vgl. Dazu die Sippe von mordw. *salams*, 'stehlen', *salitsa*, 'Dieb'"—as though some esoteric rhyming-pair involving a pun on "thief" were to be adumbrated.) Whatever the remote etymology of *slaviis/solovei*, it is at any rate entirely irrelevant to the understanding of the word by Russian-speakers themselves in their literary culture, where it always means a bird connected *kat' exokhen* to the word and to glory.

The *solovei* is usually regarded positively. In the folktale *Ptichii yazyk*, "The Language of the Birds", a merchant and his wife have a son, Vasilii. While they are at table, a nightingale in a cage keeps singing, and the merchant swears he will give his wealth away to anyone who can tell what the bird is saying. Their six-year-old son demurs, but when his parents urge him to speak and to conceal nothing, he tells them the bird is saying the day will come when his parents will be his servants. They are distressed and later that night put the sleeping Vasya in a boat and push it off to sea. The *solovei-veshchun*, "Nightingale-Sage" (note the compound usage, and cf. *Solovei-razboinik*—J.R.R.) escapes from its cage, flies out to the boat, and perches on the boy's shoulder. They are rescued by a ship's captain, who ignores the bird's warning, interpreted by Vasya, that they are about to be damaged by a squall. After the ensuing storm, though, the chastened mariner heeds the bird's advice to put into hiding to avoid twelve pirate ships. They resume their journey and strike anchor at Khvalynsk, where the king suffers from the incessant squawking of a raven and its wife. He promises to give the hand of his daughter to anybody who can get the black birds to fly away so he can enjoy peace and quiet. However anyone who accepts the challenge and fails will be beheaded. Vasya's nightingale explains that the ravens are arguing about whether their son belongs to his mother or father, and have been asking all this time for the king's judgment. "To the father!" declares the monarch, and they fly away. The boy is ennobled and richly rewarded, and in the course of his travels he stops at a house where he is shown due honor. But its inhabitants turn out to be his parents. The nightingale's

prophecy is fulfilled, the family are reconciled and Vasilii brings his parents to Khvalynsk, where they live happily.³³

The *locus classicus* for the complex, stressed, poetic use of *slaviislovei* in Russian, though, is the *Slovo o polku Igoreve*, "The Song of Igor's Campaign" (Nabokov) or, more concisely, the "Igor Tale" (Keenan). In the 810 lines of the epic, the word *slava* "glory" occurs 15 times; *slovo* "word (with all the nuances, when necessary, of *logos*, the Word—J.R.R.)", three times; and *slaviislovii* "nightingale", four times. There are also numerous proper names with the element *-slav-*, even Gorislavich, which Nabokov in his translation renders as "Malgory";³⁴ in Prof. Keenan's words, "the sound of Slavic glory is heard once every three verses,"³⁵ though the word Slav itself does not appear.

One cannot discuss the *Song* without some reference to the vexed question of its authenticity. The *Song* is a literary masterpiece that in its gorgeous strangeness and literary perfection stands alone in Old Slavonic, somewhat as *Beowulf* does in Old English. Both texts were preserved in unique manuscripts; but unlike the Cotton MS. containing *Beowulf* that survived conflagration and found a safe haven in the British Library, the manuscript of the *Song* was lost in the great Moscow fire of 1812. An edition of the Slavonic text with translation and annotation was printed at Moscow in 1800, and a handwritten copy was made for the Empress Catherine: nothing else survives. An agent of Count Aleksei Musin-Pushkin had acquired the manuscript from the archimandrite Ioil' of the Spaso-Yaroslavskii monastery around 1790: it was a miscellany, bound together with texts of the *Tale of Opulent India*, the *Wisdom of Ahiqar* (Rus. Akir), and the Byzantine epic *Digenes Akritas*. The *Song* describes the unsuccessful campaign of a

³³ *Narodnye russkie skazki iz sbornika A.N. Afanas'eva*, Moscow: Khudozhestvennaya literatura, 1978, 196-199. This beautiful volume, which has afforded this writer many happy hours of bedtime reading, was the generous gift of my dear friend Oksana Fyodorovna Nikol'skaya, whose wonderful hospitality I have enjoyed year after year in St. Petersburg. It is a pleasure to record here my gratitude to her.

³⁴ Nabokov, 102.

³⁵ Keenan, 216.

prince of Kievan Rus', Igor', in the spring of 1185 against the Polovtsy (or Cumans): Bilbo Baggins might have called the poem "Almost to the Don and back again." Over the years, various scholars have sought to demonstrate that the *Song* was a forgery and no such manuscript ever existed. This was a period, after all, when enlightened Europeans were sedulously discovering for their nations native heroic epics whose antiquity and substance might release them from a cultural and spiritual fealty to the Greek and Roman traditions, or the Bible. It was the time of James Macpherson's bestseller, *Ossian*. Most recently, Prof. Keenan has argued that the gifted scholar and pan-Slavic patriot Josef Dombrovsky, a contemporary of Musin-Pushkin's, stitched the *Song* together, dipping frequently into the waters of the *Zadonshchina* ("What happened beyond the Don"), a much later work of far less literary merit. That would not make the Moravian savant an utter falsifier, at least not by the somewhat flexible standards of scholarship and originality of the age: the *Kalevala*, too, is more a compilation by Lonnröt (1835) of various sources than a long and continuous original text. It is now accepted by many researchers that much of *Ossian*, to which a decidedly unromantic mist of disrepute and scandal clung from the time that Samuel Johnson loudly denounced the work as a forgery, was possibly genuine material that Macpherson assembled and published, albeit indulging in generous authorial liberties.

The other contents of the miscellany that ostensibly contained also the lost manuscript of the *Song* seem to me to present the grounds of an argument for its authenticity. There is a mediaeval Armenian miscellany to which the printing tradition generally assigns the title of its most popular component, *Zruyc' plnjē Kalaki*, the "Tale of the City of Bronze", an edifying adventure story most likely of Buddhist origin that was transmitted to the Near East and became an episode in the Thousand and One Nights. The Armenian manuscripts, followed by printed books (the last of the latter in Classical Armenian was published in the latter half of the 19th century; translations into the modern Western dialect continued into the 20th), situate the Tale amidst other stories of edification and entertainment, notably the *Wisdom of Ahiqar*, which was, of

course, also included amongst apocryphal texts of the Bible from very early times. The Armenians of mediaeval times (and later) enjoyed stories about distant India and heroic narratives—the *Alexander Romance* and their own Sasun epic. Though the Akritic cycle was not translated into Armenian, it took shape in the region of Melitene (modern Malatya), on the Euphrates border of Armenia; and various characters, scenes, and themes in the Byzantine epic are of local, Armenian origin. It is certain that Josef Dombrovsky, Musin-Pushkin, the latter's buyer, and the needy archimandrite Ioil' were innocent of Armenology in general and of the character and contents of mediaeval Armenian compilations for instruction and enjoyment in particular; but the volume that included the lost manuscript of the *Song* fits admirably into a kindred tradition of the compilation in manuscript miscellanies of edifying and entertaining texts that the Armenian evidence parallels and corroborates *grasso modo*.

Then there are the Ossianisms that have been noted in the *Song*. Do these tend to cast doubt upon, or buttress, claims of authenticity? Nabokov writes, "Throughout the *Song* there occur here and there a few poetical formulas strikingly resembling those in Macpherson's *Ossian*. I discuss them in my Commentary. Paradoxically, these coincidences tend to prove not that a Russian of the eighteenth century emulated Macpherson, but that Macpherson's concoction does contain after all scraps derived from authentic ancient poems."³⁶ This prescient comment anticipates the re-evaluation of Macpherson's work in recent scholarship; and the several references in the Commentary are, accordingly, not (or not just) a tease intended to keep the reader wondering whether the *Song* is genuine or not. Nabokov was, as a poet and writer as well as a literary scholar, interested in the enormous impact of *Ossian* on Russian literature itself.³⁷ His attention to Ossianisms is thus

³⁶ Nabokov, 12.

³⁷ Yu.D. Levin, ed., *Ossian* (Akademiya Nauk SSSR, Literaturnye Pamyatniki), Leningrad: Nauka, 1983, contains a Russian tr. of Macpherson as well as a huge section of Russian prose and poetry on Ossianic themes by writers

including Karamzin, Muraviov, Derzhavin, Potezhaev, Glinka, Zhukovsky, and Küchelbecker. Even if, as Nabokov argues fairly, Russians in the late 18th and early 19th centuries generally did not know English well enough to read *Ossian* in the original, the impact of the work was instant, profound, and long-lasting. Pushkin in his Lycée years and later, retold and imitated *Ossian*. I offer in translation here three of the more important poems on the theme, spanning a century and illustrating different concerns. Lermontov strives for romantic inspiration by half-imagined ancestral roots (he was in fact part-Scottish). Gumilyov in the midst of modern decadence invokes the clarity of a heroic past. Mandelstam offers a more subtle meditation on literary authenticity and heritage.

Mikhail Yur'evich Lermontov
Ossian's Tomb

Beneath the veil of fog,
In the plains below a stormy sky
Stands the tomb of Ossian
In the hills of Scotland mine,
Thither flies my slumbering spirit
To breathe deeply of its native gale
And from the grave sunk in oblivion
Again to give life to my soul. (1830)

Nikolai Gumilyov
Ossian

Heavy, leaden cloud scudded 'cross the sky,
The moon incarnadine, as if a fatal wound, among them.
Cuchulain the strong, champion of green Erin,
Fell at the sword stroke of Svaran, the king of Ocean.

Ominously sobbed old sybil's imprecations;
The sea, churned to foam, rose and fell,
And Svaran, in ecstatic storm of jubilation
Met Fingal, the lord of the waste land, hero of heroes.

They join in fight and slip on bedewed boulders,
Breaking each other's mighty, ursine shoulders,
And heed the tidings of the keening winds
Of the great battle of the plain in mighty terror.

When I tire of embraces and caressing words,
When I tire of quotidian affairs and thoughts,
I hear the air tremble with their mighty curses;
I see the heroes on the hilltop grim and full of anger. (1907)

straightforward and proper. Prof. Keenan, defending vigorously his lonely thesis, takes to task his adversaries. This is understandable: there is a lot of knock down, drag out writing in a field where the stakes are high and emotions are strong. And Keenan's is an encyclopaedic work of consummate scholarship. He suggests that "the most imaginative practitioners" in modern times of the study of the *Song* "to the end (almost universally) of affirming its 12th-century authenticity" are Roman Jakobson and Nabokov. But he observes also that the latter "eventually took (as he so often did) a dodging, ambiguous stance on the matter of authenticity ('we shall have to cope with eerie doubt...')." Keenan is no less generous about the literary quality of Nabokov's translation, which he calls "precious".³⁸ By this logic, if you accept the authenticity of the text then that is because this was a predetermined position, not one arrived at by scholarly investigation—since that can lead only to Keenan's lonely assertion that the *Song* is a forgery. But if you find the text to be authentic, yet decline to make a dogmatic assertion to

Osip Emil'evich Mandelstam

I have not heard the tales of Ossian,
I have not drunk the ancient wine;
Why then do I perceive the bloodied moon of Scotland
And the battle plain?

And in a silence ominous I sense
The martial roll of harp and raven called,
And in the moonlight clansmen's
Wind-driven tartans flicker, curl.

I have received the charmed inheritance
Of foreign songsters' migratory dreams:
Our own heritage, our boring neighbors—
We're long, unabashedly contemptuous of these.

And perhaps this is not the only treasure
That, skipping grandsons, to their sons will go,
And again a skald will shape another's epic
And pronounce it as his own. (1914)

³⁸ Keenan, 137, 138 n. 2, and 189 n. 213.

that effect, allowing that you may be wrong, or at least that the text as we have received it may contain interpolations or alterations in transmission (a condition not unheard of in the history of ancient manuscripts), then that is a "dodge". Keenan does not specify other places where the great, scrupulous, and fastidiously honest scholar Nabokov was "often" a dodger. Keenan cites Nabokov's comparison of passages in the *Song* to *Ossian*, without, however, noting Nabokov's suggestion in his Introduction, cited above, that such similarities may tend to support the authenticity of the Caledonian poem. So Nabokov's references are meant to imply the opposite of the conclusion towards which Keenan tends, and in support of which he cites them. The characterization of Nabokov's style as "precious" (one might as well call Keenan's turgid—but what for?) doubtless disturbs the immortal shade of one of the greatest writers of Russia and America as much as the buzzing of a gnat at the tail of an elephant. Yet one has no doubt that, were Vladimir Vladimirovich among us to reply to these disparagements as he did to Edmund Wilson's ill-considered critique of his much longer translation and commentary on Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin*, he would mete out to the hapless savant a spectacular and condign public horsewhipping in print. If he thought it worth the trouble.

THE BARD BOYAN, SQUIRRELS, AND NIGHTINGALES

The unknown narrator of the *Song* refers several times to the older bard Boyan:

Boyan bo veshchii, ashche komu khotyashe pesn' tvoriti, to rastekashetsya mys(l)iyu po drevu, serym v' lkom po zemli, shizym orlom pod oblaky.

O Boyane, soloviyu starago vremeni! Aby ty sia pl''ky ushchekotal, skacha, slaviyu, po myslenu drevu, letaya umom pod oblaky, svivaya slavy oba poly sego vremeni, rishcha v tropu Troyanyu chres polya na gory...

For he, vatic Boyan,/ if he wished to make a laud for
 one,/ ranged in thought/ [like the nightingale] over the
 tree:/ like the gray wolf/ across land:/ like the smoky
 eagle/ up to the clouds.

O Boyan, nightingale/ of the times of old!/ If you were to
 trill [your praise of] *these* troops,/ while hopping,
 nightingale,/ over the tree of thought/ [if you were]
 flying in mind/ up to the clouds:/ [if] weaving paeans
 around *these* times,/ [you were] roving the Trojan
 Trail,/across fields onto hills...³⁹

Nabokov in his Commentary notes:

In thought over the tree: *misliyu po drevu*. This has taxed
 the scholarship and artfulness of numerous
 commentators. At least two species of squirrel (evolved
 from *mis'*, mouse) have been made to perform in the
 branches of this metaphor. But apart from the fact that the
 same image in another form occurs ... and that a genuine
 squirrel is properly named *belya* at [line] 349, it seems
 clear that the logical or clerical lacuna here between
 "thought" and "tree" should be filled with *slaviem* ("in the
 guise of a nightingale"), thus completing the triple
 formula...

The commentators include the dean of the Russian
 Symbolists, Vyacheslav Ivanov, whose St. Petersburg "Bashnya"
 ["The Tower"] was a meeting place of the literati of the capital.
 On 25 December 1916 he wrote *Zamyshlen'e Bayana*
 ([*"Bayan's [sic] Conception"*], tr. by J.R. Russell from the 1995
 edition, ser. *Novaya Biblioteka Poeta*, St. Petersburg):

³⁹ Nabokov, 30.,32.

To S.M. Gorodetsky

Grandsons, do you hold fast
The patrimonial teachings
Of the swans' noble order?
Have you not forgotten
The singing of Bayan
Famed from the forefather
Of the youngest tribe
In the lays of ancient time?
Have you kept the intonement's enchantment?
Like a squirrel, along the branches
Of the world tree,
Bayan's conception
Plays and hides
From the roots to the crown,
And frightens and delights.
Imagine—and he's there. Look—he's here!
Who will chase after the sage? Who will guess where he is?
Where in the blink of an eye will he be?
There is for him no space, no time,
Now all of him leans
Down over the well's deep—
He falls
As if entering the ground,
And now he'll be buried...
But just look up! Who is hanging in the height
And swings?
Thus flows the mage, like a squirrel, on the tree...

And the oak's branches drowse,
Through them spread the blue-gray clouds,
And a shifting canopy in star-hue
Of the highest heavens grew.
And the oak's roots are strong;
Their subterranean tendrils sleep,

And downward grow to heavens deep,
And with leaves of stars is their forest crowned.

(Variant: lines 33-34: "Their subterranean branches
straining/ Grow deep to the subterranean skies.)

Ivanov's poem is a world-tree, like that of the Garuda, or of Perun, though I suspect its proximate source is the Norse *Yggdrasil*: the squirrel in it plays hide and seek. This reminds one immediately of "Hide and Seek", a well-known painting in the Museum of Modern Art, New York, by the Russian émigré artist Pavel Tchelitchev, whom Nabokov knew, rather disliked, and parodied mildly in a play.⁴⁰ The painting conceals various creatures and symbols, including one Nabokov would have liked and noticed—a butterfly—amongst the infinite branches and twigs of a world-tree, where a little girl plays. Russians like squirrels: a popular chocolate confection is called *Belochka*, "Little Squirrel"; and a few years ago I was handed a flier outside the Pionerskaya metro station in St. Petersburg advertising the services of a stomatological clinic whose satisfied customers enjoyed the gnawing abilities of a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed squirrel. I think Nabokov was reluctant to part with the creature, though critical evaluation of the text of the *Song* demanded he do so. Instead, the squirrel makes a leap from the branches of Kievan Rus' to upstate New York: in the novel *Pnin*, a squirrel appears at moments where near death or sharp memory bring the academic émigré hero close to Nabokov's *potustoronnost'*—the Otherworld—where beloved

⁴⁰ Tchelitchev (i.e., Rus. Chelishchev) was flamboyantly gay. Though Nabokov was personally averse to homosexuality, his gay brother, stranded in occupied Paris, was murdered by the Nazis for his orientation. Nabokov's father, who died protecting a friend from a right-wing assassin's bullet, had sought to decriminalize homosexuality in Russia; so acceptance of gay people and support for their rights was as essential a component of Nabokov's creed as a Russian liberal as was his violent and uncompromising detestation of anti-Semitism in any form. He was a firm supporter of the State of Israel. The idea of homosexuality as sexual *inversion* was useful in the construction of an outsider in a world of reversals and mirrors, as we shall see presently in the discussion of his novel *Pale Fire*.

faces from a lost Russia are restored.⁴¹ One, indeed, is Pnin's first love, Mira Belochkina [Little Squirrel], a Jewish woman murdered by the Nazis. So, squirrels hopping about, appearing and hiding on the world tree bring one a glimpse of meaning from beyond the barrier of existence. Nabokov plays more complex games here. As Gennadi Barabtarlo notes in his learned commentary on *Pnin*, citing Peter Lubin's study "Kickshaws and Motley" among others, Nabokov believed that Cendrillon's "pantoufle de verre" [Cinderella's glass slipper] was not of glass, but of *vair*, squirrel fur, cf. Rus. *veveritsa*. The motif preoccupied Nabokov, for it recurs from the beginning to the end of his American period: in *Bend Sinister* ("a girl's tiny slipper trimmed with moth-eaten squirrel fur"), *Lolita* ("her eyes were *vair*"), and *Ada* ("miniver-trimmed slipper"). But he also finds a crucial use for the Cinderella glass that the image of the squirrel (with its references to Cinderella's slippers of squirrel-fur) replaces in the novel.

Pnin's wife Liza, a cheap soul who writes vulgar poems,⁴² has left him for a blowhard German (of course, given the author's aversions) aptly named Wind, a psychiatrist (Nabokov hated Freud). It is not clear how much of Pnin there is to the son, Victor, who visits him from school. Outwardly the meeting is not successful: Victor is not hungry and does not care for the soccer ball Pnin offers him. But the two dream the same thing; and later on Victor sends Pnin an aquamarine punchbowl whose beauty is a certain revelation to Pnin of the profundity and beauty of the boy's soul, and of his love. On the night Pnin, at last confident of the security of his teaching post at Waindell College, holds a housewarming party, his guests admire the punchbowl. As they are departing, Pnin's chairman of department (a German, again), tells the Russian he is not to receive tenure—home and job are all lost. Pnin goes into his

⁴¹ Véra Nabokov insisted that *ponatoronnostr'* was the key to her husband's artistry and philosophy; see Vladimir E. Alexandrov's superb monograph, *Nabokov's Otherworld*, Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991.

⁴² Diabolically funny, obscene parodies of the early Akhmatova: Lydia Chukovskaya reports that these offended and infuriated the great poetess.

empty, empty home to clean up, remembering to make a plate of scraps for a neighborhood dog, for a human's misfortune should not deprive an animal of pleasure.⁴³ While washing up, Pnin lets fall a heavy nutcracker in the soapy water; there is a sound of shattering glass, and for an agonizing moment the hero thinks he has broken Victor's gift. At that moment, the narrator tells us, he looked very old. But the bowl—and love, and meaning, and the texture of Pnin's identity—is unbroken, whole, and true

Nabokov, as we have seen from his comment on the *Song* and his novel *Pnin*, could not bear to part with a squirrel who was not there. How much more, then, would he have had to say about a nightingale who was. But as is usual with Nabokov, the good reader is invited to play a game of hide-and-seek to find out what it is. The first point to be made is that Nabokov was

⁴³ This small detail, in the context of the episode, is not only as heartbreaking (Russian *serdtserazdirayushchee*, "ripping the heart violently to shreds", puts it better) in its perfect placement and artistry as the death of Anna Karenina. It is the great vindication of Nabokov as a sternly moral writer in the great Russian tradition of Pushkin and Tolstoy, and the ultimate refutation of those who regard Nabokov as a post-modern cynic playing brittle intellectual games. Games there are—but they are for real. It is not hard to find other assertions of a deeply felt and responsible decency in the writer's oeuvre; what is more astonishing is the failure of those who find Nabokov facilely clever, to perceive them. Consider Nabokov's angry advocacy of the kind Gregor Samsa, in his lecture on *Metamorphosis* and later in *Strong Opinions*: Vladimir Vladimirovich saw Gregor's family as proto-Nazis, and went to some lengths to prove that the hero had been transformed, not into a cockroach, but into a pleasantly roly-poly beetle. If he'd discovered his wings, he could have flown out the window, to roll around happily in the company of other beetles—like *Cincinnati*, in *Invitation to a Beheading*, who at the end walks away from the dystopia of the novel, to find others like himself! (Nabokov apparently read German quite well, though of course he averred that he barely knew the language.) Or notice Humbert's admission, at the center of *Lolita*, that he had left a trail of slime across dreamy, trusting America. Who could possibly read this and consider the novel amoral or obscene? In the case of *Pnin* one notes, however, that the author was prepared to let "my poor Pnin" die—his friends at *The New Yorker* protested, and Nabokov heeded them. He passed the test, and more: Pnin jumps novels, to become a happy, tenured professor beyond anyone's capacity to harm.

acutely sensible of the *brevity* of the masterpiece under study: in his introduction, he notes that the *Song* "consists of 14,175 letters or about 2850 words", which he has divided into 860 lines. The notes in the Commentary are generally very focused, and deal with a line or two. But on p. 92, quite unobtrusively, the translator inserts a relatively short note—on lines 1-70! That is quite a large chunk of the text: it looks like Nabokovian humor, hiding something of serious significance. Here is the note:

1-70. Under the pretext of trying to decide what style to adopt, the old, involved, grandiloquent style of Boyan, or something more in keeping with a contemporaneous subject—the would-be singer of Igor's campaign asks himself how would Boyan have begun, invents examples of Boyan's political idiom (63-70), as if to see how they fit recent events, toys with them, rejects them—but in the meantime he has craftily and successfully fashioned of them the beginning of his story. Thus, in his *Pamyatnik* [The Monument], Pushkin in 1836 parodied a poem by his predecessor Derzhavin (1743-1816) on a Horatian theme ["*Exegi monumentum...*"], in order to smuggle in his own secret aspirations, his own secret pride, under the cloak of high mummery.

This is Derzhavin's poem of 1795, in my translation:

I raised to myself a monument wondrous and eternal.
It is harder than the metals and o'ertops the pyramids;
Neither whirlwind nor swift lightning will break it,
And the flight of time will not cause it to crumble.

So!— I will not altogether die, but a large part of me,
Escaping decay, will be alive after my death,
And my glory [Rus.: *slava*] will grow, not fade away
As long as the world esteems the Slavic race.

Rumor [Rus.: *slukh*] of me will spread from White Sea
Waters to the Black;

Where Volga, Don, Neva flow; from Ripheus, flows Ural:
Amidst numberless peoples every one will recall
How I arrived at fame from obscurity because

In light Russian verse first I was to dare
Advertise Felice's moral graces,
In heartfelt simplicity to converse of God
And with a grin to tell the truth to Tsars.

O Muse! Take pride in service justly earned.
Who scorns you—treat them with contempt yourself,
And with casual and unhurried hand
Crown your brow with immortal dawn.

Here is Pushkin's *Exegi monumentum*, written in 1836, one year before the poet's death. I have italicized lines where the Russian is identical, or nearly so, to Derzhavin's.

I have erected for myself a monument not built with hands;
To it the people's path will not be overgrown with grass.
Higher has it reared its unquiet head
Than the pillar of Alexander.

No, I shall not altogether die: my soul in intimate lyric
Will outlive my ashes and *escape decay*,
And *gloried* [Rus.: *slaven*] shall I be, as long as in this
sublunar world
Even a single poet yet shall live.

Rumor [Rus.: *slukh*] of me shall traverse great Rus' entire;
And every tongue existing there, me acclaim:
The proud son of the Slavs, and Finn, and still wild
Tungus, and the friend of the steppes, the Kalmyk.

And long will I be beloved of the people
For the feelings of good that my lyre aroused,
For in my brutal age I glorified Liberty
And for mercy for the fallen, called.

To God's command, *O Muse*, be heedful,
Of offense, unafraid, demanding not a crown.
Praise and slander accept with equal grace,
And do not argue with a clown.

The common features of the two poems fall into three closely related categories: 1) A monument, and escape of decay, both of which are related to immortality; 2) The glory (*slava*, *slaven*) and rumor or fame (*slukh*), from the same root as the latter), which guarantee that immortality; and 3) The Muse, who confers the poetic gift whereby fame and glory are achieved.

Out of modesty or, more likely, the sort of game of hide-and-seek he plays with his cherished careful reader, Nabokov does not mention his own *Exegi monumentum*. It is the 124-line *Slava*, composed at Wellesley, MA in 1942, which he translates as "Fame" (*Poems and Problems*, 1970, no. 31, pp. 102-113). It contains a direct and ironic reference to Pushkin in lines 73-76, where a grotesque figure counseling despair says,

*Net, nikto nikogda na prostore velikom
ni odnoi ne pomyanet stranitsy tvoei:
nyne dikii prebudet v neveden'i dikom, drug stepei dlya tebya
ne zabudet stepei.*

No, never will anyone in the great spaces
make mention of even one page of your work;
the now savage will dwell in his savage ignorance,
friends of steppes won't forget their steppes for your sake.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Another line, in Nabokov's poem *O pravitelyakh* ("On Rulers", Cambridge, MA, 1944), reproduces the rhythmic signature of this strophe of weary disgust at the inevitable sameness and hopelessness of the future: *Umiraet so skakoi istorik/ za Mamaem vroy tot zhe Mamai* (anapaestic trimeter, which he did into English thus: "The historian dies of sheer boredom:/ On the heels of Mamay comes another Mamay (anapaestic tetrameter = *dlya tebya drug stepei ne zabudet stepei*). And Tatar tyranny dully precedes that of the pogromist Romanov, the cockroach-whiskered Ossete.

In his footnotes to his English translation, the author cites Pushkin's lines on the Tungus and Kalmyk, lest the Anglophone reader miss the reference. The poem divides in two, in two different ways; thematic and metric. In lines 57 and following, Nabokov evokes a Russia with a threshold [*porog*], "a path drenched by maples in violet blood" [*tropa vsya v lilovoi krovi*] and "ditches" [*kanavy*]. Blood and a ditch: rearrange anagrammatically and symbolically *kanava* and *porog*, change the season from despairing autumn to hopeful spring, and you have the analogous line with *ves' v cheryomukhe ovrag* "all in racemosa the ravine" to whose edge the dreamer, returned in sleep to Russia, is being taken to be shot (*Rasstrel*, "Execution by firing squad", Berlin, 1927). The racemosa is a spring tree blossom used by the Symbolist poet Konstantin Dmitrievich Bal'mont as an emblem of love, and it is emotionally charged in Russian poetry.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ As noted above, Nabokov etched the first lines of this poem in glass in Edmund Wilson's guest bedroom, where writers were encouraged to leave a favorite strophe. Mandelstam's poem *Chto poyut chasy-kaznachik*, 1917, printed in the collection *Tristia*, is apposite to discuss here because of its highly symbolic use of the images of both *cheryomukha* and *solovei*. Osip Mandel'shtam, *Sobranie sochinenii v II tomakh*, G.P. Struve and B.A. Filippov, eds., Washington, D.C.: Inter-Language Literary Associates, 1964, I, 69, no. 98, my tr.: "What does the cricket clock sing./ Fever rustles./ And the dry stove mutters./ This is the red silk burning./ What are the mice doing, gnawing/ Life's hull so thin?/ This is the swallow, and Kore/ Unfastening my barque./ What is the rain on the rooftop muttering?/ This is how black silk burns./ But the racemosa will hear 'Farewell!'/ Uttered even at the bottom of the sea./ For death is blameless./ And nothing can be helped./ Since in its nightingale-fever (*Chto v goryachke solov'inoi*) My heart stays warm." M.L. Gasparov, Osip Mandel'shtam, *Snikhovoreniya*, Proza, Moscow: Biblioteka Poeta, 2001, 630, proposes the explanation that "the poet himself, in the nightingale-fever of love and creativity, has an intimation of the proximity of death. The boat of his life is gnawed through, he is sinking, and from the bottom of the sea he sends his love—racemosa, a symbol from Bal'mont—his final 'Farewell'. The swallow for Mandel'shtam is an intermediary between this world and the world of shades; the daughter is perhaps Antigone leading her blind father Oedipus to his place of rest." I render *dochka* here as Kore, since Persephone is a girl Mandel'shtam mentions more often; and she belongs better to the milieu of psychopompoi and crossings of the Styx.

If one superimposes the poem of 1942 upon that of 1927, it expresses a heartfelt nostalgia that the mind's conscious knowledge of tyranny must refuse. Also, in roughly the first half of the poem the dactyl is very prominent [*i serdtse prósitsya, i serdtse méchetsyač tak i kátitsya óstroyu ósip'yu pód goru*, and so on]. In lines 44-47, Nabokov introduces and stresses [*Perechítite i ostanovites' na etikh strokakh*, "Reread and pause upon these lines"] an image of the magic Sirin bird, his old *nom de plume*, and the word *vol'shebnik*, "wizard", which is a partial anagram of his own name. The maker of magic, its own creature, is the poet himself: after the evil guest's discouraging words, the poet laughs, *i vnezapno s pera moi lyubimyi sletaet anapest*, "and at once from my pen nib a flight of my favorite anapaests rises"—and a reader, a body, and *slava* are all but an "empty dream" then. The work of the poet in its facets becomes itself transcendence: he is his words, Sirin-bird-bard.⁴⁶

The reversal of tone and sense, from lonely, despairing, and earthbound to exultant and soaring, is signified by a mirror-like

⁴⁶ At the end of the title poem of his collection *Chast' rechi* [A Part of Speech], Joseph Brodsky employs a mirroring play of which both English and Russian are capable in this case to express the idea that one informs, is informed by, and is part of the spoken word, especially when it is the bard's grammatically and rhetorically rigorous word: *Ot vsego cheloveka vam ostayotsya chast' rechi. Chast' rechi voobshche. Chast' rechi*. "What gets left of a man amounts/ to a part. To his spoken part. To a part of speech." In English, "spoken part" must resonate also with the "...poor player/ That struts and frets his hour upon the stage/ And then is heard no more"; mortal man, in the Scottish play, Act V, Scene vi. To understand fully Brodsky's conception of the sound of the poem itself as the immortal part of its maker and his ultimate expression, one must refer to the poem Alexander Genis calls Brodsky's *Pamyatnik: U vsego est' predel/ Gorizont—u trachka, u oshayan'ya—pamyat' dlya rosta— rasshirenie plech/ Tol'ko zvuk otdel'ya'sya sposoben ot tel/ Vrode prizraka, Tomas/ Sirotoivo/ zvuka, Tomas, est' reč!* "Everything has its limit/ The eye, the horizon; memory, for despair/ Height, one's shoulders squared/ Only a sound is capable of detaching itself from bodies/ Like a ghost, Tomas/ The orphanhood/ Of sound, Tomas, is speech!" (*Litovskii noktyurn*, XVIII, in *Uraniya*). This immortal speech, detached from the decaying flesh, is not repetitive, though, but unique: the verse Whitman declares in "O Me! O Life!" that each man may contribute to the eternal, powerful play.

reversal of meter itself: dactyl (§- -) to anapest (- - §).⁴⁷ The ability to see this world in the looking-glass is Nabokov's special gift, and liberation, and glory. At the end (lines 120-124) he stresses the image:

*No odnazhdy, plasty razumen'ya drobya,
uglublyayas' v svoyo klyuchevoe,
ya uvidel, kak v zerkale, mir, i sebya,
i drugoye, drugoye, drugoye.*

But one day while disrupting the strata of sense
and descending deep down to my wellspring
I saw **mirrored**, beside my own self and the world,
something else, something else, something else.

Nabokov's nightingale, his *slavii* of *slava*, is a bird who transports one through the looking glass and transforms the quotidian into the marvelous. But it is also *slovo*, the word itself, which shapes and is shaped by the poet; and sound alone is capable of detaching from this decaying flesh, sound carrying word into glory and immortality. Where Nabokov mentions the nightingale outright, he foregrounds it in punning and names it in a mirror-like etymologizing reversal, too:

⁴⁷ In *Strong Opinions*, 98, Nabokov declares, "I am as American as April in Arizona," a locution which "conceals and transforms so many clichés of American culture" (Elizabeth K. Beaujour, *Alien Tongues: Bilingual Russian Writers of the "First" Emigration*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989, 82). Since the Nabokovs used to go butterfly-collecting in the Western states every summer, it is not a dishonest declaration; but it clearly plays upon the expectation of "...as apple pie", and surprises one with the substitution by the strong spirant /z/ in the last word of the expected labial/liquid pattern (*April, apple, pie*) yet rounds the strophe poetically by echoing "American" with "Arizona". But the word American (- §- -) has a dactyl; Arizona (- - §-), an anapaest: so when Nabokov departs from the cliché for the exotic, liberated and liberating new vision, he uses this marker of a meter seeing itself in the mirror, and beholding something new, something else.

Among the animals that haunt our verse,
 that bird of bards, regale of night, comes first: scores of
 locutions mimicking its throat
 render its every whistling, bubbling, bursting, flutelike
 or cuckoolike or ghostlike note⁴⁸

Regale + night > nightingale, Ger. *Nachtigall*; bird/bard provides the association of the poet's craft and coin, *slovo* "word" and *slava* "glory", with *slaviisloveni*, "nightingale" to follow.

PALE FIRE

We have seen that Nabokov encoded through Horace, Derzhavin, and Pushkin his own bardic claim to glory in a footnote in his Commentary to the *Slovo o polku Igoreve* that discusses the unnamed author's equally furtive claim, made through the prelude describing Boyan, the nightingale of olden time. There is nothing new about such oblique contrivances: Virgil's seems a Pythagorean numerical puzzle.⁴⁹ Given the

⁴⁸ "An Evening of Russian Poetry," 1945, *Poems and Problems*, 160.

⁴⁹ Pythagoreans, and Platonic readers of the *Timaeus* thereafter, were interested in the *tetraktys*, a figure of 9 (i.e., 3x3) points plus one to make the perfect number 10. Virgil accordingly encodes himself in a triad of places into the *Aeneid*:

- 1) Spectator of one's own picture. Virgil declares Jupiter's covenant with—and decree of the future of—Rome, which divides into periods of 3+30+300 years, plus infinity (equal to the ineffable Unity), i.e., 3+3+3+1: *tetraktys*. This covers the events of the poem itself and shortly thereafter. In this early part of the book, Achaes and Aeneas arrive at Carthage and see their own past on a new bas-relief.
- 2) In Book VI in Hades, a vision only a bard can vouchsafe, Achaes runs past a relief of Icarus that is not there. So the bardic power of *ekphrasis* is stressed without the intervention of any picture at all. This is a second, more spiritual level of art. And indeed here it is decreed that others will be better painters and sculptors: Rome's genius is to be the higher *logos* of reason, expressed through Law.
- 3) Aeneas receives his shield, which portrays the future Empire. He delights in the pictures, understanding nothing of them, and takes up willingly the burden of his nation's future. This third experience of art,

importance Nabokov ascribed to form, one must consider the relation of his scholarly publications to his fiction. His extraordinary novel *Pale Fire* (1962) consists of an edition poem of 999 lines, the 1000th of which would have been identical to line one. Its author, John Shade, is a reflection and ghost: he does not live to write that last line, though we know what it is.⁵⁰ An Introduction and Commentary enclose the poem: the editor, Charles Kinbote, is himself a mirror-character. He is either the deposed king of a semi-Slavic, semi-Scandinavian country, Zembla; or he is the deranged Russian professor Botkin. He lives in a rented house. Its owner, a judge, may be stalked by an escaped criminal, Jack Gray; or else an assassin, Jacob Gradus (who himself has a mirror-double, Sudarg of Bokay, a master of—what else?—glassmaking), has been dispatched by the revolutionary régime to kill the king. Pekka Tammi argues that the “ready model” for *Pale Fire* is “the scheme of a scholarly edition adopted by Nabokov in his four-volume *Eugene Onegin* (1964), finished before the novel.” On its mirror-worlds, she observes, following Véra Nabokov, that “it may well be on the

reason and understanding. In these latter two instances Virgil expands with conscious metaphorical and artistic intent upon Homer's episode of Odysseus' descent to Hades and Thetis' delivery to Achilles of a new shield. And as for the numbers, see John Shade's poem in *Pale Fire*: 999 lines, plus one the author died before writing, but which we know!

⁵⁰ “I was the shadow of the waxwing slain/ By the false azure in the windowpane/ I was the smudge of ashen fluff—and I/ Lived on, flew on, in the reflected sky.” I wonder whether Shade's first vision, and his subsequent musings on objects reflected in the glass and seen as though deposited upon the ground outdoors, might owe something to one of Nabokov's favorite poets, Vladislav Khodasevich. This is *Berlinskoe* (“Berlin poem”: *Chto zh, ot oznoba i prostudy*), 14–24 Sept. 1922 (*Stikhotvoreniya*, [Biblioteka Poeta, Bol'shaya Seriya], Leningrad: Sovetskii Pisatel', 1989, 161, no. 175), in my tr.: “Well, then, for chill and cold/ There's cognac or hot grog./ Here's music, the clink of plates./ And a lilac sort of dusk./ And there, beyond the thick, big/ Polished glass,/ As though in a darkened aquarium./ A blue aquarium—/ Multi-eyed trams/ Swim between submarine lindens./ Like electric schools/ Of shining, lazy fish./ And there, slipping into the nighttime rot/ On the thickness of the alien glass/ In the carriage windows is reflected/ The surface of my table./ And, penetrating into a stranger's life/ Suddenly with disgust I recognize/ My lifeless, severed/ Head at night.”

ultimate indeterminacy of such questions (as whether Zembla exists or not any more than anything else in *Pale Fire* exists within an agreed reality—J.R.R.) that much of the joy of reading this novel hinges.” It is Nabokov’s tribute to Pushkin, his own 20th-century *roman v stikhakh*, “novel in verse”. Alexander Dolinin agrees, in his essay on Nabokov’s translation of *Eugene Onegin*, that “now and then the authorial persona of the commentary (on Pushkin—J.R.R.), not unlike the protagonist of *Pale Fire*, grows out of proportion and starts to supplant the reality of Pushkin and his novel by self-projections....” He suggests Nabokov intended the Commentary in *Pale Fire* to mimic the structure of that written for *Onegin*, “which, in his words, builds up the character of Pushkin ‘by means of ... digressions or brief interpolations, nostalgic yearnings, sensuous enchantments, bitter memories, professional remarks, and genial banter (II.170)’.”⁵¹ Nabokov uses all these discursive strategies to create a living, detailed picture of Pushkin’s work, reading, life and times. Kinbote, by contrast, employs the structure of the commentary on a text to write about himself and his perhaps delusional world of Zembla. Shade is a heterosexual, and the poem deals with his love for his wife Sybil and their grief over the suicide of their daughter, Hazel, which occurs at the exact midpoint of the poem. The commentator is homosexual, loathes Sybil, and is entirely indifferent to Hazel. He will typically take a single word out of context and use it as the pretext for a long footnote about palace intrigues or paederastic dalliances in Zembla. His motto might have been, “Only disconnect.”

Again, Nabokov, as we have seen, does the opposite in his own scholarly work: the short note to a long chunk of text in his Commentary on the *Song*, far from obscuring or distorting Boyan, places the ancient bard within a catena of poetic apologiae whose leitmotif is *slovo* and *slava*—and *slavii*, too. The *Song* deals with the epoch of the Varangian presence in

⁵¹ See Pekka Tammi, “*Pale Fire*,” in Vladimir E. Alexandrov, ed., *The Garland Companion to Vladimir Nabokov*, New York: Routledge, 1995, 571-586; here, 572, 575, and Alexander Dolinin, “*Eugene Onegin*,” in *The Garland Companion*, 117-130; here 126, 127.

Rus'; and one recalls the mixed Slavo-Scandinavian milieu of Zembla in *Pale Fire*. Could Nabokov's work on the *Song* have been as germane to the idea of *Pale Fire* as his work on *Onegin*, or perhaps even more so? Nabokov had loved the Igor' epic since his school days, and he studied it at Cambridge. He collaborated on a translation with Roman Jakobson and Marc Szeftel (the latter, Galya Diment has argued in her *Pniniad*, was perhaps the model for Pnin) through the late 1940's; and he put finishing touches to his work on the *Song* in Corral Log Cabins, Afton, Wyoming, in August 1952.⁵² Kinbote completes his work on Shade's poem at the fictional "Cedarn, Utana"—obviously an amalgam of Utah and Montana (Wyoming lies between them). One would expect this correspondence alone to have put Nabokov's chief biographer on the track of a link between *Pale Fire* and the *Song*; but in the index to Brian Boyd's monograph, *Nabokov's Pale Fire: The Magic of Artistic Discovery* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), I find no mention of *Slovo o polku Igoreve*.

But Priscilla Meyer, in her earlier study *Find What the Sailor Has Hidden: Vladimir Nabokov's 'Pale Fire'* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1988), had seen the influences plainly; she notes how Nabokov seeded *Pale Fire* with references to Norse literature in order to create Zembla and to reassert old Viking-Russian connections; she writes that Nabokov's commentary on the *Song* was "the literary-historical point of departure for *Pale Fire*," and she points out the note to line 681 in *Pale Fire* with its reference to the Zemblan forger of "a famous old Russian *chanson de geste*, generally attributed to an anonymous bard of the twelfth century." (One must keep in mind Nabokov's propensity to play hide-and-seek: since the forger belongs to the mirror-world of Zembla, in some hypothetical real world the *Chanson* is probably genuine!) As to *Onegin*, she recognizes its influence on *Pale Fire* and goes so far as to term Nabokov's study "a literary autobiography that

⁵² See Brian Boyd, *Vladimir Nabokov: The Russian Years*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990, 174 and n. 36; and *The American Years*, 1991, 219.

mimics a commentary."⁵³ But Meyer, who in her admirable work of scholarship found most of what the sailor had hidden, still did not unearth the *pamyatnik*: there are plenty of happy discoveries awaiting the attentive reader still. "Kinbote places himself," Meyer writes, "at the center of a series of circles focused on self rather than on the expanding universe that his scholarship should have revealed to him."⁵⁴ In his footnote on Boyan in the commentary to the *Song*, though, Nabokov renders homage to the poets of Russia, from the Slavonic bards to the 18th century to Pushkin, and on into the present time, their words ever alive and echoing, the holy words of poetic power radiating across the universe as if borne on the wings of eagles and sung by the birds of speech who regale the night.

We are perhaps some distance from a magic eagle *in illo tempore*, its power mastered by saints and their words of power in an Armenian spell. But the verses of the Russian Symbolist Nikolai Gumilyov belong to a kindred poetic culture and heritage of East Christian faith and Indo-Iranian-tinged myth. So one may catch both *slovo* and *slava*, in the charged primordial Word of Creation, *logos* and *mantra*, poem and prayer, that paralyzes an eagle and frightens the stars.⁵⁵

⁵³ Meyer, 41, 53, 55, 63, 140. John Lyons, "Pale Fire and the fine art of annotation," in L.S. Dembo, ed., *Nabokov: The Man and His Work*, Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1967, 157-164, points out the similarity of Nabokov's comment in *Onegin*, II, 79, that he is prevented by "a barbarous regime" from going to Leningrad to consult playbills in libraries to Kinbote's complaint in Cedarn that he has no access to a library and must quote references from memory. This seems to me only a very distant comparison. Afton, Wyoming is much closer to Cedarn than the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library. It is important also to stress that for Nabokov the American West, which he visited in the company of a loving family, was a place of beauty and continuous marvel. For Kinbote it is all misery and exile—and here, too, Kinbote is the antithesis, the mirror-opposite of his demiurge. Lyons does not seem to have recognized the influence of the *Song* in *Pale Fire*.

⁵⁴ Meyer, 96.

⁵⁵ N. Gumilyov, *Slovo* [The Word], *Tsikh poetov*, I, repr. Berlin: Izd. S. Efron, 1922, 15-16, tr. mine.

The Word

On the day when above the newly-made world
 God inclined His face,
 They used to make the Sun halt with the Word;
 By the Word cities were laid waste.

And the Eagle would not beat his wings,
 The Stars fled, clinging to the Moon,
 When, appearing as a rosy flame,
 The Word upon heaven sailed.⁵⁶

But for the lower life there were the numbers
 Like domestic animals harnessed to the plow.
 For the number, intelligent, conveys
 All of meaning's necessary shades.

The grey Patriarch, who had subdued
 Both good and evil 'neath his hand,
 Determined not to assay sound
 Engrossed the Number on the sand.

But we forgot the Word alone
 Shines in the midst of this world's woes:
 The Gospel according to St. John,
 The Word is God declared.

We fixed as its boundary
 Nature's mean limits, though:
 And like bees in an abandoned hive
 The words now dead smell foul.

⁵⁶ *I oryol ne vzmakhival krylami./ Zvyozdy zhalis' v uzhas k lune./ Esli, tochno
 rozovoye plamy./ Slovo proplyvalo v vyskine.*

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- fig. 1 Spell: *Gir am[enayn] čel gani* (*Urbatagirk*, Venice, 1512).
- fig. 2 Illustration of the wingless eagle on its leafless tree, with angel, from a *hmayil* [magic scroll] with the same spell. (F. Feydit, *Amulettes de l'Arménie Chrétienne*, Venice: San Lazzaro, 1986, fig. 89; from Bibliothèque Nationale MS 102).
- fig. 3 Tibetan wood-block engravings of Garuda conquering Nagas.
- fig. 4 Russian *lubok* of Il'ya of Murom and the Nightingale-Robber (B.N. Putilov, ed., *Byliny*, Leningrad, 1957, 80).



fig. 1



fig. 2



fig. 3



fig.4

AN ARMENOLOGICAL NOTE ON KARTĪR'S VISION.

By James R. Russell,
Harvard University,
Cambridge, MA

*Et'ē nkateal dimec'ic' i ver yamenagraw uṭin soskali
Hreštak k'o xatātut'ean k'aṭc'rut'eamb inj patahesc'ē.
C'oyc' inj, Tēr, i yelic'n awur šnč'oys arjakman,
Mak'rut'ean oḡi lusov ambarjeal i yerknaworac'n erĵankac'
Pargewawk' siroy k'oy ekeal haseal.*

“If I direct my gaze upwards, towards the fearsome road that takes all,
May your angel of peace meet me, in sweetness.
Show me, O Lord, on the day of departure and expulsion of my breath,
A spirit of purity arising in light from the midst of the joyous in heaven
Coming, reaching me, with the gifts of your love.”

St. Gregory of Narek, Armenia, 10th century.

The Zoroastrian high priest Kartīr left several epigraphic accounts of his visionary journey to the otherworld: much attention has been devoted to these texts, for they are unique in the Sasanian corpus and reflect an extraordinary situation in which the state religion responded to an existential challenge. The vision of Jāmāspa in the *Ayādgār ī Zarērān* and that described in the several recensions of the *Ardā Vīrāz Nāmag* are the sole parallels in the corpus of Middle Persian texts. I have suggested that Kartīr's spirit-journey was a reaction to similar miracles performed by his arch-rival, Mānī, whose new creed attracted the early Sasanian rulers of a polyglot empire because of its multi-confessional

claims (notably Christian and Buddhist) and its particular Gnostic refraction of Mazdean dualism. The mystico-ecstatic practices of both religious figures employ a sufficient number of features in common with those of Siberian, Mongolian, Thracian, and other shamanic systems that they can reasonably be categorized as shamanistic.¹ While definitions of shamanism may reasonably differ, affecting the scope of usage, there have been in the Iranian field characterizations of shamanism as “primitive” and thus inapplicable to the faiths of complex societies. These are sentimental rather than semantic objections— they have literally no scholarly meaning. One crux in the interpretation of Kartīr’s inscriptions is the Middle Persian expression *ēwēn mahr*. The first word can mean “a kind of”, or “ritual” (cf. the Armenian loan *awrēn(k’)* “custom, law”), or “mirror” (cf. New Persian *āyina*). It has recently been argued by Prof. Martin Schwartz on the basis of the latter reading that the ritual involved a kind of catoptromancy familiar from Egyptian, Hellenistic, and other forms of magic. That is not implausible, given the lecanomantic properties ascribed in Persian tradition to the Cup of Jamšēd, the *jām-e Jam*. The second word can mean “death” (<*mrθyu-, cf. Arm. l-w *ma(r)h*) or “sacred word, mantra” (Av. *maqθra-*, cf. Arm. l-w *margarē*, “prophet”, lit. “mantra-maker”). During his spirit’s absence the body of the righteous Vīrāz is treated with the taboos appropriate to a corpse; this is usual in shamanic beliefs and practices. Kartīr’s boy helpers would be familiar both to Late Antique magicians and to shamans of any period.

One has proposed that the repeated use in Kartīr’s inscription of the MPers. of the Avestan formula *humata, huxta, hvaršta* indicates that this was in fact the ritual mantra he used: the prayer *Vīspa humata* in fact affirms that the triad is salvific; and one might interpret the text to mean either that the good thoughts, words, and deeds are, or that the formula itself is. The very familiar and obvious character of the formula— to this day the commonest Persian souvenir is the “*fravašī*” symbol with the NPers. *pendār-e nīk, goftār-e nīk, kerdār-e nīk* inscribed above— conceals it, like the purloined letter.

Yet the formula, with its thrice-repeated initial *h-*, a strong expulsion of breath, would be conducive to the controlled and rhythmic ventilation helpful for inducing a trance state for the otherworld journey. The sound has semantic force by its association in Iranian with both “good” (*hu-*) and the verb *h-*, “to be”. One contributes additionally to the discussion a relevant formula from the Armenian dossier. The relevance of Armenian data to Iranian religion does not require argument; but to underscore the fact that Iranian religious culture is the *substratum* of Armenian Christianity, I have double-starred every lexical item, all or part of which is of unambiguously Iranian origin. The tenth-century theologian and mystic St. Gregory of Narek (Arm. Grigor Narekac‘i) compiled 95 meditative prayers into the ***Matean ołbergut‘ean*, “Book of Lamentation”. The prayers are intended to be recited aloud, at length and in tears, to induce a state of heightened religious feeling and of receptivity to the indwelling presence and outflowing grace of Christ. A preface to part

1- See J.R. Russell, “Kartīr and Mānī: a Shamanistic Model of Their Conflict” and “A Parthian *Bhagavad Gītā* and Its Echoes,” repr. in James R. Russell, *Armenian and Iranian Studies* [=AIS], Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies, 9, Cambridge, MA, 2004.

of the 33rd, for instance, explains that it is recited intensively as part of the ritual of the ***Patarag* ("Divine Liturgy", lit. "Offering") to enable the celebrant physically to behold the divine light descending upon the altar with the consecrated gifts: I have called this practice liturgical mysticism;² and it corresponds, *mutatis mutandis*, to the intensification of normal *halakhic* practice that Prof. Moshe Idel has illuminatingly discussed as one of the types of Jewish mysticism.³ Armenian folk tradition ascribes magical properties to the ***Matean*; and one who recites it uninterruptedly is supposed to acquire supernatural powers. From its very title it is evident that the text should provoke the emotional abreaction of tears. Though this aspect is alien to the Zoroastrian types of religiosity, the poetics Narekac'i deploys to bring one closer to God must be relevant nonetheless.

In chapter 3, God is evoked in a typical litany, of which several lines may be cited: *Amenap'ayl čaṛagayt'*, ***xostovaneal loys*,/ ***Antarakoys **vstahut'iwn*, *antartam **hangist*,/ *Anyeḷli knik'*, ***ansahmaneli tesil*, ***vkayael anun*,/ ***Čašak k'atc'rut'ean*, ***bažak berkrut'ean*,/ *Hastič' hogwoc' hac'*, ***awtar mt'ut'eanc' sēr*, *anerkbay **xostumn*,/ *Cackoyt' c'ankali*, *zgest ankaput*,/ *Awt'oc' baḷjali*, *zard **p'arac'*... "Universally shining ray, light confessed/ Undoubted certainty, resolute rest/ Unchanging seal, unbounded vision, witnessed name/ Taste of sweetness, cup of joy/ Creator, bread of souls, love alien to the tenebrous, unequivocal promise/ Desirable covering, raiment that cannot be stolen/ Shelter sought, adornment of glory..." The passage stresses divinity as a light, banishing darkness, to which one goes with speech and an emphasis on certainty — as in the soul's passage after death. God is the mystic's food, shelter, and clothing. The phrase emphasized in bold characters deserves special discussion: obviously, there are three repeated *h*'s, as in Kartīr's mantra. In Armenian, the prefix *h-*, from Iranian *hu-*, "good", is an intensifier: ***hskay*, "gigantic" (lit. "good and Scythian"), *hlu* "meek" (lit. "good and attentive"), ***hzawr* "mighty" (lit. "good and strong"), etc. So the repeated use of the letter can have a semantic overtone and emphasis as in Iranian. The use of a triad must evoke the Trinity, too. *Hastič'*, "creator, affirmer" from the vb. *astem* is a mediaeval — and probably accurate — *Volksetymologie* of *Astuac*, "God" and would thus represent God the Father; *hogwoc'*, gen. pl. of *hogi*, "soul", would refer to the Holy Spirit. *Hac'* (pronounced *hâts*, with final aspiration), refers to Our Lord Jesus Christ: the unmixed wine and unleavened bread become in the Mass His blood and flesh. The phrase acrophonically renders also the word for the Triune Christian God, *hAST hOgWoc' hAC' > ASTOWAC'(> / Astuac* (Arm. *ow* is the conventional scribal diphthong for *u*, which is now pron. /v/ before a vowel: /*Astvadz*/). There is no doubt that Narekac'i did this intentionally: in chapter 52.2 one finds the strophe *Ew and Hastotid mianal tēruni marmnoyd **čašakmamb* "And to be

2- See J.R. Russell, "Armenian Spirituality: Liturgical Mysticism and Chapter 33 of the *Book of Lamentation* of St. Grigor Narekac'i," repr. in *AIS*.

3- Keynote lecture, conference of the International Association for the History of Religions, 20 Sept. 2006, București, România. One acknowledges also the stimulating and groundbreaking discussion by Prof. Martin Schwartz, University of California, Berkeley, of the poetics of the *Gāthās* of Zarathuštra, both at the conference and in many conversations over the years. He has inspired and informed the way I read the *Narek*.

united to you, O Creator [i.e., God the Father], through the tasting of your body, O Lord [i.e., the Communion bread of God the Son]"; in his *Ban **xratu **vasn utit **hawatoy ew mak'ur varuc' arak'inut'ean* ("Logos of counsel on the orthodox faith and a pure and virtuous mode of life"), the economy of the wisdom of the Word of God is called *hac' i yerknic' ijeal kerakur hogwoc'* "bread come down from Heaven as the food of souls".⁴ Narekac'i's formula, found in a text meant to induce religious vision, has physical effect, phonetic and semantic marking, theological background and density, and poetic acrophony. It emerges from the sole — and principal — living *Chrétienté* of the Iranian world. This parallel from a related tradition of like poetic sophistication may at least strengthen the perception that, whether or not Kartīr's performance was done with mirrors and its drama heightened by catalepsy, his *ewēn mahr* was an Avestan ritual formula of three words, its sounds and meaning emerging from the fountainhead of Zoroastrian faith.

4- S. Grigor Narekac'i, *Matean otbergut'ean ew ayl erkasirut'iwnk'*, hazarameaki hratarakut'iwn, Ant'iliias: Tparan Kat'otikosut'ean Hayoc' Meci Tann Kilikioy [St. Gregory of Narek, *The Book of Lamentation and Other Works*, Millennium Edition, Antelias, Lebanon: Press of the Armenian Catholicate of the Great House of Cilicia], 2003, p. 683. There is a multilayered play in this clause on the consonants of ethereal *erkink'* "heaven", where the transcendent Father is, and earthly *kerakur* "food" — the bread of the Son. The Armenian ear hears with *erkink'* its partner, *erkir* — "earth". The words were originally conceived, it would seem, as halves of a whole, or as a pair, each containing the element of *erku* "two". *Kerakur*, itself a reduplicative form from the aor. stem *ker-* "eat", morphologically underscores duality; and phonetically it resumes and completes duality: kERaKUṛ> ERKU "two"!

THE RIME OF THE BOOK OF THE DOVE (*STIKH O GOLUBINOI KNIGE*): FROM ZOROASTRIAN COSMOLOGY AND ARMENIAN HERESIOLOGY TO THE RUSSIAN NOVEL.

By James R. Russell,
Harvard University.

PREFACE.

Some years ago the late Byzantinist Alexander Kazhdan noted with the typical lightness, even casualness, that makes his profound insight and encyclopaedic learning so delightful to read, that Vladimir Nabokov's ekphrastic description in *Ada* of a woman's face and body observes the formal canons of Byzantine prose.¹ Nabokov in an interview long before had slighted his own Byzantinism; and since the master often did such things to conceal his magician's hand and put all but his prized Good Reader off the track, one thought it imperative, on the very basis of his denial, carefully to uncover the mediaeval strata in his work. One had already examined in some detail in an earlier study Nabokov's employment of the ancient Russian epic of Prince Igor²; so when preparing a presentation of *Podvig* (translated as *Glory*), one noted with care the use of an image from another monument of the Slavic past, the old Russian poem of the Book of the Dove.³

1- KAZHDAN 1982, p. 116.

2- RUSSELL 2005.

3- The preliminary findings out of which this essay has grown were presented at a Mather House Seminar on Nabokov and subsequently in a lecture to the Literary Study Group in the Davis Center for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard on 11 April 2008. A magical trip to Great Novgorod in the summer of 2007 with my friend and generous host of many years, Oksana Fyodorovna Nikolskaia of St. Petersburg, inspired one's interest in Novgorodian traditions; and this study is dedicated to her. It is a pleasure to thank my old friend, the great scholar of Russian poetry Sonia Ketchian, for her invitation, and her co-chair Edythe Haber, whose own work on the folkloric elements of *Glory* have been a source of inspiration. Conversations with Dinsha Mistree of MIT and Daniel Schulte of Harvard College added to the pleasure of one's research. I am indebted also to Kirill Rets of the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, for his generous provision of texts and studies at the very outset, without which one's work would have

The spiritual ballad or poem (the Coleridgean “rime” works perhaps better in this case) on the *Book of the Dove* (Rus. *Golubinaia kniga*, *Stikh o golubinoi knige*) exists in a number of transcribed oral variants, most of which were collected in northern and northwestern Russia—emanating most likely from Great Novgorod. “Dove” (*golub*’) in the name, referring presumably to the Holy Spirit, may have been a *narratio facilior* for an original “depth” (*glub*’, hence **Glubinnaia kniga*), since the poem relates the deep secrets, that is, the ones that concern cosmology. A great book falls from Heaven and the first Christian monarch of Rus’, Prince Vladimir, asks King David to read it. But it is sealed; so David, answering Vladimir’s questions, tells him from memory of what is in the book concerning the “mothers” and “fathers”—the chiefs—of various creations. This first and longest part of the poem is a question and answer list. Then David explains a dream Vladimir has had: it is the primordial struggle between *Pravda* (“truth, straightness”) and *Krivda* (“falsehood, crookedness”). The former won and reigns in Heaven; so the Lie reigns on earth till the end of days. With this second part the poem ends; and were one simply to reverse the order of the two parts, they would comprise a fair summary of the contents of the Zoroastrian book of Creation (*Bundahišn*), also called *Zand āgāhīh*, “Knowledge of the *Zand*”: *Zand* is the interlinear translation and commentary in the Middle Persian or Pahlavi vernacular on the sacred text of the Avestan scriptures.

Lists are common in ancient texts and in early and late oral literature, cosmology is an important concern of Jewish and Christian canonical and apocryphal texts (as particularly profound knowledge and a potential source of heresy it aroused anxiety and the orthodox tried to keep it secret), and the cosmic dualism of good and evil in Iranian religion left a passing impression on Second Temple Judaism but an indelible imprint upon nascent Christianity. With those caveats, the specificity of the Book of the Dove still suggests an Iranian source; and in the Byzantine period the route of transmission would have been Armenia; its vector, the oral teachings, transmitted by itinerant preachers and minstrels, of the adherents of heterodox sects. The fifth-century divine Eznik of Kolb in his *Refutation of the Sects* (Arm. *Elc alandoc*’; Western editors and translators have preferred to designate the text *De Deo*) provides an account of the Zoroastrian dualist cosmology based in part on the accounts of earlier Syriac and Greek writers but also on the presumably oral narratives of local Zoroastrians in Armenia itself. Focussing on the idea that the Lie holds sway in this world, he noted scornfully that although Mazdeans and Manichaeans professed enmity towards each other, they were really the same. As Christianity took hold, the older religion went underground and lost social status: in the eighth century Yovhannēs Mayragomec’i in a series of homilies attacked the *gusan-k*’ “minstrels” and *xelkatak-k*’ “jongleurs” who had once been the living books and theatre of the royal court, as disseminators of pagan and obscene doctrines. Zoroastrianism maintained for many centuries a shadowy existence in Christian Armenia: in Armenian communities of Anatolia, from Mardin in the remote southeast to Merzifun in the Turcophone west, the little community

progressed far more slowly; and to Professor Valentina Izmirlieva of Columbia University, whose brilliance and learning have shamed me into making this article much longer than it was intended to be. I owe special thanks to Rebecca Stengel, Michael Grossman, and Sgt. Martin Fay: three guardian angels.

of the *Arewordik*⁴, the Children of the Sun, survived down to modern times;⁴ whilst the country became the source of various heresies branded by the Church as Manichaean that spread west to the Balkans to become the teaching of the Bogomils and Cathars. There may be specifically Armenian folk and mythological elements in the Rime of the Book of the Dove that could attest to such a vector of transmission from Iran, across Byzantine Anatolia, and into the Balkans. Should the doctrines in the Book of the Dove have been thus transmitted to southeastern Europe, the *kaleki perekhozhie* “itinerant blind minstrels” and *skomorokhi* “jongleurs”, whose activities and position in Kievan Rus’ can be closely compared, *mutatis mutandis*, to those of their Armenian counterparts, brought the poem to Russia. Old Russian apocryphal literature contains unusual, striking Iranian features attesting to a reception of Zoroastrian material; so in context the suggestion that the Book of the Dove has an Iranian component should not require special pleading.

Although the minstrels and their art seem to have suffered suppression in the south of the country (the Ukrainian *dumy*, however, retaining something of the tradition), the Book of the Dove, and the great corpus of *byliny*, “ballads”, survived in the freer conditions of the republic of *Velikii* (“Great”) Novgorod and in the Russian north. There may be connections of some traditions about submarine kingdoms in the Book of the Dove (perhaps Armenian, and related to Zoroastrian concepts of a world-sea as well), to the cycle of *byliny* about the Novgorodian minstrel Sadko. The epic poem *Slovo o polku Igoreve*, “Song of Igor’s Campaign”, which deals with the war of 1185 fought by Rus’ against the invading Polovtsy, is the great monument of ancient Russian literature in the south. The spiritual songs and ballads are the corresponding treasure of the north; and the latter half of this study deals with the use of this tradition in the work of the great twentieth-century Russian-American poet, novelist, and literary scholar Vladimir Nabokov. Nabokov was born in St. Petersburg and read Slavonic studies as a student at Cambridge following his family’s flight from Russia after the Revolution. He worked for decades on the Igor’ epic, and published a translation and commentary in 1960 in which he underscored the similarity of the work to *Ossian*. At the time most readers still shared the views of Samuel Johnson, who had dismissed the latter as a forgery—it is now generally accepted that Macpherson in fact recast much traditional, oral material in the language of late 18th-century Romanticism—and some scholars still doubt the authenticity of the Igor’ epic. Nabokov presciently considered the similarities between the two works as an indication of *Ossian*’s authenticity, though in the novel *Pale Fire* (1962) he plays upon the possible falsity of both epics as part of the larger theme of mirror worlds and contingent realities.

In both his commentary on the Igor’ epic and *Pale Fire*, Nabokov just as importantly perceived—and, in the novel, proceeded to construct by means of fictional Zembla—a cultural bridge spanning the Baltic and North Seas, linking Britain and Russia, northern

4- See the final chapter of RUSSELL 1987(a); on the endurance of Armenian sectarian communities in Western Anatolia down to modern times, see RUSSELL 1995-1996, on Bob Lion (b. Aslanian) a self-described Paulician born in Divrig (Gk. Tephrikē), the town that had been in Byzantine times the stronghold of the movement.

Russia in particular. There seem to have been two motivations for this, aside from the considerations of literary-historical scholarship: the first is the desire of the exile to transcend the barrier between himself and his homeland. Clandestine, even magical returns to Russia, or imaginary countries like the *Estoty* of Ada that de-Sovietize Russia and rejoin it to the free world, are a perennial theme in Nabokov's work and belong to the general concerns of the émigré intelligentsia. The second is more particular: the tendency of Western intellectuals to accept tyranny in Russia as practically a law of nature enraged Nabokov, not only because as a true liberal who believed in the absolute universality of human and civil rights he recognized the pernicious falsehood of such smug cultural relativism. He also knew that such views of Russia were superficial, and failed to take into account both the ancient republican traditions of Novgorod and of other places in his beloved Russian north and the vigorous democratic culture of the pre-Revolutionary Russian opposition that the Bolsheviks distorted, presented as their own, and largely destroyed. So in his novel of 1932 *Podvig* (lit. "campaign, [heroic] exploit", which he translated as "Glory"; *Romanticheskii/Zolotoi vek* "The Romantic/Golden Age" were other working titles) the maternal surname of the hero, Martin, is Indrikov. In the Book of the Dove the father or mother of all beasts is the *indrik*—a debased form of *edinorog*, "*monokeros*, unicorn". There is no question that Nabokov knew this work at least as well as the Igor' epic: it was very popular, and most existing editions and studies of it belong to the mid- and late nineteenth century. It is the topic of Alexander Blok's first important poem; and Viacheslav Ivanov wrote a short poem about it in 1915.⁵ The theatrical set designer and painter Nicholas Roerich, who lived just down Bol'shaia Morskaia street from the Nabokovs in St. Petersburg, produced two paintings called "The Book of the Dove" illustrating the themes of the poem. So the Book of the Dove is a poem whose echoes and reflections in graphic art Nabokov might well have encountered in his youth, even before fleeing Russia. The cosmology of the Book of the Dove is viably alternative to the canonical one and undeniably heretical—on both counts it breathes the air of liberty and of that freedom of the imagination particularly dear to an artist. The novel *Glory* itself was slighted by the critics upon publication, for its blandness of theme and flatness of form; but it would seem that the author employed such shortcomings deliberately, in order to evoke the background of the banality and limitation of life in exile in which Martin suffers. Just as the fabulous *indrik*, a creature belonging to heroic and mythological time, can travel through the hidden deep caverns of earth, purifying the waters, so Martin, kind and pure of heart, a hero lost in a world without nobility, will travel clandestinely to his mythologized Russia, only to be killed. The Book of the Dove belongs, not only to the ancient stratum of Russian culture in which Nabokov grounds his character again the dreary present, but also to the traditions of freedom for which Martin, with noble disregard for his own safety, will fight, a knight of the golden age.

5- MUR'IANOV 1996.

1.

The poem on the mythical *Golubinaia kniga* was early recognized as special and unusual in the corpus of Russian folk poetry.⁶ Jagić called it the “pearl of the Russian mythological epic”; M.V. Trofimov, who accepted the “dove” as a *narratio faciliior*, called it “The Lay of the Deep [i.e., *glubinnoi*] Book” and suggested vaguely (but in my view, correctly) that there were “Iranian and other mythological parallels” in it, especially in the questions and answers about the whale (Rus. *kit*).⁷ Those parallels were noted, negatively: though a version of the poem exists in the collection of Kirsha Danilov (probably Siberia, 18th century, most likely collected from a settler of North Russian origins), Kallaidovich omitted it from his publication of Danilov’s MS because he regarded of “the crude mixture in it of the Christian and pagan” (*grubago smesheniya v nei khristianskago i yazycheskago*).⁸ In Scripture, the Wisdom of Solomon 7.17-20 declares that God has given “knowledge that is not lying about things that are, to comprehend the components of the world and the action of natural forces” (*o sushchikh poznanie ne lozhnoe poznati sostavlenie mira i deistvie stikhii*); and 3 Kings 4.33 enumerates the topics of Solomon’s books. A probable Christian source that exerted influence on the shaping and contents of the poem, discussed at length by Mochul’skii, is the popular apocryphon “Discourse of the Three Prelates” (*Beseda trëkh sviatitelei*); and another source, belonging like the Book of the Dove to the genre of question-and-answer, is “The Questions of John the Theologian on Mount Tabor” (*Voprosy Ioanna Bogoslova na gore Tavorskoi*). In the *Beseda*, the list of questions answered includes the first worshipper of God (Enoch), the first to study a book (Methuselah), the first builder of a church (Solomon), the first Patriarch of Jerusalem (Jacob), and the first archdeacon (Stephen). The places, people, and animals that are *chiefs* of their categories in Creation is a special concern of the Book of the Dove; and the *Beseda* deals with this. As for the other peculiarities of the poem, such as the explanation of the existence of truth and falsehood, Speranskii suggested they derive “from... some ‘Book of Creation’, but not a canonical one, that has not come down to us” (*iz... kakoi-to ne doshedshei do nas “knigi Bytiia”, no ne kanonicheskoi*), the apocrypha of Adam, etc. In the view of N.S. Tikhonravov, the battle described in the Rime between Truth and the Lie—*Pravda* and *Krivda*— with accompanying speculation about the beginning and end of days, reflects a general anxiety in 15th-century Russia about the impending seventh, “sabbatical” millennium.⁹ While it is undoubtedly the case that apocrypha (Rus. *otrechënnnye knigi*) were such a major source, as in other Eastern Christian folk cultures, the formulation is still somewhat vague.¹⁰ The argument from millenarianism for a presumptive *terminus* for the poem seems weak also, since preoccupation with the apocalypse is a perennial con-

6- For two representative variants in complete English translation, see Texts 1.1 and 1.2, appended hereto.

7- TROFIMOV 1915, pp. 74, 79.

8- SPERANSKII 1917, p. 25.

9- SPERANSKII 1917, p. 372.

10- SPERANSKII 1917, pp. 371-372.

cern of Christian literature; and texts of an esoteric nature in particular are rife with such cosmological secrets.¹¹ It has been proposed that a more secure and plausible *terminus ad quem* in the early 16th century may be provided by the mention of the White King (*Belyi Tsar* ' in most all variants of the text: he is in all probability the Muscovite Basil III.¹²

The structure of the Rime may be analyzed in five parts: 1. The Book appears, in most versions falling from heaven in a storm. 2. People gather around the book in hierarchical order: kings, princes, nobles, and peasants: some versions add the minstrel-reciters (*kaleki*) themselves to the list. 3. One of the nobles, usually the first Christian ruler of Rus', Prince Vladimir of Kiev, questions— rather anachronistically!— the “king most wise (*premudryi tsar* '), David son of Jesse”, on the contents of the book; and David says the book is sealed and too heavy to lift besides, but he will speak of it from “memory of old”. 4. Vladimir asks David about how the world came into being, and what its chief geographical features and creations are. David answers the questions. 5. Vladimir has had a dream of two hares or other beasts, one gray, one white, fighting (in a few versions, the contestants are two youths); and he asks David to interpret it. David explains that this is the primordial battle between Truth (*Pravda*) and the Lie (*Krivda*). In most versions Truth wins and claims Heaven; so the Lie is left to rule the earth, hence the human predicament of lawlessness and injustice. In a few variants, though, it is the Lie that defeated (*odolela*) Truth and will therefore rule the world till the apocalypse. Either way, the Lie holds sway over our world for the term of its present existence, and Truth is enthroned in Heaven.

The body of the poem— the numbingly repetitive fourth part— is essentially a list in question and answer form. This is an appropriately ancient form of revelation: in his Hymns (*Gāthās*, *Yasna* 44) the Prophet Zarathustra addresses such a list of cosmological questions to the Creator God Ahura Mazdā. Unlike in the poem of the Book of the Dove, the answers are not recorded (presumably since the questions are rhetorical and anticipate the response “I did”). But Zoroastrian tradition still affirms that God and the Prophet spoke together,¹³ and their colloquy is called the *spəntō frašnā* “holy questions”. Though

11- A good example of the ubiquity of the millenarian theme is the category of Armenian mathematico-magical literature that goes under the name of *Vec' hazareak*, “The [Book of] the Six Thousand”, six millennia being considered the term of duration of this world. It is possible that St. Mesrop Maštoc', the inventor of the Armenian alphabet, was interested himself in Pythagorean mathematics and Christian eschatology, since one way of writing 6000 using the letters is *zr*, i.e., 6x1000, the two letters being the 6th and 28th ordinally, and, thus, both rare perfect numbers as well (the other way is the letter *c* = 6000). This could be the “great treasure hidden in Armenia” of which Anania Širakac'i, 7th century, to whom is attributed the first mathematical table called *Vec' hazareak*, spoke in a suitably guarded and cryptic manner: see J.R. Russell, “Maštoc' the Magician,” forthcoming in S. La Porta and T. Van Lint, eds., *Festschrift* for Michael Stone, forthcoming; and RUSSELL 1989 with refs.

12- MOCHUL'SKII 1887, p. 368. Here too, though, one must be cautious, since “white” became at some undetermined point a standing epithet of the Russian monarch in folk poetry and by itself is no indicator of the age of a text. In the folk song *Kak vo gorode vo Ustiuzhine* (“Once upon a time in Ustiuzhin town”) peasants flee to the forests to escape the cruelties of serfdom and send a petition to the “white Orthodox tsar” — in St. Petersburg, a city founded centuries after Basil's reign! (See REEDER 1993, pp. 9, 107.)

13- For instance, in the Zoroastrian credo, the *Fravarānē*, *Yasna* 12.6: *aθā aθā čōiθ Zaratuštrō daēvāiš sarəm vyāmrvītā vīspaēšū frašnaēšū vīspaēšū hanjamanaēšū, yāiš apərəsaētam Mazdāsčā Zaratuštrasčā...*

it is certainly true for some genres of the Hellenistic period that “an organized thematic list is the result of a scholarly way of thinking”, and thus reflects a literate sophistication,¹⁴ it is equally true that a list can be pre- or non-literate. For it is just as much the soul of oral literature to employ a list, whether as a bardic *tour de force* like Homer’s catalogue of ships in the *Iliad*, or simply in fulfillment of the necessary function of encyclopaedic transmission of knowledge that oral literature had to serve before writing and the consequent creation of archives and other forms of storage and retrieval of knowledge, or both.¹⁵ The list is not only *Listwissenschaft*, that is, a kind of genre reflecting the ordered thinking and erudition of its author; it provides a pattern of order with which the reader or listener can structure his world-view and activity. An audience that accords authority and social recognition to the reciter of such a list whose contents are of importance— of religious, cosmological significance, in the case of the Rime— are investing him with their trust, a kind of “fiduciary capital” on which they expect a profitable return: the creation of a social reality for them that works. In the tradition of Eastern Orthodoxy, the exemplar for the genre of the list is the Pseudo-Dionysian corpus, with its enumeration, for example, of the angelic orders. Another salient feature of Christian *Listwissenschaft*, of relevance to the Rime of the Book of the Dove studied here, is what Prof. Valentina Izmirlieva calls Biblical onomatocentrism, an obsession with the magically powerful names of God and their localization to Jerusalem and its Temple.¹⁶

In the case of the Book of the Dove, the list is recited, but its source— the Book itself— is placed at an additional remove from the audience: the great tome remains sealed, its tantalizing mysteries thus both concealed and imparted,¹⁷ and king David must oral-

“Just as Zarathustra anathematized association with the demons at all questionings, at all meetings, at which Mazda and Zarathustra conferred [so I do the same].”

14- COHEN 2000, pp. 55-66: the author notes Hellenistic lists of the famous or best representatives of categories including lawgivers, painters, sculptors, architects, wonders of the world, large islands, the highest mountains, the greatest rivers and seas, etc.; the lists might be more narrowly curious, as for example those of Hygienus in Latin, 2nd cent., on people who ate their sons at a meal, others who were eaten by dogs, and others still who were crushed by a boar.

15- BERMAN 2007, esp. pp. 74-76, points out that with the invention of writing there becomes possible differentiation in the functions of literature: it is no longer burdened, as when limited to orality, with the necessary function of serving as a factual historical record and encyclopedia of transmissible knowledge.

16- See IZMIRLIEVA 2008, pp. 7-8, 27.

17- The allure of secret knowledge would have been a powerful aspect of the popularity of the Rime. Here is a practical and striking example of how secrecy and mystery can operate: After the American Civil War, several soldiers of the Confederacy formed a band they named the Ku Klux Klan (from Gk. *kyklos*, “circle”)— a terrorist organization whose aim was the restoration of slavery. The KKK was linked most notoriously to the crime of lynching; but there is in fact no correlation between the number of recorded lynchings and the growth of Klan membership. The major draw of the organization for new recruits was the attraction of secret passwords, tokens of recognition, rituals and liturgical terminology, and the like; and when, thanks to the efforts of a Southern dissident named Steven Kennedy the KKK was infiltrated and its diverse mysteries were broadcast on national radio, applications for membership plummeted. It was the trappings of secrecy, more than its actual power, from which the Klan acquired its glamour and terror. See LEVITT AND DUBNER 2006, p. 58. It is thus interesting that the Rime of the Book of the Dove manages to deploy the attraction of secrecy while at the same time revealing at least some of the

ly recount its contents from “old” memory. The action of transmission and reception is likewise placed at one remove from the audience: instead of the minstrel imparting the mysteries of the Book of the Dove to the audience directly, he reports king David doing so to prince Vladimir and his host, who are themselves arranged, as noted above, in an orderly, hierarchical list, from nobility down to peasantry. In the systematic listing of features of sacred geography and of the aspects of Creation, Biblical toponyms predominate: Jerusalem and mount Zion there, mount Tabor of the Transfiguration to the north, the river Jordan of the Baptism of Our Lord, and so on. Some *onomata mystica* heighten the esoteric appeal of the list: the stone *alatyr* (“altar”), the beast *indrik* (“unicorn”), the bird *strafil* (“ostrich”).¹⁸ Yet there are also some Russian *loci* and features connected to the sacred aspects of Scripture and the Land of Israel: though Ocean is the greatest of seas, the greatest lake is Il’men’ (although a lake of the same name in the Holy Land, perhaps Tiberias, seems here to be the prototype of the historical Il’men’ of Great Novgorod). And the greatest of kings is not David or Solomon, but the White Tsar. And in the Rime, Moscow is not the Third Rome—Russia is the new Holy Land itself. So the curious feature of placing both information and imparter at one remove in the narrative strategy of listing in the rhyme may be intentional, paralleling the two planes of sacred phenomena themselves—Biblical, in the background, and Russian, in the foreground where the actual audience are. Thus, the Rime transforms the Orthodox genre of the listing-ballad, with its Biblical and Pseudo-Dionysian material, from straightforward enumeration to a third-person narrative, with the superaddition of non-Biblical mythological material.

It is reasonable to suggest that the poem of the Book of the Dove may be indebted in equal measure to the sources in apocryphal written literature studied by Mochul’skii, Veselovskii, and others, and to others in oral tradition reflected in written accounts of sectarians and their teachings, in its employment of question and answer and its conveyance of knowledge in lists. Though much of the material in these lists is clearly to be explained from sources within Christian tradition, there are other aspects that have specifically Zoroastrian affinities; and the closest correspondences are to the Mazdean cosmology as described by non-Iranian informants in the Sasanian era (*ca.* fifth century A.D.), principally the Armenian Eznik of Kolb (see Text 3 *infra*), and the two principal sources of ancient Iranian cosmology: the Hymns of Zarathustra and the Middle Persian (Pahlavi) book of Creation, the *Bundahišn* (see Text 2.2). The latter begins—rather than ending, as here—with an account of the primordial contest between the forces of good and evil. The account of that battle in the Middle Iranian text does not allude to its having been seen in a dream-vision, as is the case with Prince Vladimir; but Zarathustra’s own revelation in the *Gāthās* (*Yasna* 30: see Text 2.1) of the battle, and of the beginnings of the dualistic cosmos, specifies this. It is difficult indeed to imagine how a human being might otherwise than in a dream or the like be witness to cosmogonic events; but when both dream and

“mysteries” supposedly locked beneath seven seals!

18- That is, *strufokamil*, OCS. *str’kokamil*; some variants have instead the Phoenix.

dualism are mentioned together, one is justified in proposing the great revelatory moment of Iranian scripture as an ultimate source. That is, there may be intermediary oral and written teachings both, interposed between the written teachings of the Persian books and the oral narratives of the Russian *kaleki*,¹⁹ but the closing of the Book of the Dove strongly suggests that the Iranian cosmogony is a principal substratum.

The question of transmission of a text that may have such distant and non-Christian roots is of obvious importance: how did a modified Iranian cosmology reach northern Russia? One proposes this route: features of the cosmological teachings of the *Bundahišn* and related material, principally “Zurvanite”, from northwestern Zoroastrian Iran, reach Armenia in the Sasanian period. After the fall of the Sasanians, the Armenian Paulician and T’ondrakite sectarians learn it from local Armenian Zoroastrians, the Children of the Sun, and incorporate aspects into their own speculations. As they migrate into the Balkans, the material reaches the Slavic, Bogomil milieu. It is carried north by minstrels belonging to the sect into Kievan Rus’— and the remoter its bearers from Orthodox and imperial authority, the more of it, and the more detail, survives. The Rime was chanted by itinerant *kāleki*, that is, blind minstrels, cripples (*kalēki*; a proposed derivation from Latin *caligae*, “boots”, seems unnecessary, though a loan from that term also exists in Russian),²⁰ evoked by Radishchev as the paupers for the sake of Christ who recited also such standard narratives of Christian folk literature as the *Life* of Alexis the Voluntary Pauper. It is worthwhile to note that Armenian Christian *gusans*, “mistrrels”, also recited this popular *Vita*. The Assyrian Aramaic novel that became a Biblical apocryphon— the Wisdom of Aḥiqar— was also very popular in Armenian folk literature, so much so that *xikar* became a common adjective meaning “wise”.²¹ In Russia, again, the precepts of *Akir premudryi* (i.e., “Aḥiqar the most wise”: note that the same epithet is used of David in the Rime) were well known. So material coming into Christian Russia from Christian Armenia would have been anything but an exotic and alien importation to be greeted with hesitation— rather, it was entering a familiar, even kindred milieu offering no barriers to its reception and assimilation. Although the Russian minstrels and their corpus were studied at first hand only in the last two centuries, these *kaleki* are known from as far back as the eleventh century, when they were organized into traveling bands (*druzhiny*): the greatest of Russian folklorists and philologists of the pre-Revolutionary period, A.N. Veselovskii,

19- Such intermediary texts colored by contact with the Iranian cosmogony might include, for example, the *Poimandres*— the Pymander of the Middle Ages— in the *Corpus Hermeticum*. The narrator begins by describing how once when his thinking soared and his bodily senses were restrained, as in one heavy with sleep, an infinite being called Poimandres appeared to him and answered his request to know the things that are, their nature, and God by granting him an endless vision of clear and joyful light in which then darkness arose separately. See COPENHAVER 1992, p. 1. Though the text combines Egyptian (the enigmatic name Poimandres may be a Hellenization of the Coptic *p-eime nte-Rē* and mean “intelligence of [the sun god] Ra”, see KINGSLEY 1993), Neoplatonic, and other elements, the effect of what is most likely an Iranian-inspired *incipit* is palpably dramatic.

20- See VASMER 1953, vol. I, pp. 508-509, s.v. From the frontispiece illustration, Plate 1 *infra*, to the work of Bezsonov on the *kāleki*, it is clear they were blind— *kalēki*.

21- See RUSSELL 1987(c), Ch. 6 on Alexi(ano)s; on *xikar*, 64 n. to line 31.

proposed that they were originally itinerant Bogomil preachers; and Anichkov, in agreement, compared them to Western analogues with Cathar connections, the jongleurs who accompanied pilgrims and sang the *chansons de geste*, to which he likened the Russian *byliny*.²² There is no reason to contest these arguments, and none has been advanced: the present study supports them.

The Bogomil heresy arose, evidently in part on Anatolian, Armenian foundations, in the Balkans: following the migrations of Slavs into the region in the 6th and 7th centuries, the Byzantine emperor Constantine V Copronymus beginning in 759 sent Paulician colonists to settle in Thrace, on the western approaches to the imperial capital. The Paulician heresy was Armenian in origin; and there is strong evidence that some adherents of the sect lived in its ancient center, Tephrikē (Tk. Divriği), down to the outbreak of World War I and the Armenian Genocide. Anatolia since Achaemenian times had been steeped in Iranian religion and cultural tradition; and although the Hellenization and Christianization of the region led to the extinction of most of the indigenous languages,²³ and to the severe diminution of the local Zoroastrian communities, there is documentary evidence of the survival of small communities of adherents to the Iranian faith—and it is quite possible that much more escaped written notice, as the pressure of Church and Caliphate necessitated a clandestine worship.²⁴ So in the 4th century St. Basil of Caesarea described the *magousaioi*, i.e., “Magians” of Cappadocia as worshipping Zarnouas, i.e., *Zurvān*. It is noteworthy that both practitioners of the faith, and Christians describing it, in the Sasanian period afford prominence to the god of infinite Time; for evidence of Iranian religion in the far north of Russia reflects the same emphasis. Zoroastrian Armenians at Marsovan (Tk. Merzifun), T’lkuran, and elsewhere in Anatolia who called themselves *Arewordik*’, “Children of the Sun”, endured down to modern times; so such sectarians and non-Christians would have preserved cosmological myths of precisely the kind reflected in the poem of the Book of the Dove.²⁵ Though the T’ondrakite heresy, a successor in many ways to the Paulicians, possessed a written text, the Armenian *Banali čšmartut’ean*, “Key of Truth”, *Arewordi* doctrines were passed on by word of mouth. The bards and minstrels of ancient Armenia bore the Iranian designations *gusan* (“reciter”) and *xelkatak* (“jester”). In recent centuries the term *ašul*, from Arabic *‘ašūq*, cf. Tk. *aşık*, “lover”—for that subject is the principal burden of his songs—has replaced *gusan*. And in polemical sermons of the 8th century these secular entertainers are reviled as propagators of pagan and heretical doc-

22- SOLOSHCHENKO AND PROKOSHIN 1991, pp. 7, 14, 17.

23- See the chapter “Eve of the Turkish Conquest” in VRYONIS 1971; and HOLL 1908.

24- In my research, I learnt of the survival down to 1915 of the Armenian Zoroastrian “Children of the Sun” only because a French Armenian woman responded by letter to my call for information in the Paris paper *Yaraj* “Forward”; just as fortuitously, an Armenian friend in San Diego happened to know a nonagenarian Paulician named Bob Lion (*né* Aslanian), whom I interviewed shortly before his death. Yet it would seem the reasonable norm for discoveries of religious tradition kept deliberately secret to have this fortuitous aspect.

25- On the Paulician survivals, see RUSSELL 1997; on the *Arewordik*’, RUSSELL 1987(a).

trines.²⁶ Though these invectives are attributed to the 5th-century Catholicos Yovhannēs Mandakuni, it is more likely that they belong to the pen of Yovhannēs Mayragomec‘i, who lived three centuries later—just at the time, that is, when Paulicians were posing a real threat to the Empire and some of them were settling in Thrace to seed the nascent Bogomil religion.

The heretical views of the Bogomils of the Balkans exhibit an overtly dualist flavor; and one dualist cosmological myth entered the Slavonic and Romanian apocryphal literature, most likely by the vector of Bogomil minstrelsy. According to it, an ornithomorphic Satanael (usually a duck, Russian *gogol’*) dove to the bottom of the primal sea to fetch the grain of earth from which God might create the world. The myth is found in various forms among the Finno-Ugrian peoples of Russia who live in contact with the dominant East Slavic population: in Cheremis myth the diving duck is named Keremet, younger brother of the highest god, Yuma. Keremet also makes the mountains. This detail is of interest: in the Zoroastrian cosmology, the primordial earth was a flat disk riding upon the waters in the stony cosmic egg. When Ahreman attacked from beneath, the earth fled; and the funnel-like area voided became hell, while the displaced earth formed the ring of mountains to stabilize the shaking earth. Keremet’s role may be a distant echo of that part of the cosmogony. Although dualist systems possibly independent of Iranian influence existed in both the ancient Balkans and, it would seem, in Siberia, it is at any rate certain that they furnished a substratum hospitable to the reception of subsequent Zoroastrian and Manichaean ideas.²⁷ So it is noteworthy that in the Cheremis version the evil spirit is the younger brother of the supreme god, cf. the relationship of Ahreman and Ohrmazd in the 5th-century Armenian version presented by Eznik of Kolb of the “Zurvanite” Iranian cosmogony. Eznik also mentions another aspect of the cosmological myth that is not preserved in the Zoroastrian canon but is derided in a Middle Persian Manichaean hymn as having been part of it: that a demon named Māhmī heard from Ahreman how to create light—by the performance of consanguineal intercourse—²⁸ and betrayed the knowledge to Ohrmazd (see Text 2.2 and n.).²⁹ Compare God’s inability to create the earth without Satanael’s help! These details point to a specifically Zoroastrian influence, whatever the pre-existing dualism that might have served as a hospitable substrate for the narrative. A.N. Veselovskii’s remarks on this score are instructive: “Let us first of all dismiss any ap-

26- See MANDAKUNI 1860, esp. *Vasn arbec ‘olac’ anawrēnut ‘eanc’* “On the lawlessnesses of drunkards” and *Vasn anawrēn t’aterac’ diwakanac’* “On the lawless theaters of the demonic ones”. To a certain degree the Christian accusations of paganism against secular entertainers are stereotypical: Soviet Armenian anti-clerical scholarship tended to take Ps.-Mandakuni at face value, elevating the *gusans* to the stature of folk heroes in a class war; but non-Soviet scholars perhaps exaggerate in the opposite direction by failing adequately to appreciate the survivals of Iranian religion in Armenia of which oral entertainment was a vector, and thus according too little credence to the literalism of his statements.

27- On the Balkan data, see STOYANOV 2000, pp. 128-133.

28- That is, the Zoroastrian *xvaētyadāba-*: the practice endured until recent times in the Parsi community of India, and in remoter parts of Armenia.

29- See ZAEHNER 1972, pp. 438-439.

parent divergence of views: folk (Finnish, Slavic) vs. imported, Bogomil-Christian myth. One viewpoint does not exclude the other, no matter how contradictory they may seem. Bogomilism was not a self-sufficient religious movement: its dualism goes back to the teaching of the Manichaeans and Paulicians; its cosmological myth recalls ancient Iranian representations about the mutually hostile creative activity of Ohrmazd and Ahreman [*o sovmetnom, vrazhdebnom drug drugu tvorchestve Ormuzda i Arimana*], but the outer forms of the myth could be of local, folk origin.”³⁰

If the Cheremis myth, cited by Stoyanov in his research on dualist beliefs amongst the Slavs, appears in a general sense to be related to Iranian conceptions, though, the details of a more complex Mordvinian one agree so closely with the Zoroastrian myth of creation involving Zurvan as transmitted by Eznik, with overtones also of the Book of the Dove, as to remove any doubt of an Iranian source, for which the vector of transmission would have been Russian minstrels (*kaleki*) and adherents of dissident sects (*raskol'niki*). Such a hypothesis, of a dissident Christian vector, would be supported by the presence in Mordvinian folklore, for instance, of a version of the apocryphal *Cheirograph of Adam*, a Christian work that could have come only from a Russian source.³¹ Here, then, is the Mordvinian myth: Once upon a time, when there was only water, the god Cham-Pas was floating on a stone. He lamented that he had no brother or friend with whom to take counsel; and at these words he spat in despair into the sea [*on pliuul s dosady v more*]. The spittle became a great mound [*bugor*] and floated after him. Cham-Pas struck at it with his scepter [*zhezlom*], at which point Shaitan (that is, the Arabic Shaytān, “Satan”) leapt out of it and said, “Lord, you regret you have no brother or friend with whom to think and take counsel. I’ll be happy to be your brother.” Cham-Pas grudgingly accepted Shaitan as a friend, but not as a brother; and asked, “Let’s create the earth. What shall we make it from? For there’s nothing but water.” Shaitan didn’t know, and fell silent, so Cham-Pas then commanded him to dive to the bottom of the sea and fetch some sand, calling upon the name of God. Twice Shaitan dived, invoking his own name instead, at which a flame burnt him. At the third dive he mentioned God and was able to retrieve the sand. But when he came up he kept some in his cheek, intending to create his own world, too. That made his head swell; so Cham-Pas struck him with his scepter—the wet, unformed sand burst out into God’s delicate, newly-created universe and disrupted it, forming the mountains. Thereafter Shaitan was condemned to dwell in the nether fire; but not before he managed to spoil the creations of Cham-Pas by adding negative characteristics to them. For instance, while man’s body lay yet inanimate, guarded by a dog, Shaitan attacked, causing the dog to sprout shaggy fur and the man to become sick with disease. Cham-Pas then endowed man with a soul.

The first striking detail of the Mordvinian myth is the floating stone: this recalls the white, energy-imbued stone of the Book of the Dove which floats upon water or air, brings

30- VESELOVSKII 1889, pp. 4-5.

31- VESELOVSKII 1889, p. 32: for a study of the text see STONE 2002, with folklore motifs pointing to a possible Indian precursor noted in a review by RUSSELL 2003.

immortality to those who touch it, and stands at the navel of the world, in Jerusalem, or in the cathedral beneath the ocean where the Virgin Mary bathes and the relics of St. Clement are interred. Its name, Rus. *(a)latyr*’, seems to be a deformation of “altar”; and Moses Gaster long ago suggested that some of the features of this miraculous object are to be traced to Jewish myths about the foundation stone (Heb. *even shetiya*) on the Temple Mount at Jerusalem from beneath which the abyssal waters of the submundane ocean boiled up when king David incautiously moved it.³² The detail of the *scepter* of Cham-Pas must call to mind Eznik’s mention of the ritual bundle of *barsom*-twigs employed by Zurvan in the thousand-year sacrificial liturgy (*yasna*) performed for the birth of Ohrmazd. Eznik of Kolb, para. 186, explains the Iranian loan-word in Armenian, *barsmunk*’, i.e., *barsom*, as *gawazan* “scepter, crozier” (lit. “cow-goad”): it is to be supposed that over the century that had elapsed between the baptism of the Armenian Arsacids and his writing, some Iranian ritual terms, even those secondarily armenized, had become obscure even to a learned reader, hence the gloss. This is, one would venture, perhaps too specific a correspondence for it to have been a merely fortuitous coincidence. More likely, as the myth traveled from Iran through Armenia and westwards, the more generic “scepter”, originally a gloss, replaced the obscure *barsom*. The refusal of Cham-Pas to accept Shaitan as his *brother* echoes the only explicit condemnation in the Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature— in the eighth book of the *Dēnkard*— of any feature of the Zurvanite cosmology, the suggestion that Ohrmazd and Ahreman are brothers. It seems to have been the intention of the Zoroastrian divines to affirm that the twinship of the two spirits means nothing more than a parallelism in their temporal manifestation.³³

The form of the Rime of the Book of the Dove: a list of the chiefs of the creations, followed by a dream vision of the confrontation between good and evil— neatly inverts the order of the *Bundahišn*. This obviates the need to enumerate both the creations of the good God and the noxious counter-creations— the *xrafstarān*, or stinging, biting, destructive living things, the smoke of fire, the salt in sea water, and so on— of the evil spirit which is reflected, as we have seen, in the Mordvinian cosmological myth, since the encounter of Truth and the Lie is left to the end of the narrative. Thus the list of important beings and places in the Rime fits more comfortably into Christian tradition, which has no category of *xrafstarān* in its system, than it might otherwise have done; and that would have pleased most of the *kaleki*-reciters and their listeners, one thinks. But the dualist features of this text still remain prominent; and those aspects and textual and oral features of traditions contiguous to that in which the Rime developed demonstrably have more in common with what has been called the Zurvanite “heresy” than they do with the doctrines of the Pahlavi books themselves. Although the rather crude myth of Zurvan and the birth of the twins Ohrmazd and Ahreman is presented by contemporary foreign sources: Syriac, Armenian, and Greek— as the common belief of the Sasanian adherents of the correctly-named *dēn*

32- See GASTER 1891, p. 204.

33- See SHAKED 1992.

ī mazdēšn, the Religion of Mazdā-worship (the term “Zoroastrian” was rare then and has become common in latter days on analogy with “Christian”, though the adherents of the ancient Iranian faith still find the designation closer to accuracy than Muslims can with “Mohammedan”), it is absent from the Pahlavi literature, whether as dogma to be accepted or as a heresy (like those of Mānī or Mazdak, for instance) to be refuted. It would seem that some thinkers proposed that infinite time must have pre-existed the “twin” spirits of Yasna 30; so in some sense they originated from it. That position never affected the ethics or religious ritual of the Zoroastrians; so Zurvanism, never a movement on its own, was never targeted by such sacerdotal and political zealots as Kirdēr, the scourge of Manichaeism, or Ādurbād ī Amahraspandān and Mihrnarseh, the persecutors of Christians.³⁴ The theory seems to have been an attempt to solve a philosophical problem, rather than a religious one: any manifestation must be temporal, therefore sequential; and sequence necessitates difference, hence duality. Duality realizes the potential of difference, of opposition—hence of dualism. Happening needs time; so if there were no time, none of Creation could have happened. Of course an infinitely pre-cosmic time in which nothing happens is not measurable, so for Iranians this was *akanārag*, “boundless”, like the Greek *apeiron*, in distinction to the finite and therefore measurable age of the cosmos, the time characterized in Avestan and Pahlavi as that of the “long dominion”. Eznik notes this distinction in his own way: Ohrmazd’s time is a heavenly eternity of imperishable youth (*yawitenakan*), while Ahreman’s is circumscribed by a limit, subject to change and decay (*žamanakean*).³⁵

The precise time and manner of the transmission of these Iranian myths to Slavic Europe is uncertain. Sasanian and Central Asian silver vessels and other objects have been found in the Russian north and east, and in the Baltic region; the artistic forms of the Thracian and Pannonian cultures bear an Iranian imprint; and Sogdians settled on the northern coast of the Crimea.³⁶ So Slavs and Iranians very likely encountered each other at various

34- *Ibid.*

35- Cited by ZAEHNER 1955, p. 243. Arm. *yawēt*, used in Christian formulae (*yawiteans yawitenic* = *saecula saeculorum*, cf. Pers. *jāvedān*), derives ultimately from Av. *yavāeta-*, whose base is the same word for “young” from which we have modern Persian *javān*. Arm. *žamanak*, also an Iranian loan, cf. Pers. *zamān*, has the shade of temporality, thus flux and decay, as in the myth of the alternating light and dark of *žuk-žamanak*. PIRSIG 2005, pp. 35-36, presents a conundrum similar to, probably related to the question of time with which the Sasanian and earlier philosophers were grappling. Before minds existed to conceive of laws; and before matter existed for gravity to be manifest, was there a law of gravity? That is, did gravity, or any other principle or form for that matter, exist in any way one rationally can employ the term, in the pre-infinity of unmanifestation? Pirsig concludes, with an ominous playfulness, that gravity is a *ghost*. Cf. “Two spirits came to be heard of, in a dream vision...”

36- A total of 82 silver vessels from Iran proper and Central Asia (Sogd, Khwarazm, etc.) have been found in the forested regions of the Kama river basin, half of them datable to before A.D. 700. A small Buddha statuette of Kashmiri type was found at Helgö, a mediaeval commercial center on an island off the Swedish coast; and Arab coins nearby date to A.D. 742-833. Constantine the philosopher—St. Cyril, evangelizer of the south Slavs—lists “peoples who know the Scriptures and who praise God, each in its own language: the Armenians, the Persians, the Abkhazians, the Iberians, the Sogds [i.e., Sogdians], the Goths, the Avars, the Turks...” From their place on the list it seems the Sogdians mentioned were to be encountered in the Crimea; he probably gained this knowledge during a mission of 861 to the Khazars. Though the derivation of Sogdaia/Sudak from “Sogdian” has been disputed, there was found nearby on the Taman’ peninsula nearby the handle of an earthenware vessel inscribed in Sogdian with the name →

points in the centuries before the former could have been making written records: loans into Slavic such as *simargl*, perhaps from an Eastern Iranian pronunciation of Persian *simorγ*, a magic bird of Iranian myth, suggest that Slavs acquired Iranian religious lore in those times. But it is at least plain from the early written Slavic texts that dualist doctrines were being conveyed orally far into the northern fastnesses of Kievan Rus' around the same time as the Christianization of the realm or soon thereafter; and they endured. The *Povest' vremennykh let* ("Primary Chronicle") records for the year 1071 the interrogation by Ian, a boyar emissary of prince Sviatoslav, of two *volkhvs* ("magicians") who had come to Beloozero in the far northeast, apparently scaring the living daylight out of the locals: when he asks how man was made, they tell him God washed himself in the bath, perspired, dried himself with straw and threw it down to earth from Heaven. He and Satan then quarreled (*raspresia*) over who should create man out of it. In the end it was the devil that made the body of man, but God put a soul in him; so at death the body goes to earth while the soul returns to God. When Ian asks the *volkhvy* whom they worship, they reply that their god is Antichrist in the abyss.³⁷ There are some obvious similarities discernible even in this concise and prejudiced narrative, both to the Mordvinian cosmogony and to that of the Rime of the Book of the Dove. In a monograph on the Russian jester-minstrels called *skomorokhi*, a word of uncertain origin, R. Zguta regards the episode in the *Primary Chronicle* as *prima facie* evidence that bards brought dualistic and other teachings considered heretical by Orthodoxy and current amongst the Balkan Bogomils to Rus' by word of mouth. They gradually moved northward after suppression by the Church authorities in the Kievan regions to the freer environs of Novgorod— the locus also of most *byliny* and of the oral variants of the Rime of the Book of the Dove— where they thrived till the late 16th century, being formally banned only in 1648.³⁸

Since one has proposed Armenia as the logical intermediary for the transmission of Iranian cosmological ideas through Byzantine Anatolia and the Balkans into Kievan Rus', it is perhaps apposite to mention here a curious correspondence between an Armenian tradition and one recorded in the *Primary Chronicle* mentioned above. According to the latter "There were three brothers: one's name was Kii, the other, Shchek, and the third, Khoriv, and their sister was Lybed'. Kii sat on a mountain where now is the district Borichev, and Shchek sat on the mountain now called Shchekovitsa, and Khoriv sat on the third mountain, which came to be called after him, Khorevitsa. And they made a city in

→ of its owner, Šāfnōšak ("Believer in immortality"); so the presence of the Sogdians and other Iranians around the time of the conversion of the Slavs, in various parts of the Russian land, is amply documented. The Melkites of Khwarazm retained the language of the Soldains— as Het'um called the Sogdians in 1307— as a Christian liturgical tongue into the 14th century. See DE LA VASSIERE 2005, pp. 245-250, 257, and plate I.3 opp. p. 178.

37- On the contest: "*I raspresia sotona s Bogom, komu v nem' stvoriti cheloveka. I stvori d'iavol cheloveka, a Bog dushiu vo n' vlozhi;*" on their worship: "*Ona zhe rekosta: Antikhristu, on zhe reche ima, To gde est', ona zhe rekosta: Sedit' v bezdne.*" Text in LIKHACHEV AND ADRIANOVA-PERETTS 1999, p. 76; tr. in CROSS AND SHERBOWITZ-WETZOR 1953, pp. 151-152.

38- See ZGUTA 1978, pp. 7, 15-23.

the name of their eldest brother, and called it by the name Kiev.” The Novgorod chronicle adds that the three were pagans, and, like the other Slav *Poliane*, sacrificed to lakes, wells, and groves.³⁹ An 8th-cent. Armenian historian, Ps.-Zenob Glak, tells a somewhat similar tale: During the period of the conversion of the Armenians to Christianity in the 4th century by St. Gregory the Illuminator, the prince of Siwnik⁴⁰ went from the temple of Gisanē to the town (*awan*) of Kuaf and persuaded the soldiers of that village (*giwl*) to be baptized. They proceeded with St. Gregory into the Aycsan valley, east opposite Kačkon that is the fortress Astlonk⁴¹. Demetr and Gisanē, the author explains, were two Indian princes who came to Aštišat and built a city called Višap. The Armenian king Vālaršak killed them and gave the principality to their three sons, Kuaf, Meltēs, and Xof/Hof. Kuaf built a town and named it after himself; Meltēs built another, which he named Melti; and the youngest, going to the province (*gawar*) of Palunik⁴², built a town and named it Horeans/Xorni.⁴⁰ The two foundation myths have in common three brothers, all pagans, on three hills, who found three towns.⁴¹ The proper names of the first and third brother are somewhat similar. D.S. Likhachëv thought the Armenian account an echo of the Slavic legend, taking *Poluni* (sic!) to be a rendering of *Poliane*.⁴² But one thinks that if the two myths are in fact related, the Armenian one is probably of greater antiquity and more likely to be the source of the Slavic: Palunik⁴³ is not the rendering of a foreign toponym, but a province of Armenia whose name is ancient Anatolian. The name of the middle brother, Meltēs, is probably ancient Anatolian, too: cf. Melid-Kummanu, Gk. Melitēnē (modern Malatya) on the Euphrates. An early designation of the Armenians themselves in Gk. is *Melitēnioi*. The village of Mekhdi still stands, in the district of Muš. Gisanē, from Iranian *gēs*, “long hair”, is a cult attribute of the Heracles-like divinity Vahagn, Avestan *Vərəθraγna*, whose temple stood near Muš at Aštišat, lit. “happy in sacrifices”, where St. Gregory early in the fourth century (according to the account of Agathangelos) dedicated a church to St. John the Baptist that became one of the two most sacred places of pilgrimage in the country: *Čangli diwan Mšoy Sult’an Surb Karapet*, “The court of the bells, king of Muš, Holy Forerunner” stood

39- LIKHACHËV AND ADRIANOVA-PERETTS 1999, p. 9: *I bysha 3 brat'ia: edinomy imia Kii, a drugomu Shchek, a tret'emu Khoriv, i sestra ikh Lybed'.* *Sediashe Kii na gore, gde zhe nyne uvoz Borichev, a Shchek sediashe na gore, gde nyne zovetsia Shchekovitsa, a Khoriv na tret'ei gore, ot nego zhe prozvasia Khorevitsa. I stvorisha grad vo imia brata svoego stareishago, i narekosha imia ego Kiev.* On their paganism, p. 456: *Biakhu zhe pogane, zhrushche ozerom i kladezem i roshcheniem, iakozhe prochi pogan.*

40- See AVDOYAN 1993, p. 86 f.

41- The pattern is general and congenial, of course, in ethnic foundation myths: Biblical Shem, Ham, and Japheth; and Iranian Iraj, Turaj, and Salm. In folktales, the same three brothers appear, with the lazy, somewhat stupid, guileless, happy-go-lucky youngest one, Ivan of course, the hero who gets the Firebird's (cf. the Simurgh's!) feather and so on.

42- LIKHACHËV AND ADRIANOVA-PERETTS 1999, p. 390 n. It is interesting that Professor Roman Jakobson of Harvard did not share this opinion: in a lecture on the importance of Armenian studies and its relevance to Slavica delivered at a symposium of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research on 11 June 1955, he stated that the foundation legend of Kiev was purely derivative from the Armenian tradition of Ps.-Zenob (recording in the NAASR archive, Belmont, MA, provided by Marc Mamigonian).

till the eve of the Armenian Genocide. Vahagn was renowned as a slayer of dragons, Arm. *višap*, from Iranian, hence the mention of nearby Višap(-ak'alak') "Dracontopolis"—the sudden storms that vex the great lake Van, some fifty miles to the east of Muš, were explained in folklore, long into the Middle Ages, as Vahagn wrestling an aquatic *višap* out of the water when it had grown great enough to swallow the world, and casting it into the sun to burn.⁴³ So it can be seen that various details of the Armenian myth in the *History of Tarawn* are related and belong to the pre-Christian, Zoroastrian and Anatolian culture and topography of the country, corroborated by other Classical Armenian sources, all of which predate by centuries the Slavonic ones, where the tradition of Kii, Shchek, and Khoriv is actually rather isolated.

If the two myths are related, then, it would seem that the Armenian one, native to the region of Muš and the great lake of Van (at the eastern end of the plain of Muš, about fifty miles from the town), was partially adapted by the Slavs as the foundation-legend of Kiev. The detail in the Novgorod chronicle connecting the three brothers with sacrifices to lakes could have been, then, an adaptation of the web of myths about lake Van to the vast Novgorodian lake Il'men'—a feature of some importance, as will be seen presently, in the poem of the Book of the Dove. One can but speculate as to why this particular myth might have found its way into the Russian *Primary Chronicle*. Perhaps the motive force was the slight similarity of the toponyms Kuaf and Kiev. The *topos* of three brothers is commonplace in Indo-European myth and folklore, making adaptation a simple matter. In any case, the Russian chronicle, in which we find evidence of a dualism that is perhaps of an Armenian-tinged Iranian type, seems to reflect in the Kievan foundation myth the evidence of yet another ancient Armenian source.⁴⁴

In the Rime of the Book of the Dove the enumeration of the chiefs of the creations is strongly informed by Biblical legend: so the greatest of mountains is Tabor, the mount of the Transfiguration; and Jerusalem is the chief of all cities. The parent of all fishes is the whale (Rus. *kit*, from Gk. *kētos*): the earth sits upon it and will end when it turns over. Though the obvious *locus classicus* for Christian mythography here is the book of Jonah (which also partly shaped the balladic cycle of Sadko, to be considered presently), the earliest attestation of this particular *topos* is the Zoroastrian legend of the epic hero Kərəsāspa

43- See RUSSELL 1987(a), Chapter 6, on Vahagn.

44- One additional reason this particular foundation-myth might have had particular significance may be tentatively suggested: though the middle name of the two triads is different, the first and third may contain (or have been thought to contain) the Iranian elements *kavi-* and *xvarənah-*. The first is a designation of the heroic dynasty of Iran that ended with the reign of king Vištāspa, the royal patron of Zarathustra. The word becomes *kay* in Persian; and it is found frequently as a compound, Pers. *kayānfarr*, with the second term, attested as Arm. *p'ark'*, Pers. *farr*, *khorrāh*—divinely-bestowed glory. Zenob's mention of India is rather mysterious: though the 10th-cent. historian T'ovma Arceruni mentions travelers from distant Zaplastan, i.e., eastern Iranian Zābol, for instance, and the "fire-temple" of Baku was visited by Panjābi travelers, there seems no particular reason to associate Zoroastrian traditions in Armenia of a divine pair named Demeter (most likely a Hellenization originally as "Earth Mother" of the name of Vahagn's female consort Astlik, "Little Star", cf. the Astlonk' fortress mentioned in Zenob's account) and "Shaggy" Vahagn with India, unless this is a garbled memory of Parthia and Eastern Iran.

in the Avestan hymn *Yasna* 9: he landed on an island and began to cook his meal. The island was the back of the Horned Dragon, Aži Srvara, who got burned and dived: this yarn, attractive to sailors, was received into Jewish folklore in Arsacid and Sasanian Babylonia, where we find it in a narrative of Rabba bar Bar Hanna, whose tall tales are studded with Iranian names. But the motif is very common, and its farthest western type is the legend of St. Brendan of Ireland.⁴⁵ The chief of the birds in our Rime is the suitably exotic and big *estrafıl*, or ostrich: it is associated with both Ocean and the axial white stone called (*a*)*latyr*, i.e., the “altar”, and it causes shipwrecks. The bird can be compared to the giant Čamruš, a mythical bird in the Zoroastrian text on creation, the *Bundahišn*, that is associated with Burz *yazad*, and thus, through the latter’s association with the waters, with the marine imagery of the Rime, too.⁴⁶

The greatest of lakes in the Rime is Il’men’ (Armen, in some variants). This is the name of the vast lake on whose shores Great Novgorod stands; but its prototype is supposedly located in the Holy Land. The poem mentions also a cathedral church in the ocean containing the relics of St. Clement that periodically manifests itself above the waters; and some versions add that the Holy Mother of God can be seen there, shining in all her glory. The locus of the Russian shrine is the Black Sea, off Chersonesus where Clement was martyred and his bones were cast into the sea.⁴⁷ But the association of the shrine with the Virgin, the Queen of Heaven, calls to mind the principal sacred place of the Armenian folk epic of Sasun: the submarine shrine of the Holy Mother of God (Arm. *Surb Astuacacin*) of Marut’a in lake Van. Any Armenian minstrel would have known all or part of the epic, whose roots are extremely ancient: there are hundreds of recorded recitations, attesting to its great popularity; and the influence of the Armenian Artaxiad cycle— a major source of the Sasun epic— upon the Ossetic epic of the Narts attests to the wide diffusion of Armenian oral heroic epic literature.⁴⁸ There is a second shrine in Sasun to the Virgin on Covasar, i.e., “Sea-mount”: for this and because she is Queen of Heaven she bears the additional epithet in epic *banjrik*, i.e. standard Arm. *barjr* “high” with the affectionate/diminutive suffix *-ik*. But it is noteworthy that in the *Bundahišn* the divinity Burz *yazad* (i.e., the “High”), mentioned above, is said to come up from the deeps of lake Arang when at intervals of three years the enemies of Iran mass on mount Alburz (another name with the element “high”; cf. the Arm. parallel of mountain and undersea shrine). The legend of St. Clement in Russia could thus have undergone some contamination by Armeno-Iranian sacred legend in oral epic, in the course of its transmission. The shrine of Clement is not the only undersea marvel of its kind in Russian lore: the sunken, living city of Great Kitezh in lake Svetloiar is much better known, yet one notes that there may be some legendary

45- See RUSSELL 2004 (b), esp. pp. 420, 424-425.

46- For summaries and translations of relevant passages see Text 2, *infra*.

47- See MOCHUL’SKII 1887, pp. 396-397.

48- See RUSSELL 2006 [2007] on the transmission from Armenian Artaxiad epic of the episode of Argawan to the Circassian *Nebenüberlieferungen* of the Ossetic *Nartae*.

Armenian connection to that town, too—for it was dedicated to Armenia's patron saint, a prominent figure in Orthodoxy, Gregory the Illuminator.⁴⁹

Any discussion of submarine legends with reference to the traditions that clustered around Great Novgorod must involve the great cycle of *byliny* about Sadko. The basic story is this: Sadko⁵⁰ was a rich merchant of Novgorod. But once all he had was his musical instrument—the *gusli*—that he played at feasts. So he was essentially a *skomorokh*. One day he was not summoned to perform, so he went and sat on the shores of lake Il'men' (greatest of all lakes!) on a "burning white stone" (*bel goriuch kamen'*—reminiscent of the (*a*)*latyr'*!) and played there. The water boiled (*voda vskolybalasia*; cf. the similar phrasing of the Rime), and he ran back to town. But, still without gigs to play, he came back to the lake, the water boiled once more, and the king of the sea appeared (*pokazalsia tsar' morskoi*). The latter liked Sadko's playing, and commanded him to return to town and, betting his own rash head (*buinu golovu*, a standard epithet in folk poetry and song for the brave hero's head) tell the merchants there was a fish in Il'men' with golden scales. He won the bet, became rich, went to sea, and one day there was a great storm. "Ah, brothers, brave band," exclaimed Sadko, "We've traveled the sea for an age/ And paid the king of the sea no tribute." They lowered riches into the water, to no avail: the king wanted a live head (*zhivoi golovy*), and when they cast lots, they kept coming up Sadko's. So he took his *gusli*, reclined upon an oaken plank in the sea, the ships sailed away, and he slept, waking "in the blue sea, on the very bottom" (*vo sinem more, na samom dne*). Sadko went into the king's "white stone chamber" (*palata belokamennaia*) and played for three days. The king danced, the waters of the sea boiled, and an old man advised Sadko to cut the strings of his *gusli* in order to stop. The king of the sea then offered Sadko a maiden in marriage: he must neither choose the first nine hundred offered, nor sleep with the last, dark (*chernavushka*) girl while in the sea—or he will never return home. Sadko slept then, and waked in Novgorod, with his rich trading ships lolling at anchor on the waves of the river Volkhov. He built a church to St. Mikola of Mozhaisk, and lived with his bride.⁵¹ The affinities of the core *byliny* of the Sadko cycle to the Rime are evident: the hero is

49- For the transcribed variants of the episode in Armenian see RUSSELL 2007; on Burz yazad, ANKLE-SARIA 1956, ch. 24.24= pp. 196-197. One of the nine cupolas of the Shrine of Basil the Blessed on Red Square in Moscow is also dedicated to St. Gregory the Illuminator; the central and tallest honors the Holy Mother of God.

50- Variants of the name include Sadke, Sadka, Sotko, and Sadok; perhaps the name may be related to the south Russian toponym Sugdaia/Sudak, i.e., **suyḏaka-*, "Sogdian", discussed *supra*, and the old designation of the Sea of Azov, Surozh, also "Sogdian". The Sogdians, whose homeland lay around modern Samarkand, were an Iranian people who traded on the Silk Road and sea-lanes, who professed no single established religion and whose cities have been compared to Italian mercantile republics. They would have been most congenial to the freedom-loving, mercantile Novgorodians; and excavations at Novgorod have yielded appliqué dragons of Central Asian type, as well as several *gusli*—one inscribed with a name appropriate to the bard who was the owner, *Slovishcha*, i.e., "Little Nightingale". See KOLCHIN 1985, pls. 23, 157, 159. For the bardic praise-singer and the nightingale (*solovei*) are related: the first gives voice to fame or glory (*slava*), and the name of the second embodies it.

51- See SMIRNOV AND SMOLITSKII, 1978, pp. 148-157. The volume has 27 variants of the Sadko ballad—more than on any other theme.

a minstrel himself, like the *kaleki*; the action takes place at lake Il'men' and on the open sea; there is a special stone identical in description to the *alatyr*'; the sea roils; there is a magical fish; and there is a magnificent palace on the sea-bottom. Just as the Rime owes details to various learned Christian texts, the narrative of the antient mariner (!) Sadko is indebted to the book of Jonah.

There are subsidiary narratives on the model of Sadko about the mysterious lake, as well; much as various Armenian legends cluster around the main epic theme of lake Van and its miraculous undersea chapel.⁵² Both the Armenian and Russian legends partake of the highly durable and intriguing human archetypal image of light in submarine darkness: see the Appendix to this study.

The chief of the beasts in the Book of the Dove is the unicorn, *indrik* (from the Russian calque *edinorog*, on Greek *monokerōs*). It is described as a creature who lives in the holy mountain, travels unhindered through the subterranean regions of the earth, does nobody any harm, and causes springs to well up; it also releases waters that are blocked— and these bring nourishment and healing to humanity. The *Physiologus*, second or third century, specifies that the unicorn's horn purifies water of a snake's venom. Again we find both an Iranian source and Talmudic echo, as well as famous scenes in European art.⁵³ The unicorn of the *Bundahišn* (see Text 2.2) is a three-legged ass that stands in the world-

52- In Armenia, the confluence of epic legend and hagiography produces a hybrid take about the submarine exploits of St. Gregory of Narek: see RUSSELL 2007. An example of the subsidiary narratives of the Sadko cycle may be adduced here, from SMIRNOV AND SMOLITSKII 1978, p. 242, *Muzh idët za zhenoi v Il'men'-ozero* ("A husband goes after his wife into lake Il'men'"): "A fine young man set off to fish at a faraway gulf of lake Onega, and a stiff wind kept him till daybreak on the islands. As it grew light, he saw three swans come flying, strike the ground, become girls and bathe in the bay, leaving their bird-skins on the shore. The young man crept up quietly and snatched one bird-skin away. When they were finished bathing, two of the girls came out on shore, put their skins on, struck the earth and then flew away as swans. But the third girl was looking for her skin and couldn't find it. At that moment the young man walked up to her and said, 'What will you give me for your skin?' 'Would you like a treasure, or gold beyond reckoning?' 'I need no treasure. Give me your self.' 'As you please,' she replied. 'I'll be your wife.' They made a vow to each other and became man and wife. Towards evening the wind died down. When they were about to board his boat, the young man handed her bird-skin over to his wife. 'Put it away,' he said, 'so it won't get dirty.' But his wife threw it over her, turned into a swan, and flew off into the sky. And in parting she only cried out to her husband in human speech, You couldn't hold and keep me; so you won't see me for three years. When three years are past, come to lake Il'men'. You'll see a washerwoman on the shore, and she'll lead you to me.' The young man went home all alone, and his life was sad: he missed his wife, for he had fallen very much in love with her. The appointed time came, so he went to Novgorod, to lake Il'men'. When he arrived there the sun was setting and he saw a washerwoman on the shore beckoning to him. 'Lead me,' he said, 'my dear, to my wife.' 'Why not take you? Let's go.' They walked along the shore and their path kept descending, and somehow it was getting colder. And they arrived in a big village, at a rich house. His conductor said to him, 'When you go into the house, make sure to say no prayer (*smotri ne molitis*').' And a huge man with a gray head, a gray beard, met them in the house. 'It's a long time,' said he, 'son in law, that we've awaited you!' Then the beautiful girl came out, holding by the hand a boy of three. 'Look,' said she, 'Ivanushka, at how your child has grown up!' 'Let him raise him,' said the old man. 'This good is needful for us.' The young man greeted his wife, and they lived happily together. And I visited them, drank their beer, and tasted sweet honey.'" (*I ia u nikh v gostiakh byl, pivo pil, sladkim mëdom zakusyval*: cf. the end, from the same stock phrase, of Pushkin's Prologue to *Ruslan and Liudmila*: *I tam ia byl, i mëd ia pil*, "And I was there, and I drank mead [= honey].")

53- The *locus classicus* is the second of the Unicorn Tapestries in the collection of the Cloisters Museum of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York: the unicorn dips his horn into a stream to rid it of poison; and a lion sits just behind him! See FREEMAN 1983, pp. 18-19 and Plate 6 *infra*.

ocean, purifying all the waters and fertilizing all the creatures by its urine; and it assists the divinity Tištrya to take needed water from the cosmic sea. Rabba again claims to have seen a creature like a three-year-old heifer he calls the *rydy*’, **ridyā*, that stands between the upper and lower waters of the universe and causes them either to pour down or spring up, thereby bringing the season of Spring to the world. It is likely that Rabba conflated the appearance of the equid or caprine unicorn, the monstrous size of the rhinoceros, and the Biblical *re’ēm*—originally a huge, dangerous buffalo hunted by the ancient kings of the Near East.⁵⁴ The kindly, beneficent unicorn of myth appears most often as either a goat or an equid or a combination of the two; the actual one-horned creature of ancient reports was, however, the giant and very dangerous rhinoceros (itself an object of artistic and mythographic interest in early modern Europe).⁵⁵ So it is from the latter that the *indrik* gets its huge size; from the former, its holy character.⁵⁶ In the Slavic world, the Khludov Psalter and the *Izbornik* of Sviatoslav of A.D. 1073 both contain drawings of equine unicorns of the Western mediaeval type (see Plates 4 and 5). In several versions of the Rime of the Book of the Dove, the animal more generally regarded as the king of the beasts—the lion—fights and defeats the *indrik*. One is reminded here of the reliefs at Persepolis depicting a lion attacking a great bull. The latter creature is shown in profile, and appears to have only one horn.⁵⁷ The noble appearance of the king of the felines ensured it a place in ancient Iranian art, as elsewhere; but in Zoroastrian theology it is a decidedly demonic being. So perhaps at Persepolis, but much likelier still in our Rime, the contest of lion and

54- See KIPPERWASSER AND SHAPIRA 2008; and POPE 1965, pp. 259-260, on Job 39.9.

55- See CLARKE 1986: travelers brought the first living specimens of the Indian rhinoceros to Europe early in the 16th century.

56- When Pliny the Elder (23-79 A.D.) spoke of unicorns, it was the formidable rhinoceros from India or Africa he had in mind; and it was believed to kill that other giant, the elephant, by impaling it from beneath with its horn. In Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, the word used for the equine-caprine unicorn is *kargadan* or *karkadan*; but the same word is applied, as in an illustration to the *Manāfi’-i ḥayawān*, to a rhinoceros—and this was the original meaning of the term, for the word is from Sanskrit *khadga-* or *khadgadhenu-*, “rhinoceros”. The Sufi poet Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī in his *Dīvān-e Šams-e Tabrīzī* (FORUZANFAR 1367, stanza 920, p. 371) employs the image of mortal combat of these two: *Agar cū šīr šavī, ‘ešq šīr-gīr-e qavī-st/ Vā gar cū pīl šavī, ‘ešq karkadan bāšad*. “If you become a lion, love is a mighty lion-catcher; and if you become an elephant, love will be a unicorn.” Annemarie Schimmel, who studied these lines, suggests they portray a vision of Messianic peace in which elephant will lie down with unicorn (SCHIMMEL 1980, p. 107). Typically, the unicorn of Christendom is a white horse with a goat’s beard and feet—more caprine at first, more equine as one enters the high Middle Ages; and a long, narrow horn, sometimes baroquely spiralling, juts out of its forehead. This is how the creature appears, for instance, in the ninth-century Byzantine Khludov Psalter (illustrated in “The Paradigm of the Unicorn,” JUNG 1968, p. 444, p. 247); in an early-thirteenth-century Arabic manuscript of the *Na’t al-ḥayawān*, a pair of wings is added to a creature that is feline and caprine in appearance (see ETTINGHAUSEN 1950, pl. 7). In Christian exegesis, the one horn is an emblem of monotheism; the motif of the hunt symbolizes the persecution and sacrifice of Christ.

57- Schrader suggested a century ago that Ctesias, a Greek physician who served at the Achaemenian court in the fourth century B.C., saw this and thought it was a unicorn—hence his report that there are unicorns in India. But Ctesias also says that they are white-bodied, asinine creatures that run fast. Those who drink from the white, black, and crimson horn of the animal (i.e., a rhyton, the classic drinking horn of the Iranians) become immune to disease and the falling sickness; and the horn itself is an antidote to poisons. This is not the creature of the Persepolis reliefs.

horned beast may represent the battle between falsehood and truth—a battle in which the lie, here on earth in the present time, is the victor.⁵⁸ There is a Buddhist parable in which the unicorn, not the lion, embodies the power of death. It enjoyed wide diffusion, and was transmitted into Armenian theological poetry and Russian literature; but it is not reflected in the Rime.⁵⁹ There is no other instance in the Rime of one chief or paragon of the

58- ZAEHNER 1955, pp. 237-238, points out that in the *Bundahišn*, lions and snakes are called the worst creatures; and in the Pahlavi translation of the Ardibehešt Yašt, 3.8, lions are added to the list of dangerous, demonic beings: for Avestan *vāhrkō.čīθra-* “vulpine seed” we have Pahlavi *šēr ud gurg tōhm* “progeny of lion and wolf”. Thus the Mithraic symbol of a leontocephalous man around whom a serpent is entwined, designated *deus arimanius*, combines two of the evillest creatures of Zoroastrian cosmology. I have argued that the being represents death: the Mithraic initiate undertaking *Leo*, the fourth of the seven grades of initiation, thus undergoes a symbolic murder and resurrection not unlike the third degree of Freemasonry, which also has a particular leonine association in one detail of its symbolism. The *ariwcajew* “leontomorph” or “lion-slaying” Mher (=Mithra) of the Armenian Epic of Sasun reflects a source for such symbolism. In more recent times, the lion of English heraldry defeated the unicorn of the Scottish throne; but now, rampant and equal, they uphold the British royal escutcheon, as on the modern one-pound coin (Plate 7).

59-The story belongs to the famous book *Barlaam and Ioasaph*, versions of which exist in virtually every language of medieval Europe and the Near East. The ancestor of the text is the canonical life of the Buddha Sakyamuni, from India, that is known from the *Buddhacarita* of Aśvaghōṣa and the *Lalitavistara*; and the Biblical-sounding “Ioasaph” is in fact a corruption of *Bodhisattva*— the Buddhist term for a person who has come to enlightenment but elects freely to be reborn, in order to help other beings do the same and overcome suffering. The beginning of the career of the Buddha, which forms the frame narrative of *Barlaam and Ioasaph* also, may be summarized briefly. A king who had no son was granted one by the gods, and a sage informed him the boy would grow up to be either a world-conqueror or a great religious redeemer of all sentient beings. The king preferred the former option; so he saw to it that the growing boy was confined to a palace of earthly delights staffed entirely by comely young people. But curiosity about the world outside impelled him to visit the city beyond, where the gods, anxious to turn him to the path of a religious seeker, appeared to him in succession as a sick man, an old man, a corpse, and an ascetic. Thus he learned of life’s suffering and brevity, left his father’s house, and embarked upon the path to enlightenment. The story made its way to the Buddhist monasteries that in the early centuries of the Christian era lined the Silk Road, at the northern and southern edges of the Taklamakan Desert in Central Asia, present-day Chinese Turkestan: Fragments of the *Buddhacarita* have been found there. A few extracts from the prototype of *Barlaam and Ioasaph* in Manichaean Turkic from the same area are known; and there are yet other fragments, also in Manichaean script, but in New Persian translation (see HENNING 1962). The Armenian text, *Yovasap’ ew Baradam*, is a somewhat abbreviated translation of the Greek, following the latter in all essentials. The monk teaches his disciple through parables. The third of these presents “a man fleeing a unicorn (*ayr omn p’axuc’eal yeresac’ miejjerue*). But in his flight he fell into a great pit. Extending his hand, he grabbed hold of a tree that was in the pit, and he secured his feet on the ledge of the pit and figured he was well and secure. Looking up he saw two mice, one white and one black, who had the branch he was gripping, and were close to gnawing it through. Then he saw the floor of the pit— and behold there was an awful dragon (*višap*) with fire coming out of its mouth. And it opened up its mouth and waited for the man to fall in. Then he looked at the place where his feet were standing, and he saw four asps, that were striking at his heels. But a little sweet honey was dripping from the tree to which he was clinging. He gave up all his sorrow— the fear of the unicorn, the terror of the dragon who was waiting to swallow him, the mice gnawing away the branch, and the asps at his feet. He forgot all these sorrows and opened his mouth to the little drops of honey falling from that tree.” Then the monk explains the parable: “All who walk in the way of this world are like him. Now, the unicorn is the example of death, which drives the all the generations of Adam, from their birth to their end. And the dragon’s pit is this world, with all its evils and lethal snares. The branch the mice were eating is the lifetime of every man, which is worn out by day and by night and is close to breaking off. The four asps at his feet are the four natures of the body, striving to dominate each other, which weaken the body. The fiery-mouthed dragon is the belly of hell, which stands, waiting for all who accept the luxury of this life. And the sweet honey is the sweetness of this life, which permits no salvation to those who →

creations confronting and contesting another; so, given the symbolism of the unicorn in Zoroastrian and subsequent Christian tradition in which the creature is linked to the nourishment and healing of other creatures, it seems reasonable to suggest that in the variants of the Rime where the contest occurs, the two beasts take the place of the white and gray hares and the *indrik*, the unicorn, is none other than the embodiment of the spirit of good and truth itself, *Pravda*; while the *lev*, the lion, with its mythical linkage to the power of death, is *Krivda*, the incarnation of the Lie.

2.

The Rime of the Book of the Dove was part of the 18th century collection of Kirsha Danilov, published at Moscow in 1804 in the volume *Sbornik russkikh stikhov* ("A Collection of Russian Verses"), which was reprinted many times. Alexander Pushkin owned the 1818 edition—his friend and classmate at the Lycée at Tsarskoe Selo, Küchelbecker, read

love it." In the Georgian version of the parable, it is an elephant, not a unicorn, that chases the hapless man to the edge of the cliff; and the scene is illustrated thus to this day in editions of that narrative. (See ANTAPÉAN 1980, pp. 44-47, for the Armenian; and for the Georgian illumination the plate opposite p. 33 in ABULADZE 1962.) In Job 39.9, God boasts of the power of His creation, in contempt of man: *Et'ē kamic'i k'ez miej'urun ca'ayel, kam hang'e'el ar msur k'o*. "Will the unicorn wish to serve you, or to rest by your crib?" No he will not—unless, one supposes, you are a virgin girl—and the tenth-century Armenian mystic and theologian Grigor Narekac'i in his Commentary on Job stresses the creature's power. He returns to the image of the unicorn once more, in the 68th chapter of his *Matean o'tbergut'ean*, "Book of Lamentation". In a number of MSS., this chapter is given the title *Vasn araracoc' or en vrēxndir mardoys i dimac' Astucoy*, "Concerning the creatures which work vengeance upon man on God's behalf": "If I advance fearlessly amongst the weak, I am wasted by wasps;/ So what need for me of lions?/ If I survive the rending claws of bears,/ Midges, that thirst for blood, will come my way./ If I sit down somewhere without care,/ Vilest mosquitoes will roil round me like a rain of roaring fire./ If I flee, escaping the unicorn's horn,/ The tiny claws of wretched, whining gnats will flay me./ If I cower, floating in the cistern of a storeroom,/ The hideous, foul frogs will soil me./ If I stand in some open field,/ Massed flights of ticks will besiege me./ I neglect to mention locust and grub, the mighty host./ And the poisonous caterpillar and inanimate weevil./ With the watery-seeming hail, and the ruinous frost:/ To the eye these seem unarmed and humble./ But at God's indication, with grim strength eternally/ They struck, swept off, hounded the proud exaltation/ Of Pharaoh's iniquity's smiting rod, in victory./ These are the forms of the torments of passions concealed./ Unseen within the soul— Egyptian blasphemies/ Torturing the soul within, doing secret harm." (See XAC'ATRYAN AND ŁAZINYAN 1985, p. 519.) Though there is no mention of the other elements of the parable of the unicorn in Narekac'i's text, the poet flees (*p'ax-nuc'um*) even as the man in the parable did (*p'axuc'eal*); and in both cases one escapes something great, only to be overcome by something small—the biting gnats here, the mice of day and night in *Barlaam and Ioasaph*. Narekac'i might have known the parable of the unicorn, and the Armenian text would have followed the translation into Greek from Georgian ca. A.D. 900. It is characteristic of Narekac'i's typological vision that the mythological vision of the unicorn is followed by scenes culled from workaday farm life: one of the few photographs of the monastery of Narek we possess from the days before its devastation by Kurdish brigands and its final destruction shortly before the First World War shows peasants with oxen plowing a field directly beneath its walls (photograph by the ethnographer Eruand Lalayan, 1911, reproduced in KÉVORKIAN AND PABOUDJIAN 1992, p. 546, pl. 891). I visited Narek in June 1994: the site where the monastery stood is on a hill, but the land below, covering about 5 km to the shore of Lake Van at Gevaş, is low and marshy in places—a good breeding ground for insects. And the parable in Russia: L.N. Tolstói wrote in his *Confession* of a spiritual crisis, as a result of which he resolved to abandon the literary life, and to preach universal love and nonviolence. At that moment he remembered the "Oriental tale" (*vostochnaia basnia*) about the "traveler cornered on the steppe by an enraged beast". Tolstói wrote that the meager drops of honey of life no longer consoled him; and he concludes "And this is no tale, but the truth—true, unarguable, comprehensible to everyone!" (TOLSTOI 1963, pp. 27-28.)

the first edition in 1815—and its contents are reflected in the first great *poema* Pushkin wrote, *Ruslan and Liudmila* (1820).⁶⁰ The discovery of the spiritual songs, lyrics, and *byliny* (heroic ballads) of the folk by the Russian scholarly and literary world coincided with the publication of, and great interest in, the Igor' epic. Nabokov refers directly to Pushkin's *poema*, as will be seen, along with the Rime, in *Podvig*; and the Igor' epic was the object of his lifelong study. To study the life and letters of Pushkin's Russia, as Nabokov did, is to encounter the Rime in its context, then; and the Rime and related themes are prominent also in the Russian arts and letters of the years of Vladimir Nabokov's childhood in St. Petersburg and of his youth in emigration. The painter Nicholas Roerich, who lived before the Revolution down Bol'shaia Morskaia street from the Nabokovs, painted the *Golubinaia kniga* twice, in 1911 and in 1922-1923. The Book in both paintings is an Old Slavonic manuscript adorned with cryptic symbols and drawings of legendary beasts: it was undoubtedly modeled upon illustration noted above in the *Izbornik* of Sviatoslav of 1073 or a similar actual manuscript.⁶¹ He illustrated also the bard Boyan and other characters and episodes from the Igor' epic Nabokov studied, as well as the legend of the submerged city of Kitezh, which is related to the material of the Book of the Dove and which Nabokov mentions in his late novel *Ada*. Kitezh is famous also from the composer Rimskii-Korsakov's suite (the composer also set the legend of Sadko to music), and, a few years and unimaginable horrors later, from Anna Akhmatova's poem *Putëm vseia zemli*, "[Departing] along the way of all the world" (1940), in which she depicts herself as a woman of the drowned holy city (Rus. *kitezhanka*), returning bereaved down the sorrowful way of Russia's fate to her final home.⁶²

Viacheslav Ivanov's poem of 1915 on the Book of the Dove is so chromatic that it seems almost an ecphrastic evocation of Roerich's painting: "O golden writings/ Of the Book of the Dove:/ The depth of waves ethereal/ And the bottom a convolution serpentine,/ The dragon's secret cipher spied/ By eagle keen eyed." (*Zolotyie pis'mena/Knigi Golubinoi: / Voln efirnykh glubina, / Dno— uzor zmeinyi. / Zmiia tainopis' vidna/ Zorkosti orlinoi.*) Ivanov, both poet and philologist, plays artistically upon the scholarly variation of dove and depth, *golub'* and *glub'*; and his image of waves in the ether suggests the theme of heavenly sea. In 1903, Alexander Blok had dedicated what is perhaps his first major poem to the Book of the Dove, with the same play of dove and depth: "The queen [*tsaritsa*] gazed upon the letters of red gold leaf/ Upon the title page/ And prayed to the meek Theotokos./ Over the Book of the Dove flowed/ The blue nights of the queen:/ And to the princess white birds flew in/ From their columbine height./ The princess scattered grains/ And white wings beat./ Softly the doves cooed/ Into the chamber under the figured gate./ Ruddier, the princess than the queen,/ The queen in the book perusing every page/ And seeking meaning/ In the numbers gold and red./ High yawned open the cloud/ And down

60- Strongly dynamic verbs such as *vstrepenut'sia* and *kolykhat'sia*, found in the Book of the Dove, figure vividly in Pushkin's works, and may serve as one indication of his familiarity with the text.

61- See KOROTKINA 2001, p. 92 and DEETER 1989, p. 126; and Plates 2 and 3 in this article.

62- AKHMATOVA 1977, pp. 347-351.

fell the Book of the Dove./ And to the princess from the azure eye/ Flew forth the cooing bird./ To the princess, so sweet, so languorous/ As the icon lamp burned./ Blue musings of the queen./ The red and golden headings./ Bow down to the princess, O queen./ To the golden curls of her hair./ From your ancient profundity [*glubinnosti*]/ To meekness wise and dove-like [*golubinoi*]./ In profundity is your strength, O queen./ The gilded pages in your book./ But the princess' innocence alone,/ O queen, shall your ciphers overwhelm."⁶³ This interest of the Symbolists and poets and writers of the Silver Age in the old Slavonic and Constantinopolitan heritage was general: it would be surprising, indeed, were one *not* to find Nabokov, steeped in ancient Rus', a fellow-voyager sailing with Yeats to Byzantium.⁶⁴

The ideology of the early Soviet era stigmatized as subversive and reactionary the antiquarian, patriotic interest of writers and artists in Byzantium and Kievan Rus'. So the apocalyptic message of the Book of the Dove was co-opted to the theme of the Revolution in a poem of 1937 by Nikolai Zabolotskii,⁶⁵ rather as Soviet Armenian poets linked to the arrival of Communist revolution in Armenia the theme of the emergence from his cave at the end of days of the apocalyptic folk hero Mithra the Young (*P'ok'r Mher*) in the Sasun epic. Mher becomes a Red hero.⁶⁶ The version of the poem of the Book of the Dove that Zabolotskii recalls in his own verse is of the type in which the Lie has overwhelmed (*odolela*: the word found in the variants of the Rime where this happens) Truth and conquered the world: in most other versions, Truth wins and chooses Heaven. The former type, in which evil is temporally triumphant, resembles more closely the narrative of Eznik, in which the wicked spirit Ahreman temporarily defeats the good-natured Ohrmazd by exiting the womb first and, Jacob-like, falsely claiming the prerogatives of primogeniture; and it is closer also to the Manichaean cosmology, in which this world is wicked by nature. Perhaps the erstwhile poet of the avant garde OBERIU school, Zabolotskii, found

63- The translations are mine: Rus. text in MUR'IANOV 1996. He suggests the topic—and, one might add, the play on doves and depth comes from Andrei Belyi's lines "... this was the deep, speaking with the deep" (*eto glubina govorila s glubinoi*); and other sources might include Solov'ev's poem "My queen has a high palace" (1876) and "Song of the Ophites" (note the *zmei* of Viacheslav Ivanov's verses). But the text of the poem on the Book of the Dove mentions the queen of Heaven, *tsaritsa nebesnaia*; and even if Blok was inspired by contemporary poets to evoke a queen against whom he creates the princess, possibly a prototype of his *prekrasnaia dama*, the "lovely lady" of later verses, there surely can be no doubt that he read the folk spiritual poem too. Mur'ianov observes that Blok was writing in a Russian intellectual milieu that was intensely anti-religious: in the summer of 1903 the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party (*RSDRP*, the kernel of the Communist Bolsheviks) passed a resolution "Concerning work among adherents of religious sects [*sektantov*]"—all of which actually gives some indication of the extent of interest in Russian sectarianism, mysticism, and folk religion and tradition at the time.

64- In his essay "On Language" ZAMIATIN 1970, pp. 180-181 notes the familiarity of Leskov, Tolstoi, Gor'kii, and especially Aleksei Remizov with Old Slavonic, Old Believer, and folkloric literature. The latter even used the pre-Cyrillic *glagolitsa* in the colorful, enigmatic documents and charters of his antic secret society of artists and writers, the *Obezvelvolpal* (a satire of the Soviet propensity for acronyms, for the "Great and Free Chamber of the Monkeys"), to which Zamiatin himself and V.N. Nabokov's cousin, the composer Nikolai Dmitrievich Nabokov (1903-1978) belonged (see OBATNINA 2001, p. 352).

65- See Text 4, *infra*.

66- See RUSSELL 1998.

it politic in the year of the Great Terror to prefer this version because it implies the Marxist imperative of focusing on the predicament of this world and waging revolution, rather than hoping and believing in the goodness and power of heavenly forces (though it can, more subversively, be read as a claim that Evil governs the rulers of this earth). It was also politically savvy to base a poem on a source presumed to be of oral, folk origin, since the anti-formalist cultural policy of the Stalinist régime encouraged the study and emulation of literature ostensibly unmediated by intellectual sophistication, by the practitioners of “art for art’s sake”. Of course the Book of the Dove, for all its orality, has a dense and sophisticated textual background— but that would not have mattered to Zabolotskii.

The Book of the Dove, and the related Sadko cycle with its kindred themes of watery beings and realms, survived and developed in the Novgorod region, further variants being transmitted from there to the Russian north and east. Vladimir Nabokov was a native of Russia’s northwestern capital, St. Petersburg; and the family estates were Batovo in nearby Vyra and Rozhdestveno. In his novels, his nostalgia is for the north of Russia: lakes in the northern reaches of a fictional New York State are called, in playfully diminishing size, Omega (i.e., “big O”), Ozero (Rus. “lake”), and Zero, with Omega a cunning, kenning homonymic stand-in for the north Russian lake Onega. If Nabokov played the joke once, it would be merely poignant; but he does it twice, making it a nostalgic *cri de coeur*. In the novel *Pnin* (1957), Onkwedo, the location of the hospitable dacha of Alexander Petrovich Kukol’nikov (cheerfully Americanized to Al Cook, a metamorphosis to which poor Pnin’s intractably Russian name is not susceptible), is located, the narrator informs us, on the latitude of lake Ohrida (note the link through the lake-shape and sound O) but looks like lake Onega. Ohrid is in Yugoslavia— that is, South, but still Slav. Why this longing for the north in particular? Is it only because home was there? One thinks not, because of a comment Nabokov slips into the mouth of one of Al Cook’s guests, Count Fyodor Nikitich Poroshin, who complains that his children Igor’ and Ol’ga are not interested in “most interesting, exciting things— for instance, about local, elective self-government in the Russian far north in the seventeenth century.”⁶⁷ And here is the point: Nabokov was enraged by the smug assumption of some Westerners that Russia’s unbroken tradition of autocracy doomed it to a dismal succession of tsars and commissars about whom there was nothing to be done. The elder Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov, as we know from *Speak, Memory*, was a liberal politician who wrote in favor of gay rights, spent time in a comparatively humane tsarist jail, nearly fought a duel with a reactionary editor, and died taking the bullet intended for his friend and fellow exile, the liberal parliamentarian Pavel Miliukov. Nabokov knew intimately a Russia with a vigorous democratic and liberal tradition; and moreover, that tradition had roots in the Middle Ages, in the Hanseatic republic of Novgorod. Indeed, the ghost of the executed Decembrist Ryleev haunted Batovo: he lived there and wrote a poem situated there in which an Old Believer-like priest instigates the son of Peter the Great to rebel and restore the lost freedoms and ancient ways of the Russians.

67- NABOKOV 1996, p. 382; on Onkwedo, see p. 383.

Just as Nabokov employed the Igor' epic to build an ethereal bridge to Scotland, so he inserts a single reference to the marvelous unicorn creature of the *Golubinaia kniga* to evoke the heroic past of Novgorod, whose symbol was not the imperial double-headed eagle, but the bell of liberty. Poroshin's comment comes at an important point in the novel: before the visit to the dacha Pnin is culturally and linguistically baffled, crippled, outgunned, isolated in the novel, at the mercy of his narrator's sarcasm. But not in Chapter Five: at the dacha, Pnin is one of *les artistes chez eux*: the guests are all Russian émigré scholars, liberals, Jews, Armenians who appreciate his disquisitions on the discontinuities and stretches of spiritual time in Tolstoy. This is a central concern in the metaphysics of the real Nabokov⁶⁸— and in Chapter Five the narrator, the cruel pseudo-Nabokov, is derided as an *uzhasnyi vydumshchik*, a “dreadful falsifier”. In the preceding chapters Pnin is tormented by the cruel and vulgar Liza; so it is in this chapter, too, that Pnin's true love, Mira Belochkina, emerges fully from memory, and one learns of her murder at the hands of the Nazis in the Holocaust. Her name contains Rus. *belka*, “squirrel”— a creature that appears at Pnin's moments near death, and also, through linguistic legerdemain, in the image of Victor's wonderful blue punchbowl.⁶⁹ Pnin arrives at Onkwedo by car: acquisition of the independence and mobility of one's own wheels is an emblem of the hero's triumph (the book begins with him passively boarding the wrong train), and at the end of the novel he will ride off in it into the sunset. Nabokov had meant to kill off Pnin first, but thankfully his friends at *The New Yorker* would not hear of it; hence the final chapter, which must be a subtle joke, a satire on the image of the *troika* at the end of Nikolai Gogol's *Dead Souls*, that poem in prose Nabokov studied so minutely. So Pnin's very arrival at Onkwedo/Ohrida/Onega is in an ennobling chariot, as it were: the whole human and spiritual world of the chapter is an ideally democratic north Russia in miniature, with Poroshin's hint embedded in the narrative; and towards the end, after the revelatory reverie on Mira Belochkina, the liberal theme is recapitulated in a coda suitable to Nabokov's *potustoronnost'*, his “otherworld-ness”: Pnin believes “in a democracy of ghosts”, not in “an autocratic God”. That is, his alternative, heterodox cosmology corresponds to his anti-monarchical, liberal political views!

In *Pnin*, with an inept main character who is more noble and decent than his narrator, Nabokov fleshes out, I think, a concept he adumbrates somewhat differently in *Glory*.

68- This concern pervades Russian criticism: Joseph Brodsky wrote “poetry is, in the final analysis, time reorganized, in relation to which dumb space is internally hostile. The former was personified by Mandelstam; the state made of the latter its weapon.” See GORDIN 2000, p. 7.

69- Pnin does not at first seem to connect with his son, Victor; but they dream intersecting dreams, and the boy sends Pnin a beautiful blue glass bowl that embodies the spiritual depth and love of the giver. Nabokov points out in the notes to his translation into English of the Igor' epic that Cinderella's slippers were *vair*, “squirrel”, cognate to Old Rus. *veveritsa*, “squirrel”, not *verre*, “glass”, the *lectio facillior*. In the Igor' poem, the vatic Boyan is said to travel through the air like an eagle, across the earth like a wolf, and through the trees like a *mysl'*, “thought”. Viacheslav Ivanov and others went through linguistic contortions to make the middle image an animal— a *mys'*, that is, a mouse, well, some sort of rodent, well, a squirrel! Nabokov let “thought” stand but compensated by dispatching legions of cryptically important squirrels across his pages.

There Martin, another intellectual émigré hero whose free and noble nature is rooted in the nearly mythological past of northwestern Russia, is imprisoned, not by a pompous and finally unreliable narrator (a strategy Nabokov takes to the extreme in *Pale Fire*), but by the plodding aridity of the very narrative and structure of the novel itself. It proved to be a dangerous strategy, since the critics generally did not understand that the very plainness, almost banality, of the novel itself might have been intentional, a foil for Martin's alien, luxuriant inner life, his intrinsic nobility. One senses the latter in the Russian title: the slightly archaic-sounding *podvig* means a knightly exploit or campaign; but in English "exploit" might be read, with stress on the *ultima*, as a verb with decidedly less-than-noble overtones. "Glory" properly translates Russian *slava*, a word of almost endless epic and artistic depths and resonant associations, in Russian culture generally and in Nabokov's *oeuvre* in particular, where it is the title of his *ars poetica*, his *Exegi monumentum*.⁷⁰

On the very first page of *Podvig* Nabokov introduces the heroic, mythological theme with reference to the most important and beneficent creature of the largest section of the poem of the Book of the Dove: "Edelweiss, Martin's grandfather, was, however funny it may seem, Swiss, a tall Swiss with a fluffy moustache, who had tutored in the 1860's the children of the Petersburg landowner Indrikov and had married the latter's youngest daughter."⁷¹ The encoded *indrik*, "unicorn", is mentioned two pages later, though never explained or rendered into modern Russian: "If the family name of Martin's grandfather blossomed in the mountains, then his grandmother's maiden name, differing by its magical⁷² origin from the Volkovs, Kunitsyns, and Belkins,⁷³ was related to the fauna of the Russian fairy tale. Marvellous beasts once upon a time trotted across our land. But Sofia Dmitrievna found the Russian fairy tale rather crude, evil, and impoverished; the Russian song, senseless; the Russian riddle, foolish— and had little faith in Pushkin's nanny, saying that the poet had dreamed her up together with her tales, knitting needles, and long-ing. Thus Martin in early childhood did not learn anything else that later on might have

70- See RUSSELL 2005 on the term with reference to Nabokov's poem and its echoes of Pushkin, and the telegraphic, concealed discussion of it in a footnote in his commentary on the Igor' epic.

71- NABOKOV 2001, p. 97, translation mine: for the Eng. tr. by the author's son, Dmitri Nabokov, where the word order has been changed, see NABOKOV 1971.

72- Rus. *volshebnyĭ proiskhozhdeniĭem*: Nabokov called himself as a *volshebnik* "magician, enchanter" and recognized in the word itself a partial anagram of his own name. The word is the title, also, of the Russian-language novel, translated into English as *The Enchanter*, that was the precursor to *Lolita*. The unnamed hero of *Volshebnik* invents an intricate fantasy-justification of his seduction of a young girl. But at his climax she cries out, the enraged neighbors mob the pervert, and he falls beneath a speeding truck. In *Glory*, Martin lives in the dream of Zoorland enveloped in the larger dream of his life, but is crushed by the reality of Soviet Russia.

73- Of course these zoöphoric surnames— Wolf, Marten, and Squirrel— are all of magical and folkloric importance. Marten echoes in English the name of the Anglophone hero, Rus. *Martyn*; one has already noted the otherworldly symbolism and epic connections of the ubiquitous squirrel in Nabokov's *Priglasenie*; and the wolf, usually *seryi* ("gray") in folk tales, is the helper of the third and youngest son, the hero. In Pushkin's long fairytale-epic poem *Ruslan and Liudmila*, to which Nabokov will allude presently, the wolf is *buryi* ("brown")— see RUSSELL [2009]. So in fact magic and enchantment lie beneath the overt narrative at every point.

added to his life, piercing the semi-precious wave of memory, one more enchantment; but enchantments there were in plenty anyway, and he had no occasion to regret that in childhood his imagination had been awakened, not by Eruslan but by Eruslan's brother.⁷⁴ And isn't it really all the same where the gentle push comes from, by which the soul is moved and takes off, doomed (*obrechënnaiia*) after it never to cease its movement?" Martin is doomed indeed to his heroic quest: he will cross secretly the closely guarded frontier of Russia under the Soviets and perish. The very next scene adumbrates the quest and crossing, employing imagery that harks back to the very *Ruslan and Liudmila* he is supposed not to have known: in Martin's childhood nursery hangs a watercolor picture painted by "Grandma Edelweiss, born Indrikova" (*Babushka Edel'veis, rozhdënnaiia Indrikova*) of a deep forest with a path winding into it.⁷⁵ While saying his evening prayers, first an English couplet, then the Paternoster in Slavonic, the young Martin hopes his mother will not notice the "seductive path" (*soblaznitel'noi tropinki*)⁷⁶ just above him. This is a foreshadowing of the lethal, clandestine path he will take back into Russia. Martin imagines in later years, "Did it not happen just that way?" (*Ne sluchilos' li i vpriam' tak*) that he had leapt into the picture from his headboard (*s izgolov'ia*)⁷⁷ and "Was this not the beginning of that happy and tormented journey (*schastlivogo i muchitel'nogo puteshestviia*) that all of his life had become?" He recalled "the strange dark air, full of fairytale possibilities" (*strannyi tëmnyi vozdukh, polnyi skazochnykh vozmozhnostei*).

Nabokov's theme gives voice to the dreams of many of his fellow émigrés to be invited home, to return: Ivan Bunin dreamed of receiving a postcard from Stalin; Nina Berberova, of being in a coffin shipped home to St. Petersburg; and in his story "The Visit to the

74- The "brother" is the Tristan or Tristram of Western epic lore, with whom Martin was to identify himself later on. The name Eruslan is a variant of the form Ruslan, used by Pushkin and noted above; but it is closer in form to an original Turkic *a(r)s(a)lan*, "lion"—the other father of all the beasts in the Book of the Dove. (Aslan is the name C.S. Lewis gave to his leonine Christ in the *Narnia* books.) And just as the Wolfs, Martens, and Squirrels are in fact fairytale beings, despite the narrator's assertion, in the very next passage the landscape of Pushkin's *Ruslan and Liudmila* will surreptitiously enter Martin's childhood despite the narrator's claim to the contrary.

75- NABOKOV 1971, p. 151 (=NABOKOV 2001, p. 208) mentions the name of a heroine of *Ruslan and Liudmila*, Naina. The temptation to enter a painting in the nursery is an autobiographical element: in *Speak, Memory*, the path in a beech wood brings Nabokov to his American safe haven (see DE VRIES AND JOHNSON 2006, pp. 17 and 182 n. 21). One notes the linkage of the seductive to the lethal in *Glory*; cf. the thematic correspondence, noted above, to *The Enchanter*, where the serpent (*zilan!*) of death coils round the forbidden sexual fruit.

76- NABOKOV 1971 has "tempting": that is fine and sufficiently diabolical for *soblazn*, but since the author was in *Pale Fire* to deploy Goethe's *Erlkönig* I have opted for stronger stuff, letting the forest path seduce the callow boy.

77- The pictures and wallpaper of Nabokov's own nursery were magical windows; and in *Bend Sinister* the talking guest room at the Maximovs' *dacha* reminds the waking Krug that they met yesterday and "those are windmills on the wallpaper". In *Pale Fire* Nabokov, cocking a snoot at the cave metaphor in the *Republic* of Plato, with its sustained attack on art, employs the conceit of having a fictional character move still a farther remove from formal narrative reality (the latter a word the writer insisted should properly be used only with inverted commas) by having the poet John Shade muse on life as prelude to a poem—his unfinished one, his dead daughter Hazel's unwritten one.

Museum” Nabokov has a magic door opening from a French provincial museum onto a snowy Moscow street. In the poem “Death by Firing Squad” (*Rasstrel*, Berlin, 1927), too, Nabokov writes of his bed sailing off in dream (cf. Martin’s headboard!), of having returned to Russia, only to be killed. He wakes from the nightmare in merciful exile but reflects how his heart still wanted to be home, with the ravine of the execution *ves’ v cherëmushke*, “with racemosa all abloom”. The delicate white *cherëmukha* flowers of the northern Russian spring appear in Nabokov’s writings as emblems of nostalgia.⁷⁸ The evocation of the prayer in Slavonic⁷⁹ and the reference to “fairytale” (*skazka*) both evoke mythology and the Russian past, thereby multiply stressing the mention of the *indrik* in its context. In another poem, “Dream Vision” (*Snovidenie*, Text 5.2 *infra*) that, like “Death by Firing Squad”, links the dream to a vision of death, Nabokov encounters a murdered friend. Thus there is a tightly associated complex of themes of dream states and dream visions, a return to Russia, and death and the dead that Nabokov adumbrates in poems and elaborates in novels, to which *Podvig* also belongs. In the latter, the hero’s dreams seem to be the crucial addition to a super-saturated solution of reality (an image, incidentally, that Zamiatin applies to the point at which the writer, who works in a semi-dreaming state, succeeds in creating a fiction): “[Martin] noted a certain peculiarity about his life: the property that his reveries had of crystallizing and mutating into reality, as previously they had mutated into sleep.”⁸⁰ In that narrative, though, Martin will not be able, as Pnin does, to make a viable life of exile— perhaps the younger Nabokov was not yet reconciled himself to such a necessity— and his circumstances conspire against any possibility of a future in Western Europe. He is in love with a girl, Sofia Zilanova, who will not return his affection: it has long been recognized that her surname contains the Turkic word for a serpent, *zilan*, that is encountered in the name of a mythical villain of the Russian *byliny*, or heroic ballads,⁸¹ and she is in love, in turn, with Martin’s Cambridge classmate Darwin, whose

78- On émigré nostalgia, see FRANK 2008, p. 52: the post-Soviet comedy film *Okno v Parizh*, “Window into Paris”, reduces the theme to a joke with a mawkishly sentimental ending, albeit less vulgar than the lion, witch, and wardrobe of C.S. Lewis in the Anglophone world. Nabokov engraved in the glass of Edmund Wilson’s guest room window the first couplet of the poem (NABOKOV 2002, p. 186): “There are nights when as soon as I lie down/ My bed sails off to Russia” (*Byvaiut nochi, tol’ko liagu, / V Rossiïu poplyvët krovat’*).

79- In the Russian: “at which we left somebody named Jacob to our debtors” (*prichëm kakogo-to Iakova my ostavliali dolzhnikam nashim*), a child’s misunderstanding of OCS. *iakozhe ostavliaem dolzhnikom nashim*, is lost in Dmitri Nabokov’s authorized translation, since the English reader will not get the reference, any more than a Russian might an American’s child’s hearing “Gladly the cross-eyed bear” for the words of the hymn “Gladly the Cross I’d bear” (this example courtesy, at a distance of over four decades, of one’s much loved sixth-grade teacher Mrs. Jeanne Oladele, an African-American from Texas).

80- NABOKOV 1971, pp. 108-109= NABOKOV 2001, p. 177: [*Martyn*] *podmechal nekuïu osobennost’ svoei zhizni: svoistvo mechty nezametno osedat’ i perekhodit’ v deistvitel’nost’, kak prezhde ona perekhodila v son*.

81- In folklore, the knight-hero (*bogatyr’*) Tugarin Zmeevich (lit. “Serpent-son”) and Krasa Zilantovna (HABER 1977, p. are the *ischad’ia* (“unholy offspring”— cf. *infra* Esenin’s use in the poem “Marfa Posadnitsa” of the word *ischaved’e* of the Antichrist, who helps the Muscovite king to conquer free Novgorod!) of the relations of fiery serpents with the daughters of men; cf. the Biblical Nephilim (lit., “Abortions”).

name calls up all the dry rationalism and materialism incompatible with the romantic soul of Martin, who is several times likened to Tristram⁸² (and who will become a literal-lyrical Ruslan). Martin speaks of stealing across the closely patrolled Soviet frontier; so Darwin proposes the banal solution of somehow obtaining a tourist visa instead (an alternative Nabokov himself considered, then rejected, in later life).

Russia for Martin is the Indrikova watercolor into whose forest paths he is to step, alighting in dream from the headboard-prow of his sailing bed, a magical track from a fairytale: this is the landscape of the prologue to Pushkin's *Ruslan and Liudmila*: "There on unknown paths/ The footprints of unseen beasts" (*Tam na nevedomykh dorozhках/ Sledy nevidannykh zverei*); "There wood and dale are full of visions" (*Tam les i dol videnii polny*).⁸³ It is a wholly mythological place, the heroic and free locus of a *bylina* outside the constraints of space and time, a return to the glory of childhood from the gray banality of exile. The mention of another magical road in the novel encodes the theme of ancient Rus'—the world of *indriki* and *byliny*—as well: in the Crimea, Martin sees "the sea with the Trail to Constantinople in the middle, a lunar trail" (*more s tsaregradskoi stezēi posredine, lunnoi stezēi*, using the old Russian word for Byzantium, meaning "City of the Emperor", that is found also in the Rime of the Book of the Dove: the translation published by Nabokov and his son has "the sea... with the full moon's wake, the 'Turkish Trail' spreading in the middle," losing the reference).⁸⁴ But this utopia has become a dystopia, too; so correspondingly to mythologize the latter Martin invents a satiric parody of the Soviet state, Zoorland: Nabokov, again, adumbrates this detail in a poem of April 1930, "Uldaborg" ("translated from the Zoorlandish", even: Text 5.1). The poem envisions the author's own execution, at which he laughs, suggesting a transition from the wretched everyday of life in a police state to the freedom of *potustoronnost'*, the Otherworld—a

82- See HABER 1977, from whose Homeric feast of insight, Aeschylus-like, I offer these crumbs. As NICOL 2002, p. 164, notes, in 1921, adumbrating the theme of Tristram/Tristan denied the fulfillment of love much as Martin is spurned, Nabokov wrote a poem containing the lines "I am a wanderer. I am Tristan. In dense copses did I sleep/ And slumber on a bed of ice" (*Ia strannik. Ia Tristan. Ia v roshchakh spal dushistykh/ I spal na lozhe izo l'da*). The words *strannik* ("wanderer") and "Tristan" (and "Martin" also, for that matter) are near anagrams in Russian (as are *vol'shebnik* "enchanter, magician" and "VI[adimir] Nabokov"); and *izo l'da* "made of ice" is an obvious encoding of Isolde. The style and structure of the poem remind one of Gérard de Nerval's *El Desdichado*, and thus hint at the theme of suicide, one which was to preoccupy Nabokov throughout his life. It may be argued that Martin's own *podvig* is as suicidal as it is intrepid.

83- See RUSSELL [2009] on the cosmological associations of this mythopoetic poem, which was apparently one of Nabokov's favorites in the Pushkinian corpus.

84- NABOKOV 1971, p. 20. Nabokov's own family sailed from the Crimea into exile, with Constantinople (as Istanbul was still then officially called) their first stopping place, as it is Martin's in *Glory*. And, quite beside the associations with Byzantium, one must stress the *actualité* of Constantinople for Russians at the time: even after the February Revolution, with the nation dissolving into chaos, the Russian government was still insisting that Britain and France allot the city to them as part of the spoils of victory. The liberal leader Pavel N. Miliukov was taunted in the spring of 1917 by Socialist anti-war demonstrators with the sobriquet "Miliukov-Dardanel'skii" for his particular insistence on Russian claims to the straits. (See IGNATIEFF 1998, p. 24.) The writer Nabokov's father Vladimir Dmitrievich Nabokov, also a liberal revolutionary, died trying to protect his friend Miliukov from a monarchist assassin's bullet in 1922.

theme developed by Nabokov in the novel *Invitation to a Beheading* (*Priglasenie na kazn'*), where at the moment of his execution the hero, Cincinnatus, steps out of the world into another where there are people like him. The invented language of Zoorland is fully Germanic: those of the unnamed country with its capital at Padukgrad, in *Bend Sinister*, and of Zembla, in *Pale Fire*, both English-language works of the American period, have a Slavic admixture.

Nabokov had some German ancestors, and read German well. In *Podvig* German and Russian engage more in a game of hide-and-seek than a war: Martin Edelweiss has a vulgar, materialistic uncle Heinrich (Rus. *Genrikh*), whose name may be a distorting mirror, as well as a close homonym, of the noble Indrik. But the writer always denied fluency in the German language; and especially after the rise of the Nazis to power German, already associated in his mind, with cruelty and vulgarity, became indelibly the accursed tongue of the murderer. After the defeat of Hitler, the only remaining tyranny was the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union; and as Nabokov became a master of English prose in the United States, the great bastion of anti-Communism, he might have felt less diffident about allowing some Slavic into the made-up languages of his fairytale nightmare realms. So when Martin prepares for his secret return, the careful reader knows he travels as a fairytale unicorn, that is, moving freely through the subterranean caverns of earth, a creature beneficent and kind, the champion of *Pravda* against the forces of *Krivda*. But the latter, as we know from the Rime of the Book of the Dove, rules this world, hence its lawlessness and hatred. Martin's journey, then, is into a Soviet Russia that is the shoddy, paper-thin farce of Zoorland: ripping it open, and seeming to die, he will complete his return by emerging into the heavenly realm of Our Lord Jesus Christ Himself where *Pravda* is king: the *potustoronnost'* of the path and wood of the painting, the fairytale Russia of Pushkin, the *byliny*, and the *kaleki perekhozhie*, the itinerant blind minstrels who chanted the poem of the *Golubinaia kniga* with its *indrik*. The *podvig*, literally movement, and of course also exploit and campaign, is not the futile transit from Western Europe to Soviet Russia, then, but the defeat of Zoorland and the victorious return to Rus'. And where does Rus' now live, save in the *Slovo*, the Word, from the *Slovo o polku Igoreve* to Tolstoi, the life-giving stream of Russian letters that is Martin's— and Nabokov's— *slava*, literally "renown, being heard", *Glory*.

The title of this essay suggests that the Iranian cosmologies and their Armenian intermediaries lead, not modestly to a Russian novel— *Podvig*, a relatively obscure one at that— but to the Russian novel. Nabokov steadfastly denied any of his *romans* had a political *clef*; but he wished also to be remembered, perhaps paradoxically, as a moralist. This claim sounds strange, coming as it does from the author of *Lolita* and its precursors (which include, as usual, a poem, "Lilith" [*Lilit*, Berlin, 1928], in which the narrator, like Humbert Humbert, is already dead).⁸⁵ However if one reads that novel, as the late Prof. Richard Rorty did in his essay "The Barber of Kasbeam: Nabokov on cruelty," not as a heartlessly

85- NABOKOV 2002, pp. 221-223.

brilliant tour de force on sexuality, but as Nabokov's ultimate and heartbreaking exploration of the theme of cruelty that preoccupied him throughout his life, then the claim has validity.⁸⁶ *Podvig* is larger than its overt theme: a dreamy, nostalgic Russian youth cannot manage exile and returns home to what the reader must assume is a tragic death. Nabokov was a Russian liberal democrat whose father lived for that cause and died a martyr in its service; and it is in this light that one can also understand Martin, a free spirit who cannot make his peace with unfreedom and must do battle with it to the death. But there is more: with his explicit reference to the Rime of the Book of the Dove, understood in the wider context of his other novels, Nabokov evokes the Other Rus' of dissident sectarians and their diverse cosmologies at variance with the received version of Orthodoxy, of the cosmopolitan Novgorodian republic and its liberty bell broken by the tyrannical power of Moscow's Oriental despotism, of village traditions of self-government in the Russian far north. That is, Nabokov reminds his reader that liberalism is not an alien graft onto the tree of a Russian forest, an imported hothouse flower to be dismissed by political "realists" as inappropriate or immature. Russian liberal democracy has a native archaeology of its own, its roots as deep as those of the oak around which strolls Pushkin's Learned Cat reciting his *skazki*; its flowers as familiarly native as the vernal blossoms of the *cherëmushka*. The symbols he employs to his polemical purpose, although they are subtly deployed, are nonetheless immediately intelligible to a culturally literate Russian contemporary of the author. One need only cite the essay "*Skify li?*" ("Scythians?") by the writer and critic Evgenii Zamiatin (1884-1937). It begins with this dramatic evocation of freedom: "A solitary, savage horseman— a Scythian— gallops across the grass steppe, hair streaming in the wind. Where is he galloping? Nowhere. What for? For no reason. He gallops simply because he is a Scythian, because he has become one with his horse, because he is a centaur, and the dearest things to him are freedom, solitude, his horse, the wide expanse of the steppe."⁸⁷ And shortly thereafter, to describe the battle between freedom and slavery, Zamiatin cites the poem "Marfa Posadnitsa" by that north Russian peasant poet and free spirit, Sergei Esenin, on the confrontation between Novgorod and Moscow: "It is not a monk conversing with the Lord in his cell/ But the Muscovite Tsar summoning Anti-christ:/ Alas, Beelzebub, woe is me, woe!/ Novgorod the free will not kiss my feet./ Satan

86- See RORTY 1989, pp. 141-168. Rorty suggests Nabokov's work is best when it exhibits his inability to believe his own stated conviction that art is an intricate aesthetic and intellectual game played for art's sake alone. But I think that in making such statements Nabokov was reacting against the puritanical dogmatism of post-Chernyshevskii anti-formalist literary ideology. He spoke of himself as a moralist: this to him included, though, total freedom.

87- ZAMIATIN 1970, p. 21. When the emperor Peter, stifled by Moscow, moved his capital to a place where he might better imagine the cosmopolitanism and freedom of Amsterdam, did he not both open a window to European liberalism, and waken the nearer sleeping giant of Novgorodian liberty? For the ethnographers of the academy in the northern capital naturally focused their researches at first on what lay nearby; so it was northern tales with their air of freedom that Küchelbecker and Pushkin— who created the nation's modern literary voice and thereby gave Petersburg its second, cultural and spiritual, foundation— read in their youth at their northern lycée. Had the new capital been founded at another forward position of imperial expansion: facing Poland in the West, say, or Turkey, in the South— the *mise en scene* of modern Russia would inevitably have been different and more despotic.

slithers forth as a viper from behind the stove./ In his glowing walleyes, spawn of hell:/ 'Swear you will pledge your soul to me;/ Otherwise you'll have no joy of Novgorod.'"⁸⁸

Nabokov's evocation of an ancient and autochthonous liberalism native to the Novgorodian realms, the Russian north, is a riposte to the xenophobic charge of the Slavophiles, even as the vision of a Celto-Nordic bridge to a kindred Slavic tradition is a salutary response to the exaggerated self-denigration of Russia by the *zapadniki*, the Westernizers. These concerns are at the heart of the civil discourse that the classics of Russian literature provided to a nation denied by Tsarist and Soviet despotism free expression in any other sphere: the big, good book addressing the perennial, burning questions. In a recent book—a book-length polemical essay—the granddaughter of Nikita Sergeevich Khrushchëv, the Soviet leader who dethroned Stalinism, has argued that Nabokov, because he considered the free individual the beginning and end of civic virtue and insisted upon a highly personalized, even eccentric aesthetic on that basis of creative and imaginative autonomy, is the crucial Russian novelist for the nation to espouse in the 21st century, lest it succumb to the temptation to slide back into authoritarian patterns of rule.⁸⁹ It may be added that Nabokov found ennobling values of liberty in Russian culture a millennium ago, making any reversion to unfreedom neither an inevitability inviting the condescension of Russophobes, nor a cloak of tradition beneath which a new police state might conceal its falsehood (*krivda*) and lawlessness (*bezzakonie*). *Aša kaṭ θwā darāsānī* "O Truth, when may I behold thee?" In the realms of *Pravda*, Zarathustra perhaps admires the insight and defiance of the Russian novelist as akin to his own; and shares his determination that the Truth reign on earth, as it does in heaven. And the lore that enlivens the novel was enabled to accomplish its long journey, from ancient Iran to modern Russia by way, fittingly, of the westernmost of the Zoroastrian lands and the most ancient of the Christian realms, Armenia.

88- *Ne chernets beseduet s Gospodom v zatvore./ Tsar' moskovskii antikhrista vyzivaet./ "Oi, Viel'zevule, gore mne gore./ Novgorod mne vol'nyi nog ne lobyzaet."/ Vylez iz zapech'ia satana gadiukoi./ V lucheglazykh bel'makh ischaved'e ada./ "Pobozhisia dushu vydat' mne porukoi./ Inache ne budet s Novgorodom slada!"*

89- See COATES 2008, rev. of KHRUSHCHEVA 2008. Khrushchëva sees the "American" Nabokov as a model for 21st-century Russia because of his individualism—the quality that, she argues, made him a success in this country. But she derides what she calls his "contempt of the Russian tradition of socially minded literature" and claims, apparently on the sole basis of the dedication of the autobiographical *Speak, Memory* to the author's wife, Véra, that he "slammed the door shut" on his readers. His creation of Dolores Haze and Timofey Pnin, kind characters, convinces her that "generously, in the Russian way, [Nabokov] counterbalanced the indifference of democracy." Coates rightly disputes Khrushchëva's simplistic characterizations and shallow, tendentious dualism, concluding, "If Russians really need a prophet, they could surely do better than Khrushcheva's ugly American." I would argue that Khrushcheva makes the right point for the wrong reasons. Nabokov is socially minded, but his concern for his country arises from the foundation of an individual, free conscience that was formed, not by exile in America, but by a Russian liberalism he encountered in his Slavonic studies and whose ancient, native roots he explores in *Glory* and *Pnin*.

TEXTS.

1. THE RIME OF THE BOOK OF THE DOVE (*STIKH O GOLUBINOI KNIGE*):

1.1 OKSENOV 1908, PP. 304-311, TR. BY J.R. RUSSELL.

1.2. *SBORNIK KIRSHI DANILOVA*, MOSCOW 1977 ED., TR. BY J.R. RUSSELL.

1.3. FURTHER VARIANTS FROM BEZSONOV 1861.

1.1. "An awesome, night y st or m came up/ And down fell t he Book of t he Dove,/ And not a small one, but a great one,/ Wide was the book— forty fathoms,/ Across it was— twenty fathoms./ To that book divine/ Came round, rode nigh/ Forty kings with the heir to the throne,/ Forty princes and the prince's son,/ Forty priests and forty deacons,/ Many people, little folk,/ Orthodox Christians./ No one walks up to the book,/ Nobody to that book of God comes near./ The king most wise came up,/ The king most wise, David son of Jesse./ Up to the book of God he walks,/ Before him the book creaks open [*razgibaetsia*]/ All the sacred writing is declared to him./ Then there came up to the book prince Vladimir,⁹⁰ Prince Vladimir, Vladimir's son: 'You, king most wise, David son of Jesse,/ Tell, sire, teach us,/ Who wrote this book,/ Who sealed this book of the dove?'/ The king most wise made reply,/ The king most wise, David son of Jesse:/ 'Jesus Christ Himself wrote this book,/ Jesus Christ, the king of Heaven,/ The Prophet Isaiah himself read the book./ He read it for a full three years,/ He read a full three pages.'/ 'Well now then [*oi ty goi esi*],⁹¹ our king most wise,/ King most wise, David son of Jesse!/ Read, sire, the divine book,/ Declare, sire, the divine deeds,/ About our life, our holy Russian life,/ About our life in the wide, free world [*svetu vol'nogo*]/ From what did our wide, free world begin?/ From what comes our red sun,/ From what, our bright young moon,/ From what, the many stars,/ From what, our dark nights,/ From what, our morning dawns,/ From what, our winds tempestuous,/ From what, the many separate drops of rain,/ From what, our mind and sense,/ From what, our thoughts,/ From what, our peopled world,/ From what, our strong bones,/ From what, our bodies,/ From what, the red blood in our veins?/ From what have come our kings upon the earth?/ From what began the princes and the boyars,/ From what, the Orthodox peasants?'/ The king most wise begins to speak,/ The king most wide, David son of Jesse:/ 'Well now then, prince Vladimir,/ Prince Vladimir, Vladimir's son!/ I am not able to read the divine book./ I have the mind to read a book, but not to read this divine one:/ This book is not small,/ This book is great./ Try to hold it in your hands: you cannot support it./ Put it on a divine lectern: it will not lie there./ we cannot conceive this book with the mind,/ We cannot scan this book with the eye./ The great Book of the Dove!/ But according to my memory of long ago,/ I will relate to you, as though in writing:/ Our white, wide world was born by the judgment of God,/ The red sun, of the face of Christ./

90- An anachronistic reference to the tenth-century patron saint of Rus': the name is a Slavicized Waldemar. From the form Volodimir, some versions have even Malodumar, "He of Little Thought"—a fool and foil to David, the king most wise. He is conversely also called, as in text 1.2, Volotomon, a fusion of the saint's name with that of the paragon of esoteric knowledge and wisdom, David's son Solomon.

91- A typical formula of address in Russian *byliny*.

Of Christ Himself, the king of Heaven,/ The bright young moon, of His breasts,/ The many stars, of the garments of God,/ The dark night, of the thoughts of God,/ The morning dawns, of the eyes of God,/ The tempestuous winds, of the Holy Spirit,/ The drops of rain, from the tears of Christ,/ Of Christ Himself, the king of Heaven./ Our mind and sense are from Christ Himself,/ Our thoughts, from the clouds of heaven,/ Our peopled world, from Adam,/ Our strong bones, from stone,/ Our bodies, from the damp [*syroi*] earth,⁹²/ Our red blood, from the black sea./ From this came our kings on the earth,/ From the holy head of Adam,/ From this came the princes and boyars—/ From the holy relics of Adam,/ From this are the Orthodox peasants—/ From the sacred knee of Adam./ Prince Vladimir begins to speak,/ Prince Vladimir, Vladimir's son:/ 'King most wise, David son of Jesse!/ Tell us, teach:/ Which king is king over kings?/ Which land is the mother to all lands?/ Which head is the mother to all heads?/ Which city is father to cities?/ Which church is mother to all churches?/ Which river is mother to all rivers?/ Which mountain is mother to all mountains?/ Which stone is mother to all stones?/ Which tree is mother to all trees?/ Which plant is mother to all plants?/ Which sea is mother to all seas?/ Which fish is mother to all fish?/ Which bird is mother to all birds?/ Which beast is father to all beasts?'/ The king most wise begins to speak,/ The king most wise, David son of Jesse:/ 'Our White King is king over kings./ Why then is the White King the king over kings?/ He holds to the baptismal faith,/ The baptismal faith of worship of God./ He stands for the Christian faith,/ For the house of the Immaculate Mother of God./ That is why the White King is king over kings./ The holy land of Rus' is mother to all lands:/ In her they build apostolic churches,/ They pray to the crucified Christ,/ To Christ Himself, the king of Heaven./ That is why the holy land of Rus' is mother to all lands./ And the head that is mother to heads is the head of Adam./ The city of Jerusalem is father to cities./ Why is that city father to cities?/ Jerusalem is father to cities because/ In that city, in Jerusalem,/ Here is the center of the earth./ The cathedral church is mother to all churches. Why is the cathedral church mother to all churches?/ The cathedral church stands in the middle of the city of Jerusalem./ In that cathedral church/ Stands the divine throne./ In that tomb of white stone/ Rest the garments of Christ Himself,/ Christ Himself, the king of Heaven./ That is why the cathedral church is mother to churches./ Lake Il'men'⁹³ is mother to lakes:/ Not that Il'men' that is above Novgorod,/ Nor that Il'men' that is in Constantinople [*vo Tsaregrade*]/ But that Il'men' that is in the Turkish land,/ Over the chief city, Jerusalem./ Why is lake Il'men' mother to lakes?/ Little mother Jordan flowed out of it./ Why is the river Jordan mother to all rivers?/ Jesus Christ Himself was baptized in it/ With heavenly power,/ With the guardian angels,/ With the twelve Apostles,/ With John the light, the Baptist—/ That is why the river Jordan

92- In Russian mythology, *mat'syra zemlia* "damp mother earth" is a standard tripartite expression, recalling Iranian *arədvī sūrā anāhitā* "the damp powerful unblemished (goddess)".

93- In other variants, Irmen', Armen: Il'men' is the great lake near Novgorod that floods regularly areas up to a third of its area (oral information of a local guide, July 2007). If the variant Armen is of any real significance, it may refer to the great lake of Armenia, Van, which is 80 miles in length west to east and with which are associated legends of great antiquity strikingly similar to that of the undersea cathedral of the Virgin Mary here and to the Novgorodian cycle of Sadko.

is mother to all rivers./ Mount Tabor is mother to all mountains./ Why is mount Tabor mother to the mountains?/ Jesus Christ Himself there was transfigured./ Jesus Christ, king of Heaven, the light./ With Peter, with John, with Jacob./ With the twelve Apostles/ He showed His disciples glory./ That is why mount Tabor is mother to the mountains./ On a white altar [*na belom latyre*], on the stone/ Discoursed and kept his rest/ Jesus Christ Himself, king of Heaven./ With the twelve Apostles./ With the twelve teachers./ He affirmed the faith on that stone./ He dispersed [*raspushchal*] the Book of the Dove/ Throughout the earth, through all the universe./ That is why the stone altar [*latyr*'] is mother to all stones./ The cypress tree is mother to all trees./ Why is that tree mother to all trees?/ On that tree, on the cypress/ The life-creating Cross was made manifest to us./ On that life-creating Cross/ Jesus Christ Himself was crucified./ Jesus Christ, king of Heaven, the light./ That is why the cypress is mother to all trees./ The crying-plant [*plakun-trava*]⁹⁴ is mother to all plants./ Why is the crying-plant mother to all plants?/ When the Jews crucified Christ/ And spilled His holy blood,/ His mother, the Immaculate Mother of God/ Cried mightily over Jesus Christ./ Her son, her beloved one./ Spilled her tears most pure/ On damp mother earth./ From those tears most pure/ The crying-plant was born./ For the crying-plant is mother to all plants./ The sea of Ocean is mother to all seas./ Why is the Ocean the mother of all seas?/ In the midst of Ocean/ The cathedral church emerged./ The cathedral church of the worship of God./ Of St. Clement, Pope of Rome./ On that church the roofs are of marble./ On those roofs, the crosses are golden./ From that cathedral church./ From that cathedral of the worship of God./ Emerged the queen of Heaven [*Tsaritsa nebesnaia*]/ She bathed in the sea of Ocean./ In that cathedral church she prayed to God./ Therefore is the Ocean mother to all the seas./ The whale fish [*kit-ryba*] is mother to all fish./ Why is the whale-fish mother to all fish?/ The earth is founded upon three fish./ The whale-fish stands and does not swing back [*svorokhnětsia*]/ But when the whale-fish turns [*povorotitsia*]/ Then mother earth will be convulsed [*voskolybnětsia*]/ And then our wide white world will end./ That is why the whale fish is mother to all fish./ The ostrich bird⁹⁵ is mother to all birds./ Why is she mother to all birds?/ The ostrich bird lives on the sea of Ocean/ And brings forth her progeny on the sea of Ocean./ When at God's command the ostrich bird flutters [*vostrepenětsia*] her wings./ The sea of Ocean is convulsed:/ She sinks trading ships/ With their rich wares./ That is why the ostrich bird is mother to all birds./ Our unicorn⁹⁶ beast is father to all beasts./ Why is the unicorn beast father to all beasts?/ He goes in the ways beneath the earth [*po podzemel'iu*]/ Purifies the streams and channels [*prochishchaet ruch'i i protochiny*]/ Where the beast passes./ There a spring roils [*tuta kliuch kipit*]/ Wherever that beast turns./ All beasts to that beast bow down./ He lives in the holy mountain./ Drinks and eats in the holy mountain./ Wherever he wishes he travels, under the ground./ Like the sun, when it goes through under-heaven [*kak solnyshko po pod-*

94- Purple loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria*.

95- Rus. *stratim*: in other variants, *strafil*, *strufokamil*, *str''kokamil*, i.e., "ostrich".

96- Rus. *indrik*, from *in''rog*/'*inorog*'> *edinorog*, a calque on Gk. *monokeros*, "unicorn".

nebes'iu]./ Therefore that unicorn beast of ours is father to all beasts./ Prince Vladimir spoke:/ 'Well now then, O king most wise,/ King most wise, David son of Jesse!/ Sire, I slept little last night,/ And in my dream [*vo sne*] I saw much:/ How from the eastern country,/ How from the other, the southern country,/ Two beasts came together,/ Two ferocious ones charged at each other,/ Fought and beat each other./ One beast wishes to overcome the other./ The king most wise spoke,/ The king most wise, David son of Jesse:/ 'Those were not two beasts that came together,/ Two ferocious ones that charged at each other./ That was the Lie clashing with Truth [*Eto Krivda s Pravdoi sokhodilisia*]/ Fighting and beating each other./ The Lie wants to defeat the Truth./ Truth bested [*peresporila*] the Lie./ Truth went up to Heaven./ To Christ Himself, king of Heaven./ But the Lie went among us, throughout the earth,/ Throughout the earth, throughout the Russian world./ Among all the Christian people./ Because of the Lie the earth was convulsed [*Ot Krivdy zemlia voskolebalasia*]/ Because of it all the people is enraged [*vozmushchaetsia*]/ Because of the Lie the whole people became wrongful [*nepravil'nyi*]/ Became wrongful and malicious [*zlopamiatnyi*]/ They wish to deceive each other,/ They wish to devour each other./ He who will not live by the Lie,/ He hopes upon the Lord,/ And that soul will inherit/ For itself the Kingdom of Heaven.'"

1.2. "Yes, from the beginning of the age of mortal life,/ God created the heavens with the earth./ God created Adam with Eve,/ Provided sustenance in bright Paradise,/ For them to live at their will in bright Paradise./ God laid upon them a great commandment:/ Adam was to live in bright Paradise/ But Adam was not to eat of one tree,/ That sweet fruit of the grape./ So Adam lived in bright Paradise with his Eve. For 333 years./ The snake under the well charmed them [*Prelestila zmeia podkolodnaia*]/ It brought berries from that one tree./ Adam and Eve tasted a single berry/ And knew between them an onerous sin,/ An onerous sin and great carnal transgression./ Adam sinned in bright Paradise,/ In bright Paradise with his Eve./ Here they stand in Paradise stark naked:/ Stark naked and barefoot they stood./ They covered their shame with the palms of their hands/ And came they to Christ Himself,/ To Christ Himself, the king of Heaven./ They went up on mount Tabor/ And called out and mightily cried,/ 'O king of Heaven, Jesus Christ!/ You heard your servants' prayer./ Lower me down to earth/ To dig the soil with plows,/ To sow the soil with plows,/ To sow seed in the first hour./' And the king of Heaven, light of mercy,/ Lowered him down to the hard earth./ And he dug the soil with plows,/ And in the first hour sowed the seed./ In the next hour the seed sprouted,/ And he reaped of the seed in the third hour./ He became sated by his labor,/ Clothed, and shod./ From that knee of Adam/ And that rib of Eve/ Came the Orthodox Christians/ Across all the land of the Russian world./ Adam lived, grew old,/ Grew old, passed on./ His holy head is buried./ After that flood of Noah's/ On that mountain of Zion/ By that holy head of Adam/ A cypress tree grew up./ Down to that cypress tree/ Fell the Book of the Dove./ From the heavens that book fell down./ In length that book is forty handbreadths,/ In width, that book is twenty handbreadths./ That book is thirty handbreadths thick./ On that mountain of Zion/ There gathered, came/ Forty emperors with the emperor's son,/ Forty kings with the king's son,/ And forty blind

bards [*kalik*] and a bard./ And strong and mighty knights./ They stood together in a circle./ King Volotomon spoke up./ King Volotomon, Volotomon's son./ Forty emperors with the emperor's son./ Forty kings with the king's son./ Forty blind bards and a bard./ And all the strong and mighty knights—/ They all prostrated themselves, bowed down/ To king David son of Jesse:/ 'O king most wise, David son of Jesse!/ Lift up the Book of the Dove,/ Lift up the book, remove the seals,/ Remove the seals, examine it,/ Examine it and read it./ From what began our wide white world?/ From what began the righteous sun [*solntse pravedno*]?/ From what began the bright moon?/ From what began the morning's dawn?/ From what began the dusk./ From what began dark night?/ From what began the many stars?/ The king most wise begins to speak./ The king most wise, David son of Jesse:/ 'You forty emperors with the emperor's son./ And forty kings with the king's son./ And you forty bards with a bard./ And all strong and mighty knights!/ The Book of the Dove is not small./ The Book of the Dove is great./ The book is forty handbreadths long./ The book is twenty handbreadths wide./ That book is thirty handbreadths thick./ Lift up the book in your hands— you cannot hold it./ Read it— you will not read it through./ I will tell you by my memory./ By my memory, my memory of old./ From what began our wide white world./ From what began the righteous sun./ From what began the bright moon./ From what began the morning's dawn./ From what the dusk began, too./ From what began dark night./ From what began the many stars./ The wide white world is from the face of God./ The righteous sun is from His eyes./ The bright moon is from His brow./ The dark night is from the nape of His head./ And dawn and dusk are from God's brows./ The many stars are from God's curly tresses./ All forty emperors with the emperor's son bowed down./ And forty kings with the king's son knelt./ And forty blind bards and a bard./ And all the strong and mighty knights./ King Volotomon speaks./ King Volotomon, Volotomon's son:/ 'You, O king most wise, David son of Jesse!/ You, tell please, by your memory./ By your memory of old./ Which king is king over kings?/ Which sea is father to all seas?/ And which fish is mother to all fish?/ And which mountain is mother to mountains?/ And which river is mother to rivers?/ And which tree is father to trees?/ And which bird is mother to all birds?/ and which beast is father to all beasts?/ And which plant is mother to all plants?/ And which city is father to all cities?/ The king most wise spoke./ The king most wise, David son of Jesse:/ 'The king of Heaven is king over kings./ King over kings, that is Jesus Christ./ The sea of Ocean is father to all seas./ Why is it father to all seas?/ It is father to all seas because/ All seas flowed out from it/ And all rivers submitted to it./ And the whale-fish is mother to all fish./ Why is that whale-fish mother to all fish?/ That whale-fish is mother to all fish because/ The earth is founded on seven whales./ The river Jordan⁹⁷ is mother to rivers./ Why is the river Jordan mother to rivers?/ The Jordan is mother to rivers because/ Jesus Christ Himself was baptized in her./ Mount Zion is mother to all mountains./ Cypress trees grow./ And their sap is taken to all churches./ To all churches to serve in place of incense./ The cypress tree is father to all trees./ Why is the cypress father to all

97- Rus. *Erdan*'.

trees?/ The cypress is father to all trees because/ Jesus Christ Himself was crucified upon it./ He who is heavenly king./ The mother of God cried, the Theotokos./ And wiped her face with the crying-plant./ That is why the crying-plant is mother to all plants./ The unicorn-beast [*edinorog-zver*'] is father to all beasts./ Why is the unicorn father to all beasts?/ The unicorn is father to all beasts because/ He goes also beneath the earth, / And the stone mountains do not hold him./ And those rivers of his are swift/ When he emerges from the damp earth./ He seeks an adversary then./ That ferocious lion beast./ He and the lion met in the clear field./ They, the beasts, began to fight./ They wanted to be king./ To be great over all the beasts./ And they fight for their greatness./ The unicorn beast is defeated./ Defeated by the lion beast./ And the lion is inscribed [*podpisan*]: he is to be king./ To be king over all the beasts./ And his tail is a little ring [*kolechik*]./ And the *nagai*-bird is mother to all birds./ She lives on the sea of Ocean/ And weaves her nest on the white stone./ Thither hastened trading mariners/ To the nest of the *nagai*-bird./ To her little chicks./ The *nagai*-bird flutters [*vostrepenëtsia*] her wings./ The sea of Ocean is convulsed [*voskolybaetsia*]./ The swift rivers overflow/ And drown many ships./ Drown many bright red painted ships./ And all hands are lost./ The city of Jerusalem is father to all cities./ Why is Jerusalem father to all cities?/ Jerusalem is father to all cities because/ Jesus Christ was crucified there./ Jesus Christ Himself, king of Heaven/ And support of Moscow's kingdom.”

1.3. P. 269, from the Serpukhov district: “From our *Aladyr*’./ And from that head of Adam’s./ In the middle of the Sarachinskii field/ The Book of the Dove fell down.” P. 273: “Our *Indrik* beast is mother to all beasts./ It lives in the holy mountain/ And prays to God for the holy mountain./ When this beast starts playing [*vozygraetsia*]./ It is like the clouds under heaven [*po podnébes’iu*].

From the Moscow region, p. 277: “And he, the (*Indrik*) beast walks under the earth [*po podzémel’iu*]/ Like the little sun under heaven [*Iako solnyshko po podnébes’iu*].”

From Tula, p. 280: “And he (*Indrik*) drinks and eats from the blue sea./ Does nobody any harm [*Nikomu *obidy on ne delaet*]./ And he goes by means of his horn [*rogom*] under the earth/ Like the sun under heaven./ When this beast turns with his horn./ All the earthly beasts bow down to him.”

From Mtsensk, p. 284: The *Vyndrik* beast “drinks and eats from the Holy mountain.”

From Povenetskii district, p. 290: The *Beloindrikh* [“white unicorn”] is mother to all beasts, and dwells in the mountains of Zion [*v gory Sionskiiia*]. P. 292: *Pravda* is a white [*bel zaiats*] hare; *Krivda*, a gray [*ser*] one; “It will be in the last time./ It will be in the eighth millennium./ That Truth will be taken by God from the earth to the sky/ And the Lie will walk about all the earth.”

There will then be “great lawlessness [*bezzakonie*]”.

From Petrozavodsk, p. 296, on the *Edinrog*: “He goes about under the earth,/ Purifies [*prochishchaet*] the rivulets and streams;/ Wherever the beast goes,/ There boils up a spring.”

From the Orlovskii region: p. 308, the beast is called *Indra*; p. 309, in Vladimir’s dream the battle of Truth with the Lie is “As though youths clashed together,/ Two young men battling” [*Budto iunoshi sokhodilisia*,/ *Dva mládye podiralisia*].

From the Pskov region, p. 313, on the white stone *Látyr*’, “From beneath the little stone, from beneath the white *Latyr*’/ Rivers flowed, rivers swift/ Throughout the earth, throughout the universe,/ To all the world for healing [*Vsemu miru na istselenie*]/ To all the world for nourishment [*Vsemy miru na propitanie*].” In this version it is the lion who is father of the beasts; *Krivdishcha* and *Pravdishcha* are two “little beasts” [*zveriushechki*], one gray, one white, and “the gray defeated [*odolel*] the white./ The Lie overcame Truth [*Krivda Pravdu odolela*].” So Truth went to Christ, while Falsehood goes about this world.

From the village of Pavlovskoe in the Zvenigorod district, p. 322: The *Indrik* beast “walks under the earth,/ Releases [*propushchaet*] rivers and chilly springs”.

From the village of Repiëvka in the province of Simbirsk, p. 327: Out of the cathedral church that is in the midst of the Ocean sea “Emerged the heavenly Queen:/ From the Ocean sea she bathed” [*Výkhodila Tsaritsa nebesnaia*;/ *Iz Okeana moria ona umyvalasia*]. In this version, the Lie wishes to defeat Truth; and Truth retreated [*otstupilasía*].

From the village of Saburovo of the Maloarkhangel’skii district, Orlovskii province, pp. 332-333: of both the cathedral church in Jerusalem and the cathedral church “on the sea of Ocean” [*na Kiëne na more*], “the white stone sepulcher stands on air” [*stoiť grobnitsa na vozdukhakh bela kamenna*]. In this version Truth bested [*peresporila*] the Lie and “... went to heaven./ The Lie remained on the damp earth;/ The Lie went amongst poor people,/ Amongst little orphans, little widows.” In another version of the Rime from the same locale, p. 338, the mother of stones is the *Karmaús* stone *Ilitor*, and any creature that brushes against it becomes immortal. The mother of the birds is the Phoenix [*Finiks*], a kind of Siren: “Her face is as a girl’s,/ And when she sings aloud/ And a man hears her songs,/ He will forget father and mother.”

The longest text published by Bezsonov is a Dukhobor sectarian recitation, p. 341 f., in many versions. In this one, unlike all the others, there is a dream at the **beginning** of the poem as well as the end. The first is a vision of a bird lighting on a sugar tree in a green garden, which proves to be a prophecy of the birth of children. There follows a list of sins that can and cannot be atoned for. King David then tells prince Vladimir that Christ, Isaiah, and John wrote the Book of the Dove, and released it [*raspushchali*] over all the world, all the universe. The white *Latyr* 'stone is mother of all stones; "The *Latyr* 'of the sea is father to all seas" (p. 367): the waters flow from it, bringing healing and nourishment to the world. The *Indra/ Indrik/ Vyndrik/ Beloandrikh/ Kondryk/ Edinrog/ Edinor* is the mother of all beasts, pp. 371-372: "He walked all over the wide white world,/ There was a drought [*zasúsheitsa*] in this world/ And there was no provender [*vospitaniitsa*] for good people,/ No provender and nothing to wash with [*obmyvaniitsa*]./ He dug damp mother earth,/ Dug out all the deep springs,/ Got all the boiling waters." He goes about under the earth like the sun under heaven, and both cleans [*prochishchaet*] and releases [*propushchaet*] the waters. "He lingers on the plains,/ Yet none can see him in the eyes" [*Vo stepiakh-to on prebyvaiuchi/ Nikto ego v glazy ne vidauchi*]. There follows the dream of Vladimir in which Truth and Falsehood, as either youths or hares, contest; and one or the other wins in different variants, but with the same result: "The Lie settled in secret hearts" [*Selilas ' Krivda na serdtsa na tainyia*] and people "wish to eat each other" [*drug druga poest ' khotiat*].

2. ZOROASTRIAN SOURCES:

2.1. THE *GĀTHĀS* OF ZARATHUŠTRA (INSLER 1975. p. 32): *YASNA* 30.

2.2 THE *BUNDAHIŠN*, ANKLESARIA 1956.

2.1. The *Gāthās*, or *Hymns*, are the poetic revelatory utterances of the Prophet Zarathuštra (Zarathustra, Zoroaster) himself and the core of the scripture of the Zoroastrians, the Avesta. My attempt at translation of this extremely complex text of the second millennium B.C., like others, will inevitably pose problems; but the section rendered here, *Yasna* 30, verses 2-6, is at least relatively clear—perhaps one reason, aside from the obvious importance of its contents, that it left discernible echoes where other strophes of the Prophet's revelation did not.

Sraotā gəuš.āiš vahištā avaēnatā sūcā mananghā
Āvarənā vīciθahyā narəm narəm xvahyāi tanuyē
Parā mazə yānghō ahmāi nə sazdyāi baodantō paitī

Aṭ tā mainyū paouruyē yā yəmə xvaḡənā asrvātəm
Manahičā vačahičā šyaoθanōi hī vahyō akəmčā
Āścā hudānghō ərəš vīšyātā nōiṭ duždānghō

*Aṭčā hyaṭ tā həm mainyū jasaētəm paourvīm dazdē
Gaēmčā ajoyāitīmčā yaθāčā anghaṭ apəməm anghuš
Ačištō drəgvatqm aṭ ašāunē vahištəm manō*

*Ayā mainivā varatā yə drəgvā ačištā vərəzyō
Ašəm mainyuš spəništō yə xraoždīštəng asənō vastē
Yaēcā xšnaošən ahurəm haiθyāiš šyaoθanāiš fraorəṭ mazdqm*

*Ayā nōiṭ ərəš višyātā daēvāčinā hyaṭ īš ā.dəbaomā
Pərəsmənəng upā.jasaṭ hyaṭ vərənātā ačištəm manō
Aṭ aēšəməm həndvārəntā yā bəṇayən ahūm marətānō*

“Listen ye with ears to the best things;/ Regard ye with pure mind
On the two choices of decision,/ Each man for his own body,
Before the great tribulation,/ Being aware to declare for yourselves to Him.

Now those two spirits in the beginning/ Who are twin,⁹⁸ came to be heard⁹⁹ in a dream-vision.¹⁰⁰

In thought, word,/ And deed they are the better and the evil,
Of which the wise/ Chose rightly, not the foolish.

And when those two spirits/ First arrived¹⁰¹ they created
Life and not-life,/ So that at the end of the world will be
The worst for followers of the Lie;/ But for the follower of Truth,¹⁰² the Best Mind.

Of those two spirits chose/ the Liar to work the greatest evils;
The most Holy Spirit, Truth—/ He who clothes Himself in the adamantine stones—¹⁰³

98- The term “twin” implies that they are brothers; so in the speculation of the Zoroastrian informants of the Armenian heresiologist Eznik Kolbac’i and his sources, they have a common father Zurvān, Time.

99- Av. *asrvātəm*: the verbal base *sru-* “hear” gives us *sravah-* “renown”, cf. the Gk. and Rus. cognates *kleos* and *slava*, “glory”. The sense is at least that they were perceived; perhaps, that they were audible as well.

100- Avestan *xvaṭ(ə)na-*, “sleep, dream” is cognate to Persian *xwāb*, Latin *somnus*, and Russian *son*; the accompanying verb, from the base *sru-* “hear”, is cognate to Russian *shyshit’*. This would suggest that Zarathustra beheld the manifestation and confrontation of the primordial spirits of Truth and the Lie in a dream-vision, even as does Prince Vladimir in the Book of the Dove. The word is used in only one other place in the *Gāthās*, Y. 44.5, in the acc. sg. in the expression *xvaṭənamčā... zaēmāčā* “slumber and wakefulness”.

101- Arrived on the scene, confronted each other, clashed in combat: the verb is telegraphic.

102- A follower of the Mazdean faith, a good man, one who is blessed after death, is called *ašavan-*, a follower of *Aša*, “Truth, order, righteousness”; whilst a wicked person or non-Zoroastrian is termed *drəgvant-*, follower of *Drui*, the Lie.

103- The image here is of Ahura Mazda wearing the cape of crystalline Heaven as a garment. One recalls the initial lines of the cosmic Psalm 104: “Bless, O my soul, the Lord! O Lord my God, you are most great,

As will those who render grace¹⁰⁴ to the Wise Lord/ Ever with truthful¹⁰⁵ ethical actions.¹⁰⁶

Between these two not rightly chose/ The demons: when they debated such
Questions there came upon them/ The most Evil Mind, whom they chose
So they slithered forth in Wrath¹⁰⁷/ With which they have afflicted with illness the human
world.”

2.2. The text, a ninth-century Pahlavi (Zoroastrian Middle Persian) *zand*, i.e., translation and commentary upon an Avestan scriptural original no longer preserved (its other title is *Zand āgāhīh*, “Knowledge of the *Zand*”), advertises itself as conveying the *saxwanihā ī zōfr ud abd* “deep and miraculous utterances” that have been forgotten since the Arab conquest of Iran and the eclipse of the Sasanian dynasty and Zoroastrian state religion. It enlarges upon the Gāthic revelation concerning the creation (Phl. *bundahišn*) of the world, beginning with the confrontation of the Wise Lord, Ohrmazd, with the Frightful Spirit, Ahreman, whose meeting is likened to that of two men who agree to fight on a certain day. The two primordial spirits embody Truth (called *aša-*, *ahlaw* “right-ness”, corresponding to Russian *pravda*) and the Lie (*druj*, corresponding to *krivda* in the Book of the Dove). After a period of peaceful stasis lasting six millennia the epoch of mixture (*gumēzišn*) of good and evil ensues, following the onslaught (*ēbgad*) of Ahreman, at which the earth shakes. We live in the time of Mixture, which is to last six further millennia: in the year 12000 the forces of good will be victorious and the Separation (*wizārišn*) of evil from creation will eliminate death, lies, and suffering. The text enumerates the chief geographical features of earth, such as mount Alborz, which rings the world, with the axial Tērag in the middle, the sea Fraxwkard (Avestan Vourukaša-, lit. “of the wide bounds”) and the chieftainship of its various climes (*radīh ī kešwarān*, ch. 29=p. 252 f.): the Prophet Zarduxšt (Zarathustra) is thus the chief of all righteous men and of Xwanīras, the central clime of the world. Ch. 17 (=p. 152 f.) “concerns every particular about the chieftainship of men and beasts” (*abar radīh ī mardomān ud gōspandān, harw tis-ē*). In Ch. 24 (=p. 194 f.): “[Scripture] says concerning the three-footed ass, that it stands in the middle of the sea of Fraxwkard, and has three feet and six eyes, and nine mouths, and two ears, and one horn, and its head is dark blue, and its body is white, and it consumes spiritual food, and it is

you have clothed (*lavāštā*) yourself in honor and glory, donning (‘*ōtēh*) light as a garment, stretching out heaven like a curtain.”

104- Av. *xšnu-*, cognate with Gk. *xenos*, suggests a reverential or benevolent act of giving that is met with reciprocity.

105- Av. *haiθya-*, from the verb “to be”—truth in the sense of “the way things actually are”—corresponds to its cognates, Skt. *satyā-*, Rus. *istina*.

106- Av. *šyaoθana-*, “action”, from the base *šyav-* “go”, suggests action within the general way one goes, one’s ethics, cf. Heb. *halākāh*, “ethical/normative behavior”, lit. “going”.

107- Av. *aēšma-*, Pers. *xašm*, “anger”: personified as a demon (*daēva*), hence the Ašmedai (Lat. Asmodeus) of Tobit.

righteous... and when it stales in the sea, all of the water of the sea becomes purified” (*xar ī se pāy rā gōwēd, ku miyān ī zreh ī Fraxwkard estēd, u-š pāy se, ud čašm šeš, ud dahān nō, ud gōš dō, ud srōw ēwag, ud sar xašēn, ud tan spēd, ud mēnōg-xwarišn ud ahlaw... u-š ka andar zreh mīzēd, hamāg āb ī zreh yōždasr be bawēd*). If the unicorn three-legged ass failed to do this, the text adds, all life would perish. The *Bundahišn* describes also a great bird (pp. 196-197): When enemies gather on Alborz once every three years to attack Ērānšahr, the realm of Iran, the divinity Burz Yazad “comes up from that deep lake of Ārang” (*az ān ī zōfr war ī Ārang abar āyēd*) and summons the giant bird Čamruš, who dwells on a lofty mountain (*boland kōf*) to consume the enemy host like so many grains of corn.

3. EZNIK OF KOLB, *DE DEO* (MARIÉS AND MERCIER 1960, pp. 460-461), TR. BY J.R. RUSSELL.

The version of the Zoroastrian dualist cosmology received by the Armenian bishop Eznik, writing in the fifth century, derives in part from Greek and Syriac intermediary sources; but the style and abundance of Iranian-in-Armenian terms suggests that the author learnt also from oral informants of Mazdean teaching. Speculating, it would seem, on the description of the two primordial Spirits as “twins”, Zoroastrians elaborated the doctrines deriving ultimately from *Yasna* 30 into a myth that shares the features of the folklore type one finds in the Biblical story of Jacob and Esau— with the evil spirit playing Jacob’s role!

“When, they saw, there was nothing at all,¹⁰⁸ neither heaven nor earth nor any creatures that are in heaven or earth, there was a certain one named Zruan, which is translated fate or glory.¹⁰⁹ He performed sacrifice¹¹⁰ for one thousand years, so that there might be a son to him, whose name is Ormæzd, who might make heaven and earth and everything that is in them. And after a thousand years of performing sacrifice he began to ponder in his mind, and said, ‘Will this sacrifice I am performing be of any help, and will there be to me a son Ormizd, if I strive in vain?’ And while he was meditating on this, Ormizd and Arhmn were engendered¹¹¹ in the womb of their mother: Ormæzd, from the performance of sacrifice; and Arhmn, from the doubting. Then, when Zruan found out, he said, ‘There are two sons there in the womb: the one of them who reaches me first, him I will make king.’ And when Ormizd recognized the thoughts of his father, he declared them to Arhmn, saying, ‘Zruan our

108- “At all”: Arm. *bnaw*, inst. sg. of *bun*, “root, beginning”, a loan from Middle Persian: cf. *Bun-dahišn*, of which this is a paraphrase!

109- The Arm. terms, *baxt* and *p’ar-k’* (from OIr. **farnah-*), are themselves Iranian loans. Zurvān actually means “time”.

110- Eznik uses the Zoroastrian term, *yašt*, a loan into Arm.

111- Arm. *ylec’an*: that is, one became pregnant with them; the act of insemination is not directly implied. On the channel of seminal fluid possibly mentioned by Eznik, see RUSSELL 2004 (a).

father had the thought that the one of us who goes to him first, him will he make king.’ And when Arhmn heard this he punctured the womb, went out and stood before his father. And Zruan, seeing him, did not know who this might be, and asked, ‘Who are you?’ And he said, ‘I am your son.’ Zruan said to him, ‘You are not my son, my son is sweet-smelling and luminous, and you are dark and foul-smelling.’¹¹² And while they were speaking these things to each other, Ormizd, being born in his own hour, came and stood before Zruan. And when Zruan saw him, he knew that this was Ormæzd his son, for whose sake he had been sacrificing. And, taking up the bundle of twigs¹¹³ with which he had been performing the sacrifice, he gave it to Ormizd, saying, ‘Up till now I performed sacrifice for your sake, hereafter you will do it for mine.’ And as Zruan gave the bundle of twigs to Ormæzd and blessed him, Arhmn, coming up to Zruan, said to him, ‘Did you not promise¹¹⁴ this: Whichever of my two sons reaches me first, I will make him king?’ And Zruan, in order not to break his promise, said to Arhmn, ‘O false one and malefactor! Let the kingdom be given to you for nine thousand years, my having appointed Ormzd king over you, and after nine thousand years Ormæzd shall reign, and what he will then to do, he shall do it.’ Then began Ormizd and Arhmn to make the creations; and everything that Ormizd made was good and straight [*ulil*], and whatever Arhmn worked was evil and warped [*t’iwr*].”

The text goes on to insist that the doctrines of Mani are also dualistic (*erkarmatean*, lit. “double-root”), differing in forms (*kerparan-k*’, cf. Mlr. *kirb*) but not in actuality (*čšmar-tut* ‘*eamb*) and are in fact one teaching (*k’ēš*; cf. Av. *ḫkaēša-*) with those of the Mazdeans (paras. 146-150). Eznik later mentions (para. 187) that the Persians believe a demon named Mahmi taught Ormizd how to create light.¹¹⁵

112- For “sweet-smelling” Arm. has *anuša-hot*, with the Iranian loan meaning also “immortal”, implying that Ahura Mazda is not connected with death; for “foul-smelling”, *žanda-hot* encodes one of Angra Mainyu’s Middle Persian names, *Gannāg Mēnōg*, “Foul-smelling Spirit”.

113- Arm. acc. pl., *zbarsmunsn*, i.e., the Zoroastrian ritual fasces called *barsom*. In para. 186 (p. 470), Eznik describes the object as a *gawazan*, “ox-goad”, the word in Armenian Christian usage for “scepter”.

114- Arm. aor. 2 pers. sg., *uxtec* ‘*er*, with *uxt*, a loan from Middle Iranian with religious force: one Arm. popular etymology of the name of the Prophet Zarathuštra is *zawrawor uxt*, “powerful promise” (evidently based on a form like Zarduxšt). Eznik calls the Prophet Zradašt (para. 192, p. 472).

115- See RUSSELL 1987(b); for the transcribed text of the Manichaean hymn (M 28 I Rii), see SKJAER-VO 1995, p. 245: *ud gōwēnd ku Ohrmizd/ ud Ahrmēn brādar hēnd... zūr ud pādesāgī gōwēnd/ abar Ohrmizd/ ku-š Māhmī dēw hammōxt/ šahr rōšn kirdan* “and they say that Ohrmazd/ and Ahreman are brothers... vanity and contempt they speak/ concerning Ohrmazd/ that the demon Māhmī taught him to make the world light.” On written sources Eznik probably employed, see ZAEHNER 1972, pp. 419-421.

4. NIKOLAI ZABOLOTSKII, "THE BOOK OF THE DOVE," 1937 (ZABOLOTSKII 1965, pp. 97-98), TR. BY J.R. RUSSELL.

Many times in early childhood I heard
 My forefathers' half-forgotten tale
 Of a secret [*sokrovennoi*] book... beyond the river
 The dusk flamed red and dimmed
 And it was time for bed: from the river, chilling the heart,
 The white blanket of mist rolled in,
 And the poor world, forgetful of its sufferings,
 Was still at last— only a distant grasshopper,
 Tiny laborer of the universe,
 Sang at his work, demanding no attention,
 Alone, in his unknown tongue...
 O silent hour of night falling!
 The trees are in shadow; by the dark huts
 Hoary farmers, eyes half-closed,
 Seated on logs are speaking— barely a sound.

And through the nocturnal gloom
 I see when the bowl of a pipe momentarily flares,
 Now a tangled gray beard,
 Now the swollen sinews of tired hands.
 And I hear the familiar lay:
 Truth challenged Falsehood to a fight,
 But Falsehood won [*odolela*], and ever since
 The peasants are abused by fate.
 Yet far off on the Ocean sea
 On a white stone set in the waters' midst
 A book clasped in gold is gleaming,
 Its rays probing heaven's dome.
 From some frightful storm cloud plummeted that tome,
 Its letters overgrown with flowers now,
 And in it, written by our destinies' strong hand
 Is all the hidden truth about the world.
 Seven seals, though, are suspended therefrom,
 And seven beasts the book surround,
 And for it silence is decreed
 Until the seals into the depths break and fall.

But night burns above the quiet earth,
 The fields flooded with a tremulous light.

And high above my head in dark
 The misty poplars sail.
 The world is as tale: the sayings of the folk,
 Their wisdom dark and yet so dear,
 As strong and old as nature's force
 Took root in my soul when I was young.

Old man, my storyteller of the night,
 Where are you now? Did you dream
 Of the workers' truth, believing in the hour¹¹⁶ of redemption?
 I do not know, save that you died alone
 And bare, and above you in ferment
 Long since then the coming generations, roaring,
 Are rebuilding this grim world.

5. POEMS BY VLADIMIR NABOKOV.

5.1. "ULDABORG," APRIL 1930 (NABOKOV 2002, p. 350), TR. BY J.R. RUSSELL.

5.2. "DREAM VISION" (*SNOVIDEN'IE*), 1 MAY 1927 (NABOKOV 2002, p. 191), TR. BY J.R. RUSSELL.

5.1. *Uldaborg*

(Translated from Zoorlandish)

Laughter and music are banished. Frightful
 Is Uldaborg, this mute town.
 No gardens or markets or towers
 And the palace has become a prison now.

The meek mathematician sobs quietly;
 And there is the billiard champ.
 Nothing adorns the barbed wire fences
 Not even a wrought iron blossom.

Someone at least might give glory
 In song to the mess in the snow on the square
 When the woodcutter strongman from Thorwald
 Beheaded the royal children there.

116- Perhaps to heighten the crypto-Biblical, apocalyptic aspect, the poet uses the slightly archaic word *godina*, whose most immediate resonance to the Russian ear is the poem "Whether I wander down the noisy streets" (*Brozhu li ia vdol' ulits shumnykh*) in which Alexander Pushkin wonders "every day, every moment" (*den' kazhdyi, kazhduiu godinu*) what the date of his own death will be.

And some importunate beggar they say
 In this city of untimely ends
 Is in search of a dance-master still
 For his daughters, who are all stone dead.

But the last hanged himself long ago
 And the hangman burnt the last violin,
 And the last fiddler migrated to Germany
 In the tatters of a broken man.

And though all festivals are forbidden
 (The fireworks by the quayside in spring
 And in summer the Rathaus ball),
 A holiday, a big one, is in store.

On the right diamond Whatsberg, the mountains;
 On the left shines the azure sea.
 Stray whispers on the plaza:
 Uldaborg is speaking of me.

With furtive glances closer they crowd:
 How strange all their faces are!
 Wildly they strain to hear an impossible sound:
 I have returned, and this is my laugh:

In spite of the naked guild's bans
 And the laws of the deaf and the dumb,
 The empty rejection of laughing
 And my fellow citizens' fright.

I shall look at the familiar dunes
 And the diamond ridges in the sky,
 Shove my hands deeper still in my pockets
 And laughing ascend the scaffold to die.

5.2. *Dream Vision.*

I give the alarm clock a homework assignment till morning, and dismiss into the dusk
 My room, like a hot-air balloon, and relieved I embark upon sleep.
 Already within that sleep itself it seems a second slumber overtakes me.
 A table, indistinct: I do not see who's sitting there. We're all awaiting someone.
 From amongst the guests one trains a pocket flashlight, like a gun, upon the door,
 And a friend who was killed enters laughing, his face brighter, a little taller.

I speak with him alive without surprise and know I'm not deceived.
 The once-mortal wound upon his brow, as if it were light makeup, is wiped clean.
 We talk. I'm glad. But there's an unexpected hitch, a strange constraint:
 My friend conducts me to one side and whispers something in explanation.
 But I don't hear it. A ring, prolonged, back to the performance summons me:
 It's the alarm clock reciting its lesson; and the day interrupts my centuries.
 The world, looking just for a moment imprecise, lands like a cat all at once
 On all four feet, and stands there, familiar to my eyes and mind.
 But when you recall the dream, my God, by chance, in the daytime, in someone else's
 parlor,
 Or when upon a gun shop's window glinting it flashes on the memory,
 How grateful am I then to those unearthly powers that enable the dead to come in dreams;
 How proud of the dream, the nocturnal event, the soul is then, in its perturbation!

APPENDIX.

The image of something shining, living, and holy enduring in the terrifying depths of the dark waters that are the Biblical embodiment of chaos is of great symbolic importance across a range of cultures, from India to the East Christian world, where the submarine object is a shrine illuminated by the *Theotokos*, the Queen of Heaven. And there seems to be an equally archetypal parallelism of macro- and micro-cosmic structure worth particular exploration: even as her light shines in the upper depths of the dark sky— separated from the Divine radiance, in ancient belief, by a supermundane ocean, the opening of whose windows contributed to the Deluge— so it shines from its opposite and mirror image, the depth of the terrestrial seas. The esoteric human body, *speculum mundi*, can also be visualized as containing two wells, one with its aperture upwards; the other, looking down. Remizov and the philosopher Nikolai Berdiaev are known to have conversed on the *bezdna verkha* and *bezdna niza*— the “abyss of above” and “abyss of below”.¹¹⁷ In Indian Tantric tradition, *bāḍava*, lit. “belonging to the mare”, is the name of the submarine fire that emanated from the third eye of the god Śiva when he incinerated Kāma (the god of Desire). It dwells upon the ocean floor, and burns until it will dry up the sea and erupt to consume time itself. In medieval Siddha traditions this submarine fire becomes a symbol of the sexual power *kunḍalinī*: the *cakra* (level, lit. “wheel”) at the base of the spine called *vāḍavānala*, “submarine fire”. The fire is identified with *kālagṇi*, the fire that cooks creatures to death; and it can be overcome by *yogāgṇi*, the fire of yoga that destroys the deleterious power of time. In Siddha physiology the body has two wells, with the upper one inverted. There are two *bāḍava* fires, too: one that leads to death; the other, overcoming death.¹¹⁸

It is in the light of these highly potent religious symbols that I propose to approach a

117- See OBATNINA 2001, p. 21.

118- See KRIPAL 2001, p. 95; and WHITE 1996, pp. 232-234, 240-242.

text of the *Matean olbergut'ean* ("Book of Lamentation", referred to often simply as the *Narek*) of St. Gregory of Narek (Arm. Grigor Narekac'i). The 10th-century saint was a contemporary of the Byzantine St. Symeon the New Theologian, who elaborated a system of mysticism involving the experience of the divine light; and although there is no evidence the two met, their conceptions of the Christian spiritual journey are remarkably similar. Within the Armenian Church, the influence of the mystical teachings of Narekac'i was most strongly felt in the Cilician period, after a hiatus of about a century following his death, in the works of the spiritual poets and theologians St. Nersēs Šnorhali ("the Graceful") and Nersēs Lambronac'i: the writings of the latter will be referred to presently. The *Narek* consists of 95 prayers or meditations intended to assist the worshiper through the stages of repentance, purification, and illumination—in transit through an imaginal church, from porch to nave to altar. The 33rd chapter of the Book, opening the second of the three divisions of the book, contains the instruction to recite a certain section as a prayer until the celebrant of the Divine Liturgy (Arm. *patarag*) physically beholds an actual light coming down from above. The prayer, which is employed in the service book of the Armenian Church still for its stated purpose, contains a reference to the *loycn macuac*, "liquid solidified" of the "final veil": this seems to be a reference to the waters of the supra-mundane ocean, from beyond which the light is to come to transform the celebrant of the Christian mystery, even as the transubstantiation of the offerings is effected. This reference to the heavenly sea is of such marked importance that one looks for a prefatory discussion, as it were, of the light in the opposite, lower waters that are a parallel to the upper ones. It is to be found in the course of an extended, preparatory meditation towards the beginning of the Book, stretching across Chapters 10 and 11—¹¹⁹ a hymn to the first member of the trinity of divine virtues, Faith (Arm. *hawatk'*), Hope (*yoys*), and Love (*sēr*). The annotations to my translation discuss relevant points in detail. In summary, though: Faith is a beam of light, sent from above, that serves as a road for the soul to travel upwards from earthly life to repentance. It is at the same time provision to sustain one on that road; yet should one fall, through commission of sins, into the lowest and most confining depths of "wells of water", a relic of the beam still slumbers at the very bottom, a solid (*t'anjra-mac*) and tangible (*hpawor*) fire. The imagery is vivid and powerful in its own right; but, adumbrating as it does an esoteric and particular physiology, it seems to have exerted a powerful effect on subsequent generations of the Armenian folk in whose cult of the saint it is transformed: in a ballad about the miracles performed by the saint, we find Narekac'i offering a fire burning still at the bottom of a vessel of water as a parting gift to two priests sent to examine him for signs of heresy.¹²⁰ But then, the ballad only takes at face value the aspect of the fire's tangibility—and the Armenian minstrel scornfully ridicules the official Church inquisitors, even as, one thinks, his Bogomil or Russian *kaleka* counterpart might do!

119- Text from XAC'ATRYAN AND LAZINYAN 1985, pp. 281-285.

120- See RUSSELL 1981, p. x and n. 40.

Ch. 10.

From the depths of hearts

Speech with God.

1. And now, truly both violent remorse and sin in abandon
Betray to perdition equally,
Since even though they are alien to each other and of differing kinds,
Still when one places them one beside the other— the forms of each—
They engender the selfsame progeny of despair.
For one is deficient in faith (*t'erahawatē*) in the hand of the Almighty, considering it powerless,
Whilst the other, in the manner of quadrupeds at pasturage,
Become insensate, severs the trace of hope.
Therefore, always gently inclined to the first, Satan rejoices,
Even as he is bloated with blood, as though with nourishment,
By the second, in the fashion of a devouring beast whose belly is hell (*džoxorovayn*).¹²¹

2. And now, as if thrashed with many blows of a cudgel
And arriving in the palm of the hand of death,
Yet receiving slight recovery of breath
And returning to the spirit of life,
I shall be restored, strengthened, fortified,
Rising from lifeless perdition,
Helped by the hand of Christ,
Who is in all things compassionate;
By the beneficent heavenly Father,
Bestowing the fruit of salvation and healing
Upon me, the sinner, the dissolute, the dead.
And of this supplication of lamentation
I shall erect the primary edifice of faith (*skzbnawor... zhawatoc 'n šinuac kaṛuc 'ic*).¹²²
For one of the ancients, armed with this,
Was instantly translated to his immortal lot on high:

121- The inferno is sometimes seen as a huge dragon; its maw, the gate that Christ forces open at the Harrowing of Hell— the event to which Christian exegesis considers the verse of Psalm 24, “Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and the king of glory shall come in” to refer. The formal source of the image, however, is the whale of Jonah; so here at the beginning of his meditation Gregory refers obliquely to the depths of the sea, the image he is subtly to develop later on.

122- Every poet wishes to be remembered and immortalized in his work; but for the Christian ascetic training himself in humility, *exegi monumentum* must have in mind, as Gregory often does, an *arjan*: the word is used generally with *mah-* (“death-”) to mean “gravestone”. But in Armenia as elsewhere that is a Cross, very often an elaborately engraved *xač 'k'ar*, “Cross-stone”. So the mystic through the Holy Sign links his death to the death, followed by resurrection and victory, of his Savior. Here the poet erects not merely an *arjan*, but the first part— the first third— of the imaginal church through which the reader is to progress: the porch, or *gawit*.

Taking the medicine (*del*) of penitence, through the provision (*t'ošak*) of repentance,¹²³
 He inherited the pledge of remaining unblemished while yet in this world.
 So he stand above those with whom he was sent,
 Who, fulfilling the contest for the prize on earth,
 Believed in future hope and heavenly things
 And were adorned in the splendor of the unseen.

3. Thus even one sinful unto death,
 And swallowed up (*ənkluzealn*) again in the demons' iron maws,
 Submerged (*suzealn*) in the abysses (*yandunds*) of evil,
 Has still this beam of life's salvation.
 So as to discover thereby the route of escape that is repentance.
 So the guilty one, by the rain pouring down from his eyes, by the mercies of the omnipo-
 tent One,
 Was discovered fertile ground again, dedicated to the Spirit of God,
 All-miraculous and abounding in flower.¹²⁴
 And recalling the exhortation, with this, of the worshipful Word of the Lord:
 Everything is possible for him who believeth—
 It is by having examined the measure of the goodness apportioned
 To the chosen ones pleasing to God, in this life,
 That we received this image of the Word: the anciently enthroned,
 Likewise to be clothed for the entry into sacred precincts.¹²⁵
 Without this the Lord of glory
 Did not even work among us His miracles of power—

123- The *panarion*, or “medicine chest”—the *Matean* is at the outset advertised as a powerful *spelānik*’ (“physic”) against the malaises of the soul—here is made also the *t'ošak*, or provisions for a journey that a traveler takes along with him. He speaks also of what he has in this world as a *grawakan* (“surety”): that is, property entrusted to him to be returned to its original owner—so the combined effect is to imagine the world as a road in stages, leading to eternal life, whether that be beatitude or damnation. One is entrusted with both provisions to consume, and a soul to cherish and deliver. Arm. *t'ošak* is a loan from Middle Iranian: we find in a verse of Sanā'ī the New Persian form of the word used in a context very similar to this: *Sāqiyā may deh ke joz-e may na-škanad parhīz-rā, / tā zamānī gom konam in zohd-e rang-āmīz-rā*; / *Dīn-e Zarduštī v' āyīn-e Qalandar čand čand / Tōše bāyad sāxtan mar rāh-e jān-āmīz-rā*. “Wine bearer, bring a draught, for without it abstinence abides unbroken—/ That for a time I may loose asceticism's subjective bond./ One needs a bit of each—Zoroastrianism, antinomianism—/ To prepare provision for the soul-compounded way.”

124- In the first half of this pericope the saint evokes multiple watery images of submersion and depth. The light from above reaching them is made into a road and an escape: cf. the imagery above of provision for the road, and, for escape, the allusions to the harrowing of hell, and, implicitly, to Jonah in the belly of the whale. The second half, connected by the theme of repentance to the first, neatly inverts the image of water: instead of the lower depths, the poet employs the image of tears as rain, falling down from heaven and nourishing the fields of the soul's cultivation of the Christian life on earth.

125- The image here is of sacerdotal vesting for the liturgy—the act preceding the entry into the sacred space of the church. Arm. *handerj*, “vestment”, has also semantic and lexical connections to the future (*handerjeal*)—i.e., to the end of the spiritual journey—and to the wisdom provided for the road (cf. the Middle Pers. *andarz* “counsel”, *darandarzbed* [=Arm *handerjapet*] “counselor at the royal court”).

Without first seeking to harness (*lcakic' xndreac'*)¹²⁶
 Our faith to His beneficence.
 Thus it [*scil.* faith] has the power to bestow life
 By its sovereign capability, its being alongside God,
 For: Your faith has revived you—
 Testified the mouth of God that is extolled in blessing.

4. For in truth clear vision
 And perfect wisdom
 And intimacy with God,
 And acquaintance with the Most High,
 Is the happy and chosen portion of faith,
 Which endures, extending ever, incorrupt, unencompassable,
 Sharing the honor of love and of hope.
 For if faith is sown
 In the smallest of its essence, its least measure, of a mustard seed,
 And it powerfully transports the massy mountains into the heart of the sea,
 Then truly we have received this same leading guide to the primary path of life (*skzb-našawil aṛajñord kenac'*)¹²⁷
 The service to God, with no divided mind (*anerkmit*),
 That beholds future things, and hidden ones,
 Without doubt (*erkbayut'ean*), in the soul's eyes.¹²⁸
 Faith! Honored by the glorious name of the Trinity,
 Ranked with love and with hope.
 For though the three be separated into discrete parts,
 You may know them by one and the same meaning:
 By them in God will you be forever magnified,
 Since if you believe in Him, then you love Him;
 And thereby you hope in His invisible gifts.
 Glory to Him forever,
 Amen.

126- Since I have suggested above that Narekac'i creates a spiritual map of the body in his construction of a spiritual discipline, even as is done in Indian Siddha and Tantric practice, it is apposite to note here that the image here of harnessing is, of course, the very same as Indian *yoga*, lit. "yoking" itself. That does not imply any connection; but it does bespeak a powerful parallel.

127- The image of the road (Arm. *šawil*, from Aramaic, cf. the Muslim religious use of the same word, *fi sabīl Allāh*, [to live/fight] "in the Way of God") resumes here, with Faith the leader of the caravan. Arm. *aṛajñord*, used now of the ecclesiastical office of the Primate, means literally one at the right hand, or ahead; thus to the image of leader is added perhaps another one potent to Armenians, and in the *Matean*: the powerful right hand of God.

128- Both words for doubt contain *erku*, "two". One recalls that Zurvān doubted; and that Zoroastrianism was called by Armenians, surely in a calque on Middle Iranian *dōbuništaḡīh*, *erkarmatean* "having two roots". Though Narekac'i wrote polemics against the T'ondrakite teaching, which evidently possessed dualistic qualities, this hymn to faith may have in mind only its essential power to overcome doubt and despair and act as a firm foundation.

Ch. 11.

From the depths of hearts

Speech with God.

1. And now I, the last of confessors, of good bereft,
 Gazing by the contemplation of my mind into my primeval entry into being,
 By the Maker's hand,
 Believe, in hope, for Jesus Christ to do what He wills.
 For I believed, on account of which I spoke, counseled by Paul and instructed by David,
 That even now their living supplications may come to me in visitation
 So as to know Him in faith
 And the power of His resurrection, according to the Apostle;
 Partaking in His sufferings
 And all else those words afterwards conveyed.
 Companion to these, and keenly like in type
 Is believing truly also in His renewing transformation,
 That is, from sin to repentance,
 And from maleficence to righteousness,
 And from uncleanness to purification,
 And from debts past requital for mortal transgressions, to bliss uncondemned,
 And from the fetters of servitude to heavenly freedom.

2. For surely, is there anything more beautiful than the word
 Shining clear even out of the darkness of the gloom of doubt,
 And the sinner's heart assisted, helped by God;
 So as it laughs in body, spiritually at the same instant it is lamenting;
 So that although even if in ascending to the height of the loftiest stations
 It is plunged down to the abyssal depth of the chasm of perdition's pit (*storasuzeal can-
 rut'eamb yandndayin vhin xorxorat gboyn gorcanman*)
 By the gravity of newfound sins indissoluble (*noragiwt melawk'n anj'relawk'*),¹²⁹
 He has yet a tangible relic of the beams of the salvation of life
 As a lightning-flash of radiance preserved in mind and soul,
 As a fire, made a sign and miraculously thickened and made solid,
 Compounded by the command of the Good,
 That slumbers upon the lowest bottom of the watery wells.¹³⁰

129- In the first line Narekac'i deploys almost every known Armenian word for depth, encoding "water" (*jur*) into the second line, after recording the phantasmagoric plunge of the sinner from his lofty station.

130- Arm.: *uni ew nšxar nšulic' p'rkut'ean kenac' hpawor/ orpēs zhurn nšanawor ew zarmanawor t'anjra-
 mac;/ hrašiwk' makardeal vehin hramani/ i yataks nerk'ins nirheal jrhoroc'n*. Here the lower well of
 the symbolic dark and confining waters inner, spiritual abasement, contains fire as a solid, somnolent at
 its bottom. The fire is waiting only to be brought up out of the water and, upon contact with air, to turn
 into a devouring flame that will destroy death and damnation, like the transformed *bāḍava* fire. → →

LIST OF PLATES.

1. Blind Russian minstrels guided by their Boy: frontispiece to BEZSONOV 1861.
2. Nicholas Roerich, “*Golubinaia kniga*,” 1911, illus. in KOROTKINA 2001, p. 92.
3. Nicholas Roerich, “*Golubinaia kniga*,” 1922-1923, in DEETER 1989, p. 126 pl.
4. Unicorn in the Khludov Psalter.
5. Unicorn in the *Izbornik Sviatoslava*, A.D. 1073.
6. The unicorn purifying the waters with its horn, the “Unicorn Tapestries”, late mediaeval Western European, Cloisters Museum, New York.
7. British pound coin.

The word *hpawor*, “tangible”, is of special resonance in the elaboration of Armenian mystical practice. Thus Nersēs Lambronac’i writes, “Through talking to God in prayer one touches (*hpi*) God through meditation in the mind, and reaches Him through understanding, and thus one’s clear mind comes to see God. And one’s faith shines more magnificently with the illumination of one’s reasoning faculty” (TANIELIAN 2007, p. 64 and para. 6). The editor of the text notes (p. 65) that Nersēs uses the phrase “to touch (*hpel*) God” very frequently, to describe the intimacy the worshipper seeks. One notes that here, as in the spiritual writings of other Cilicians—Nersēs the Graceful, Grigor *Tlay* (“Gregory the Boy”)—the celebratory features of illumination, of God’s close presence, have largely displaced the dark, penitential aspects of the *Narek*. So the latter, though the major native source of the technology of prayer of the following period, seems to have received in a wider context of Hesychasm.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- I.V. Abuladze, ed., *Balavariani: mudrost' Balavara*, ["The *Balavariani*: The Wisdom of Balavar"], Tbilisi: Zaria Vostoka, 1962.
- Anna Akhmatova, *Stikhotvoreniia i poemy* ["Lyrics and Long Poems"], Series *Biblioteka Poeta*, Leningrad: Sovetskii Pisatel', 1977.
- Behramgore Tehmuras Anklesaria, tr. and ed., *Zand-Ākāsīh: Iranian or Greater Bundahišn*, Bombay: Rahnumae Mazdayasnan Sabha, 1956.
- P'aylak Antapean, ed., *Yovasap' ew Baralam, Patmut'iwn ew xratk' Xikaray imastnoy*, ["Ioasaph and Barlaam, The History and Counsels of Aḥiqar the Wise"], Jerusalem: St. James', 1980.
- Levon Avdoyan, Ps.-Yovhannēs Mamikonean, *The History of Tarōn (Patmut'iwn Tarōnoy)*, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1993.
- Russell A. Berman, *Fiction Sets You Free: Literature, Liberty, and Western Culture*, Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 2007.
- P. Bezsonov, *Kaleki perekhozhie: sbornik stikhov*, ["Itinerant Blind Minstrels, a Collection of Poems"], Moscow, 1861.
- T.H. Clarke, *The Rhinoceros: from Dürer to Stubbs, 1515-1799*, London: Sotheby's Publications, 1986.
- Steve Coates, "Reading *Lolita* in Moscow," *New York Times Book Review*, 29 June 2008, p. 20.
- Shaye J.D. Cohen, "False Prophets (4Q339), *Netinim* (4Q340), and Hellenism at Qumran," *Journal of Greco-Roman Christianity and Judaism* 1, 2000, pp. 55-66.
- Brian P. Copenhaver, *Hermetica*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- Samuel Hazzard Cross and Olgerd P. Sherbowitz-Wetzor, ed. and tr., *The Russian Primary Chronicle: Laurentian Text*, Cambridge, MA: Mediaeval Academy of America, 1953.
- Étienne de la Vaissière, *Sogdian Traders: A History*, *Handbuch der Orientalistik* 8.10, Leiden: Brill, 2005.
- Gerard de Vries and D. Barton Johnson, *Vladimir Nabokov and the Art of Painting*, Am-

- sterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2006.
- Jacqueline Deeter, *Nicholas Roerich: The Life and Art of a Russian Master*, Rochester, VT: Park Street Press/ inner Traditions International, 1989.
- Richard Ettinghausen, *Studies in Muslim Iconography, 1: The Unicorn*, Freer Gallery of Art Occasional Papers, Vol. 1, no. 3, Washington, 1950.
- B. Forūzānfār, ed., *Kolliyāt-e Šams-e Tabrīzī*, Tehran: Amir Kabir, 1367.
- Joseph Frank, "Idealists on the Run," review article on Lesley Chamberlain, *Lenin's Private War: The Voyage of the Philosophy Steamer and the Exile of the Intelligentsia* (New York: St. Martin's, 2007), in *The New York Review of Books*, 12 June 2008, pp. 50-52.
- Margaret B. Freeman, *The Unicorn Tapestries*, New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983.
- Moses Gaster, "The Legend of the Grail, II," *Folklore* 2.2, 1891, pp. 198-211.
- Iakov Gordin, *Pereklichka vo mrake: Iosif Brodskii i ego sobesedniki*, ["Passwords Exchanged in the Dark: Joseph Brodsky and His Interlocutors"], St. Petersburg: Pushkinskii fond, 2000.
- Edythe C. Haber, "Nabokov's *Glory* and the Fairy Tale," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 21.2 (Summer 1977), pp. 214-224.
- W.B. Henning, "Persian poetical manuscripts from the time of Rūdākī," in *A Locust's Leg: Studies in honour of S.H. Taqizadeh*, London: Percy Lund, Humphries, & Co., 1962, pp. 89-104.
- Karl Holl, "Das Fortleben der Volkssprachen in Kleinasien in Nachchristlicher Zeit," ["The Survival of the Local Languages in Asia Minor in the Period after Christ"], *Hermes* 43, 1908, pp. 240-254.
- Michael Ignatieff, *Isaiah Berlin: A Life*, New York: Henry Holt, 1998.
- Stanley Insler, ed. and tr., *The Gāthās of Zarathustra*, Acta Iranica 8, Brill: Leiden, 1975.
- Valentina Izmirlieva, *All the Names of the Lord: Lists, Mysticism, and Magic*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008.
- C.G. Jung, *Psychology and Alchemy*, 2nd ed., Bollingen Series 20, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968.
- Alexander Kazhdan and Giles Constable, *People and Power in Byzantium: An Introduction to Modern Byzantine Studies*, Washington, DC: Dumbarton Oaks, 1982.
- R.H. Kévorkian and P.B. Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire Ottoman à la veille du génocide*, Paris: Arhis, 1992.
- Nina L. Khrushcheva, *Imagining Nabokov: Russia between Art and Politics*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008.
- Peter Kingsley, "Poimandres: The Etymology of the Name and the Origins of the Hermetica," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 56, London, 1993, pp. 1-24.
- Reuven Kipperwasser and Dan Shapira, "Irano-Talmudica I: The Three-Legged Ass and *Ridyā* in B. Ta'anith. Some Observations about Mythic Hydrology in the Babylonian Talmud and in Ancient Iran," *AJS Review* 32.1 (2008), pp. 101-116.
- B. Kolchin et al., *Drevnii Novgorod: prikladnoe iskusstvo i arkheologiya*, ["Ancient

- Novgorod: applied art and archaeology"], Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1985.
- Liudmila Korotkina, *Tvorcheskii put' Nikolaia Rerikha*, ["The Creative Journey of Nicholas Roerich"], St. Petersburg: Ars, 2001.
- Jeffrey J. Kripal, *Roads of Excess, Palaces of Wisdom: Eroticism and Reflexivity in the Study of Mysticism*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001.
- Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything*, New York: Harper Collins, 2006.
- Dmitrii S. Likhachëv and V.P. Adrianova-Peretts, ed. and tr., *Povest' vremennykh let*, ["Primary Chronicle"], Series *Rossiiskaya Akademiia Nauk, Literaturnye Pamiatniki*, St. Petersburg: Nauka, 1999.
- Teaŋn Yovhannu Mandakunwoy Hayoc' hayrapeti Čark'*, ["Homilies of Lord John Mandakuni, Patriarch of the Armenians"], Venice: S. Lazzaro, 1860.
- Louis Mariès and Charles Mercier, eds., Eznik of Kołb, *De Deo, Patrologia Orientalis* 28.3, no. 136, Paris, 1960.
- V.N. Mochul'skii, "Istoriko-literaturnyi analiz stikha o Golubinoi knige," ["Historico-Literary Analysis of the Rime of the Book of the Dove"], *Russkii Filologicheskii Vestnik*, vol. 17, Warsaw, 1887.
- M.F. Mur'ianov, "Literaturnyi debiut A. Bloka (Stikhi o Golubinoi knige: tekst, kontekst, i podtekst)," ["The Literary Debut of Alexander Blok (The Rime of the Book of the Dove: Text, Context, and Subtext)"], *Philologica* 3, 1996.
- Vladimir Nabokov, *Glory*, New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.
- Vladimir Nabokov, *Novels 1955-1962*, New York: The Library of America, 1996.
- Vladimir Nabokov, *Sobranie sochinenii russkogo perioda v piati tomakh*, ["Collected Works of the Russian Period in Five Volumes"], St. Petersburg: Simpozium, 2001.
- Vladimir Nabokov, *Stikhotvoreniia*, ["Poems"], Series *Novaia Biblioteka Poeta*, St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii proekt, 2002.
- Charles Nicol, "Martin, Darwin, Malory, and Pushkin: The Anglo-Russian Culture of *Glory*," in Jane Grayson et al., eds., *Nabokov's World*, I, New York: Palgrave, 2002.
- Elena Obatnina, *Tsar' Asyka i ego poddannye: Obez'ian'ia Velikaia i Vol'naia Palata A.M. Remizova v litsakh i dokumentakh*, ["The Emperor Asyka and His Subjects: The Great and Free Chamber of the Monkeys of A.M. Remizov in Characters and Documents"], St. Petersburg: Izdatel'stvo Ivana Limbakha, 2001.
- A.V. Oksenov, *Narodnaia poeziia*, ["Folk Poetry"], St. Petersburg, 1908.
- Robert M. Pirsig, *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, New York: Harper Collins, 2005.
- M.H. Pope, *Job, The Anchor Bible*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1965.
- Roberta Reeder, *Russian Folk Lyrics*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- Richard Rorty, *Contingency, irony, and solidarity*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989.
- J.R. Russell, intro., Grigor Narekats'i, *Matean oghbergut'ean*, Classical Armenian Text Reprint Series, Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1981.
- J.R. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, Harvard Iranian Series 5, Cambridge, MA, 1987

(a).

- J.R. Russell, "Mahmī Reconsidered," *Journal of the K.R. Cama Oriental Institute* 54, Bombay, 1987 (b), pp. 74-80.
- J.R. Russell, *Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i and the Mediaeval Armenian Lyric Tradition*, University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 7, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987 (c).
- J.R. Russell, "The book of the Six Thousand: An Armenian Magical Text," *Bazmavep* 147.1-4, Venice, 1989, pp. 221-243.
- J.R. Russell, "The Last of the Paulicians," *Hask hayagitakan taregirk'*, vol. 7-8, Antelias, Lebanon, 1995-1996, pp. 33-47.
- J.R. Russell, "Mithras in Stalinist Armenia," *Ararat*, Spring 1998.
- J.R. Russell, review of Michael Stone 2002, in *International Journal of the Classical Tradition* 10.2, Boston, Fall 2003, pp. 309-312.
- J.R. Russell, "Some Iranica in Eznik," *Journal of Armenian Studies* 8.1, Belmont, MA, 2004 (a).
- J.R. Russell, "Sasanian Yarns: The Problem of the Centaur Reconsidered," *La Persia e Bisanzio*, Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, *Atti*, 201, Rome, 2004 (b).
- J.R. Russell, "Solov'i, solov'i," ["Nightingales, O Nightingales"], *St. Nersess Theological Review* 10 (2005), pp. 77-139 (published in Russian in *Rossiya XXI*, 2006.4, Moscow, pp. 156-197.)
- "Argawan: The Indo-European Memory of the Caucasus," *Journal of Armenian Studies* 8.2, Belmont, MA, Fall 2006 [2007], pp. 110-147.
- J.R. Russell, "The Shrine Beneath the Waves," *RES* 51, Cambridge, MA, Spring 2007, pp. 117-156.
- J.R. Russell, "The Curving Shore of Space and Time: Notes on the Prologue to Pushkin's *Ruslan and Ludmila*," in publication, *Festschrift Yaakov Elman* [2009].
- Annemarie Schimmel, *The Triumphal Sun: A Study of the Works of Jalāloddin Rumi*, London: East-West, 1980.
- Shaul Shaked, "The Myth of Zurvan: Cosmology and Eschatology," in I. Gruenwald et al., eds., *Messiah and Christos* (Festschrift David Flusser), Tübingen: Mohr, 1992, pp. 219-240.
- P.O. Skjaervo, "The Manichaean Polemical Hymns in M 28 I," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, N.S. 9, 1995, pp. 239-255.
- Iu. I. Smirnov, V.G. Smolitskii, eds., *Novgorodskie byliny*, ["Novgorodian Ballads"], Moscow: Nauka, 1978.
- L.F. Soloshchenko, Yu.S. Prokoshin, eds., *Golubinaia kniga: russkie narodnye dukhovnye stikhi XI-XIX vekov*, ["The Book of the Dove: Russian Folk Spiritual Poems of the 11th-19th Centuries"], Moscow: Moskovskii Rabochii, 1991.
- M. Speranskii, *Russkaia ustnaia slovesnost'*, ["Russian Oral Literature"], Moscow, 1917.
- Michael Stone, *Adam's Contract with Satan: The Legend of the Cheirograph of Adam*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002.
- Yuri Stoyanov, *The Other God: Dualist Religions from Antiquity to the Cathar Heresy*,

- New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000.
- Bishop Anoushavan Tanielian, ed. and tr., Abp. Nersēs Lambronac‘i, *Commentary on the Wisdom of Solomon*, New York: Skewra Press, 2007.
- L.N. Tolstoi, *Ispoved’*, [“Confession”], London: Bradda, 1963.
- M.V. Trofimov, “The Beginnings of Russian Literature,” *Modern Language Review* 10.1, January 1915, pp. 73-83.
- Max Vasmer, *Russisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 1953.
- A.N. Veselovskii, *Razyskaniia v oblasti russkago dukhovnago stikha*, [“Researches into the Subject of the Russian Spiritual Lyric”], XI-XVII, vyp. 5, St. Petersburg, 1889: XI. *Dualisticheskie pover’ia o mirozdanii* [“Dualistic Beliefs about the Universe”].
- Speros Vryonis, Jr., *The Decline of Medieval Hellenism in Asia Minor and the Process of Islamization from the Eleventh through the Fifteenth Century*, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1971.
- David Gordon White, *The Alchemical Body: Siddha Traditions in Medieval India*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- P.M. Xaç‘atryan and A.A. Łazinyan, eds., Grigor Narekac‘i, *Matean olbergut‘ean*, Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1985.
- Gleb Struve and Boris Filippov, eds., Nikolai Zabolotskii, *Stikhotvoreniia*, [“Poems”], Washington, DC: Inter-Language Literary Associates, 1965.
- R.C. Zaehner, “Postscript to Zurvan,” *BSOAS* 17, 1955, pp. 233-249.
- R.C. Zaehner, *Zurvan, A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1972.
- Mirra Ginsburg, ed. and tr., *A Soviet Heretic: Essays by Yegeny Zamyatin*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
- Russell Zguta, *Russian Minstrels: A History of the Skomorokhi*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1978.

ON AN ARMENIAN MAGICAL MANUSCRIPT

NEW YORK, JEWISH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
MS 10558

by

JAMES R. RUSSELL

This paper examines some unusual features of a modern Armenian magical manuscript. The manuscript belonged to a Sephardic Jew, who annotated it, translating and transliterating some terms into Hebrew – a rare phenomenon in the Armenian context, since Armenia has no indigenous Jewish community, and the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, a distinct *millet* (a defined religio-ethnic group), were often hostile to the Jews. The Jewish owner also inscribed an ancient spell known from Arabic magical literature at the beginning of the manuscript, and I shall explore its use and significance. The manuscript contains diverse spells, lists, magic squares and characters, and *vores mysticae*, with texts in Classical and Modern Western Armenian as well as in Armeno-Turkish. Representative portions of these are offered in translation, with commentary. I have translated in full, in an appendix, the mystical prayers employed from the tenth-century Armenian *Narek*; these are of interest insofar as they illustrate a nexus of canonical and folk religious concepts. The manuscript also contains a version of *Vec' hazareak*, 'The Book of the Six Thousand', a designation broadly employed to describe Armenian magical texts that often differ widely from each other. In a final appendix, I consider some reasons why the original of this book, a mathematical table, was of intellectual importance in the context of early Christian Armenia.

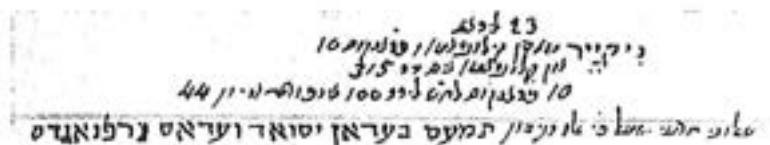
MS 10558 was acquired by the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, New York, in a lot from the bequest of the famous Hebraist and researcher

of manuscripts Prof. Abraham Katsh.¹ The other MSS in the lot are Jewish. I was asked some years ago by Dr. Jay Rovner of the JTSA Library to identify MS 10558, to which I returned only in the fall of 2007.

THE MANUSCRIPT AND ITS CONTENTS

The manuscript is a lined, hardbound school copybook, 24 × 17 cm in size and 36 pages in length, including the endpapers. The Armenian script is of a late italic or 'notary' type (Arm. *notgir*) encountered in the late nineteenth century.² The MS belonged to a Sephardic Jew: Pages 1 and 33–36 bear various notes in Judeo-Spanish (called Ladino or Judezmo by native speakers), in black ink, in the cursive *solitreo* hand and in square-character Hebrew script. Page 1 has a magical formula; p. 34, the Hebrew names of the signs of the Zodiac, with their Armenian equivalents transliterated into Hebrew characters; pp. 35–36, a list of accounts. The owner also added a few explanatory notes and translations of terms in minute *solitreo* script within the body of the text. On p. 35 appears the Jewish date 5653 (thus, in Western numerals), that is, 1892/3 CE.³ The copybook thus is modern, and the vernacular features of some phrasing within the classicizing parts of the Armenian text suggest that the MS was written by an Armenian around the same time that the unnamed Jewish owner acquired it. Indeed, it is not beyond the realm of possibility that the Armenian writer orally told the Jew who acquired the MS – most likely a purchaser rather than the recipient of a gift – the names of the Zodiacal signs, since the forms suggest that they were heard, not read and copied.

- 1 It is a pleasure to record here my gratitude to the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America for provision of a scan of the text and permission to publish it, including the plates shown here, and for the very kind assistance of the Library's staff. For the decipherment of the *solitreo* characters I thank Mr. Avner Perez of Ma'ale Adumim, Israel, without whose expert assistance their reading would have presented an insuperable difficulty to me. I am grateful to the two anonymous readers of this article as well for their helpful and illuminating comments and corrections.
- 2 See, e.g., Erevan, Matenadaran, MS 10274, written by one Mirza Mirzabekian in Baku in 1876: Michael E. Stone et al., *Album of Armenian Paleography*, Aarhus: Aarhus University Press, 2002, no. 190, pp. 496–497. It is an astrological and calendrical text – thus similar in theme, too, to the JTS manuscript.
- 3 This date marked the four-hundredth anniversary of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, among whom were my own ancestors. My grandmother Marguerite Sananes (née Saltiel, Salonica–New York, 1900–1997) remembered that neighbors belonging to the Abravanel family presented to the Ottoman Sultan a golden heirloom in token of thanks for Turkey's welcome to the Sephardic Jews.



The Arabic-Aramaic formula in Hebrew script, fol. 1r.

On page 1, in Hebrew square characters, is the formula *tm 's b 'd'n ysw 'd w 'd's nrm 'gds*. This is easily recognizable as an only slightly garbled form of the Aramaic spell in Arabic, *Tammāgis Bagdisawād Wagdās Nūfānāggādīs*. This spell is found in the Arabic *Ghāya al-ḥakīm*, 'Goal of the Wise Man', the vast magical compendium falsely attributed to the tenth-century Spanish scholar Maslama ibn Aḥmad al-Majrīṭī ('the Madrileño') and famed in the West under its Latin designation, the *Picatrix*. Indeed, much of the Armenian text of the MS derives from the *Ghāya*, allowing the possibility that the owner added the spell as the first part of the order of a magical ritual that he planned to perform. The *solitreo* note introducing the square-character formula begins with a banal series of equivalencies of kilograms, francs, liras and dirhams, in Judeo-Spanish; but immediately preceding the spell itself are these words, in Hebrew: *sha'aluni ḥakhme Yishma'el* [scil. *Yishma'el*] *perush elu hatevot*, 'The wise ones of Ishmael asked of me the explanation of these words'. This would suggest that the Jewish owner of the MS was something of a learned adept himself, enough to be consulted by Muslim sages about the meaning of a non-Arabic spell deriving from an Arabic book. However, he does not go on to provide the explanation – to say what the spell *does* mean. The *Ghāya* introduces the spell thus:

But the practical use and the knowledge of this science – may God strengthen you! – is accessible only to the one in whom its nature is established. Aristotle in his book *al-Isfāmāḥīs* refers to it when he says, 'The perfect nature is a power of the philosopher that augments his knowledge and wisdom'.

The spirit or Pneuma of one's perfect nature goes by the name of the spell, and one is to invoke it in an elaborate magical ritual when the Moon first enters Aries.⁴ In his *Muqaddima*, Ibn Khaldūn cites the *Ghāya* as calling

4 See Hellmut Ritter and Martin Plessner, '*Picatrix*': *Das Ziel des Weisen von Pseudo-Magīrīṭī* (German transl. from the Arabic), London: Warburg Institute, 1962, pp. 198–201.

the spell 'the dream word of the perfect nature'. One is to say its words while falling asleep and mention what one wants, and that thing will be shown to him in a dream. Ibn Khaldun adds that he has heard of a man who did this after a partial fast and several nights of *dhikr* exercises (i.e., in the trance-like state induced by a ritual of 'remembrance' of God through the continuous recital of sacred words and names), and a person appeared to him and identified himself as the man's 'perfect nature'.

Ibn Khaldun's rendering of the spell, *tamāghis ba 'dān yaswādda nawfanā ghādis*, is closer than that in the *Ghaya* to what we find in the Hebrew of MS 10558. Franz Rosenthal, in his commentary on the *Muqaddima*, suggests that these words are Aramaic in origin and might originally have been *temaggesh b'eddān swādh* (?) *waghalhash nawmthā ghādes*, 'You say your incantations at the time of conversation (?)', and the accident of sleep happens'.⁵ *Temaggesh*, the word he translates as 'say your incantations', is literally 'magianize' and comes from the Old Persian singular *maguš*, 'a magus', i.e., a Zoroastrian priest. Given the semantic range of the loan that became the verb *mageuō* in Greek, magianizing might involve a range of operations including sacrifice, not just saying incantations. Arabic *majūsī*, 'Zoroastrian', comes from this same form via Aramaic. This does not imply that a Zoroastrian ritual was employed or suggested. But the implication is possible: Dreams and their interpretation by Magi are a hallmark of Iranian epic, from the dream of the last Mede, Astyages, in the sixth century BCE, recorded in the *Histories* of Herodotus, to the dream of the last Parthian Arsacid, Ardavān, in the third century CE, recorded in the *Kārnāmag* ('Res Gestae') of Ardašīr son of Pāpak. *Rāzā*, 'secret', appearing as a Persian loan-word in Aramaic in the Book of Daniel, is indeed associated culturally with the specific secrets imparted in a dream and their interpretation, so closely that in Armenian the same loan, as *erazz*, becomes the standard word for a dream itself. If Rosenthal's reading is correct, a rather mundane statement about a ritual, as its words acquired a mystifying aspect, became the ritual itself, or at least its effective magical *mantra*.

The spell seems to have been well known down to very recent times in the Near East. William S. Burroughs used its words as the names of ancient Central Asian towns in *Cities of the Red Night*, the first volume of his trilogy *The Western Lands*, and he noted the particular power of the spell to induce a visionary dream. Burroughs was a Harvard man, and thanks in part to his thorough study of Shakespeare under the tutelage of the great Prof.

5 Ibn Khaldūn, *The Muqaddimah* (English transl. and commentary by Franz Rosenthal), I, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958, pp. 212–213 and note 311.

George Lyman Kittredge, he became the intellectual leader, as it were, of the other Beat writers – Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and others. But he was lonely in Cambridge; he did not join any student clubs, kept company with his pet ferret, and annoyed the other residents of Claverly Hall by practicing target shooting with live ammunition in the corridor. In later years he wrote that he detested Boston and wanted never to return. I wanted to know how Burroughs had come to know the spell, and, on 14 October 1995, I wrote him a letter asking him. But I feared he might not wish to write back to a Harvard professor. I therefore included a drawing from the enigmatic Voynich MS to spark his interest, and, knowing he was a cat lover, I mentioned that I had a cat. I received a reply, dated 1 November 1995. It reads, with typing errors corrected:

Dear Mr. Russell, Many thanks for your letter and the transcript. I had not heard of the Voynich manuscript and find the transcript fascinating. I think [it] is intended to be rotated and read in four directions. I have seen similar four way grids in Moroccan manuscripts. I did not know the source of city names. Brion Gysin, a painter who used the four way grid in his painting, gave me the names but did not know their source. Last night I had a dream of faces in shells which clearly derives from the transcript you sent. I now have six cats.
Sincerely, William S. Burroughs.⁶

Burroughs himself lived in Tangier in the mid-1950s.⁷

The owner of MS 10558 might thus have considered the performance of the spell and the consequent helpful presence of the hypostasis of one's perfect nature a prerequisite to the safe execution of further magical operations. (As to the induction of a dream vision, one finds on pp. 30–31 of our MS a spell in Armenian, translated below, invoking the angels Azrael, Gabriel, Michael and Israfil to produce the dream of one's desire. Since

6 The exchange of letters and the page from the Voynich MS are reproduced at the end of this brochure. Gysin was an artist and writer with whom Burroughs lived for years. Together they pioneered the 'cut-up' method of collage and writing; see Brion Gysin, *Turning In to the Multimedia Age*, London: Thames & Hudson, 2003. Gysin knew Arabic well and was interested in esotericism; he used the Isma'ili Assassins' slogan 'Nothing is true, everything is permitted' as his own.

7 See my article, 'The Epic of the Pearl', *Revue des Études Arméniennes (REArm)*, 28 (2001/2002), pp. 79–80, note 80, reprinted in J.R. Russell, *Armenian and Iranian Studies* (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies, 9), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004 (henceforth: *AIS*), p. 1312.

there is no Hebrew annotation, though, there is no way of knowing whether the Sephardic owner of the MS knew of it, though he seems to have gone through the whole text.) It would seem that this spell was readily accessible in the Islamic world, and a Jew of nineteenth-century Constantinople or Salonica interested in magic could easily have learnt it on his own and added it to the magical MS he had acquired. Perhaps Muslim friends who also knew it suspected it might be Aramaic, as Rosenthal did, and questioned him about its meaning. But the Armenian who produced the MS could well have known it, too.

For it would seem that in Armenia, the practice of invoking an *angelus interpretans*, an interpreting angel, or one's perfect nature in connection with an informative dream, actually predated the composition of the *Ghaya* – if indeed the latter is a product of the tenth century – not to mention the translation of parts of the latter into Armenian. The formula we have, since it is Aramaic, would have predated, maybe indeed by centuries, the Arabic *Ghaya*. And in any case, the use in the latter of the daemonic embodiments of the decans in spells has precursors in India, and in ancient Greece before those.

In the seventh century, the Armenian astronomer and mathematician Anania of Širak wrote of his apprenticeship to Tykhikos, a Greek teacher at Trebizond who knew Armenian. The curriculum may have included the occult sciences; for Anania records that once, at chapel, he slept after prayer and subsequently met and questioned, presumably in the dream state, a Sun-like being who answered his question as to whether there is life in the Antipodes. Some scientifically-minded pagans, it is to be recalled, believed the earth is a sphere with people walking all over it, as flies walk around an apple without falling off the bottom. Others still held to an older view favored also by Christians: We live on a disc in the midst of the encircling stream of Ocean. The *angelus interpretans*, citing a passage in the book of Job which suggests that such remote climes are unpopulated, informed his Armenian interlocutor that there are no creatures, marsupial, Aboriginal or otherwise, down under; and did so, it would seem, with a mild reproach for the implicitly heretical character of the curious student's question.

Anania's account of his experience does not mention recitation of a formula; but when he related to his teacher what he had done, the Greek scholar was sufficiently alarmed to implore him not to tell anybody else.⁸ What

8 See my articles, 'The Dream Vision of Anania Širakac'i', *REArm*, 21 (1988/1989), pp. 159–170; and 'The Book of the Six Thousand: An Armenian Magical Text', *Bazmavēp*, 147/1–4 (1989), pp. 221–243; both reprinted in *AS*.

except suspicion of the practice of illicit magic could have impelled Tykhikos to enjoin such discretion? For however suspect Anania's question, he had received an irreproachably pious answer to it. And in fact Armenian tradition has always regarded Anania not only as an astronomer and mathematician, but also as a master of the occult. In particular, it attributes to him the authorship of the legendary magical text *Ħec' hazareak*, 'The [Book of the] Six Thousand', of which a long version is to be found in MS 10558 itself. Extraordinary importance is attributed to this magical work in Armenian tradition. It is basically a multiplication table; but in an appendix to this article I have proposed what sort of 'treasure' (to use Anania's own word, *ganj*) it conceals.

The reproduction of the spell from the *Ghaya* is of great interest, but the translation of Armenian into Hebrew is extraordinary. On p. 34, at the end of the little exercise book, the Jewish owner of the MS lists the names of the Zodiacal signs in Hebrew, together with their Armenian equivalents in square-character Hebrew transcription, with some vowel-points to facilitate pronunciation:

tale . . *hēyyin* [Arm. *xoyñ*, Aries]
shor . . *sūl* [Arm. *c'ul*, Taurus]
te'imim . . *yēzgawor* [Arm. *erkawor*, Gemini]
sartan . . *hēzqēdīn* [Arm. *xec'getin*, Cancer]
arye . . *aryūt* [Arm. *ariwc*, Leo]
betula . . *gūysī* [Arm. *koyz*, Virgo]
mozniayim . . *qīšīr* [Arm. *kīšr*, Libra]
akrav . . *garīj* [the *j* is rendered as a *gimel* with a dot above it, as in *solitreo*; Arm. *karič*, Scorpio]
keshet . . *agērnawoz* [the *v* is rendered as a *bet* with a dot above it, again as in *solitreo*; Arm. *alehnawor*, Sagittarius]
gedi . . *aygīsīgūr* [Arm. *aycelfīnwr*, Capricorn]
deli . . *gir'ō* [or *gir{o}š*, if the final character is read as a slightly defective *shin*; Arm. *jrhos*, Aquarius]
dagim . . *sūk* [Arm. *juk*, Pisces]

Since there is no reason to suppose that pronunciation of the names of the Zodiacal signs in Armenian was thought by anyone to possess particular efficacy – the *voces mysticae*, names of the lunar stations, decans, etc. in Armenian magical MSS themselves are usually in Arabic or pseudo-Arabic – it is likely that the list satisfied mere curiosity. One may be fairly certain that it was transcribed from hearing, not from a written source;

א צדק לעודע טך נאָרע פּרעס פּרעס
 עשענע ורליט . ורפּ יוס נער ל. ל. ל.
 נקס (א) כפּד נקס אפּי ורפּד שגנ

טלה	חויין
ישור	סולא
האומים	ייגאוו
סרשן	חיזקידין
ארדה	אריוט
בתולה	גויסי
מאזנים	קישיר
עקרב	גאריג
קשת	אגירנאבוס
גדיו	אייגיסגור
דלי	גירעו
דגים	סוק

The names of the signs of the Zodiac in Armenian in Hebrew transcription with their equivalents in Hebrew, fols. 33v-34r.

apart from the Western Armenian values of the consonants, the writer of Hebrew clearly twice (in nos. 3 and 9) misheard the soft Armenian *r*, probably as a 'sh', and transcribed it as a sibilant, *s* or *z*.

There are few additional notes by the owner in the book, but on p. 8 the Armenian notes to three grids of numbers are translated into Hebrew in *solitreo* script:

A(stuco)y ē, 'It is of God' = *min hashamayim*, 'from the heavens'.

Divakan [*sic!* for *dhwakan*] *ē*, 'It is demonic' = *mimazikim*, 'from demons'.

M(a)rdkanē ē, 'It is from men' = *mibene adam*, 'from the sons of Adam'.

Page 7 has a list of the Hebrew names of the planets (*Hama*, *Levana*, *Ma'dim*, etc.), translated from their Armenian equivalents. At the end of the MS, the owner makes some cursory remarks, again in Hebrew, about various cycles of time. In the same passage he writes out in square characters the Hebrew word AMT (*emet*, 'truth') and the magical word AGRP.

Though some Jews lived in the Armenian heartland in the nineteenth century – in the interior and eastern provinces of the Anatolian peninsula – and there was a substantial Armenian community in both the Sephardic stronghold of Salonica (modern Thessaloniki) and in the great port city of Smyrna, the place where there was most likely to have been any sustained interaction between members of the two Ottoman *millet*s (religio-ethnic communities), Jews and Armenians, was the capital itself, Constantinople. Storefront signs in Hebrew, Greek, Armenian and Ottoman Turkish Arabic script could be seen in the same narrow alley. But, there as elsewhere, friction rather than amicability between Greeks, Armenians and Jews seems to have been the general rule.

Armenian writers of the Classical period mention large Jewish communities in Armenian cities, brought there by Tigran II, the Great, in the first century BCE. Though it is possible that these formed the nucleus of an early Christian community in the country, there is no hard evidence for such a hypothesis. Many of the Armenian loans from Aramaic deal with commerce and have thus been attributed to Jews, but such an explanation seems informed more by invidious prejudice than by historical fact. In any case, many ecclesiastical terms in Armenian come from Aramaic as well, making the influence of contiguous Syriac-speaking communities, as well as survivals of Achaemenian *Reichsaramäisch*, seem more likely.

Armenian writers felt an unusually strong identification with the Macabees, who represented to them warriors of a holy people similarly beleaguered, but this empathy did not extend to living Jews. The latter, as

deicides, were now wanderers in darkness, bereft of their covenant through their willful blindness. As their co-religionists did elsewhere, Armenian Christians regarded their community and Church as *verus Israel*. The Armenian Bagratids claimed Davidic ancestry, but that has more to do, surely, with Christ's own Davidic line, and with the biblical figure to whom the authorship of the Psalms is attributed, than it does with Jews *per se*. Though the Classical Armenian literature is replete with traditional Christian anti-Jewish views, these are strikingly stereotypical and betray little direct acquaintance with Jews.

Armenians and Jews did come into contact in the early modern period, mostly in large cities outside the Armenian plateau. Eremia Çelebi Kömürçiyân's Armeno-Turkish novel *The Jewish Wife*, a tale of an Albanian baker named Dimo who falls in love with Marguerite, a Jewish girl, is bloodcurdling in its judeophobia. For their part, Jews referred to Armenians as descendants of the Amalekites, sometimes using the code word *Timkhe* for them, from God's injunction in Hebrew to blot out (*timhe*) Amalek from the face of the earth. The situation only worsened in late Ottoman times, when philanthropic initiatives like the Alliance Israélite Universelle led to rapid social and economic advancement, making the Jews competitors with their Christian neighbors. And new and virulent strains of racial anti-Semitism spread rapidly in the Near East: On the eve of World War I, for instance, the Armenian journal *Mehean* suggested approvingly that Christ was not a Jew but an 'Aryan'.⁹

So Jewish ownership and apparent practical use of an Armenian magical manuscript, with its suggestion of friendly association between members of the two communities, is unusual. On p. 7 of our MS, the names of angels are given as *t'ürk'*, *nasran* and *jafut* or *jhut* (pron. *čəfut*, *čəhud*), 'Turkish', 'Nazarene' (i.e., Christian) and 'Jewish'. The latter term, which the Jewish owner of the MS does not note, could just be standard Turkish, but it is frequently employed in a derogatory way. There is, at least, nothing to suggest that the copyist was a philo-Semite. Yet, as we have seen from the rendering of Armenian names with their vernacular phonetic peculiarities and the translation of Armenian words given in abbreviated form, it is plain that the owner was not working from a book but consulting a native speaker. The latter was perhaps the author/copyist himself, since the dating of the Hebrew text, 1892, would correspond closely to the time when the MS, with its modern Armenian features, was written in a modern copybook.

One may speculate that the Sephardi purchaser owned Muslim magical

⁹ See Benjamin Braude and Bernard Lewis (eds.), *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire, I: The Central Lands*, New York: Holmes & Meier, 1982.

MSS as well – he claims learned Muslims ('Ishmaelites') consulted him. He was perhaps indulging an eclectic or catholic taste, in the hope of acquiring additional insights into the magical craft beyond what Hebrew and Arabo-Turco-Persian texts afforded him. Or perhaps he himself was a practitioner of a kind of rabbinic magic, consulting a *magid* (supernatural informant) or a *sar haTora* (master of the Law) like the angel Yofiel, as scholars from the age of the talmudic Sages down to Joseph Karo and later had done.¹⁰ If he lived in Constantinople, he would almost certainly have known some Greek; and the magical tradition in that language and milieu is incomparably vast and ancient. Armenians are less famed as magicians. But we know of an episode, some four centuries before, in which a Greek woman of Constantinople was possessed by an Armenian-speaking demon, and her relatives, evidently recognizing the language, were able to procure the services of an Armenian exorcist who performed a rite in his own tongue and cured her. Armenians thus seem to have enjoyed something of a reputation for proficiency in magic, and they might still have had it in the late nineteenth century. In attempting to explain the case of the possessed woman, I adduced parallel examples in which the language of possession is that of the nearest alien community, from amongst whose members some passive knowledge of a language unstudied, and probably also disliked or even feared, might be acquired.¹¹ Curiosity about the ubiquitous, nearest Other in the present case seems to require still less argument in justification.

What is curious is that the Jews, as a people of immemorial antiquity and evil reputation (one has in mind the theological prejudices endemic amongst Christians and Muslims, augmented by racial hatred), have historically been viewed as a *source* of magic – seals of Solomon, swords of Moses, Tetragrammaton and Sabaoth, amulets against Lilith, etc. – rather than as its recipients. References to Judaism are common in the magical literature of gentiles, but I know of no other evidence of Jewish interest

10 See Michael D. Swartz, *Scholastic Magic: Ritual and Revelation in Early Jewish Mysticism*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996. Two useful publications on belief in spirit possession in Judaism down to recent times are J.H. Chajes, *Between Worlds: Dybbuks, Exorcists, and Early Modern Judaism*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003; and Matt Goldish (ed.), *Spirit Possession in Judaism*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2003. Hirsch Loeb Gordon, in *The Maggid of Caro* (New York: Pardes, 1949), approaches Joseph Karo's practices from the point of view, it would seem, of a believer. R.J. Zwi Werblowsky's work on this subject remains authoritative.

11 J.R. Russell, 'A Scholium on Coleridge and an Armenian Demon', *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, 10 (1998/1999, 2000), pp. 63–71, reprinted in *ALS*.

in Armenian magic outside MS 10558, and transliterations of Armenian into Hebrew are few (see Note, p. 187), though numerous Armenian texts on astrology and similar subjects from the early Middle Ages on provide the Hebrew names of planets and Zodiacal signs, and explanations of the meanings of the names of angels and other biblical and apocryphal figures, places, things, etc.

How was a magical compendium and manual such as this actually used? Given the evident reliance of our MS at many points on the *Ghaya*, one may suppose that David Pingree's explanation of the understanding and use of the latter would be valid for the former as well:

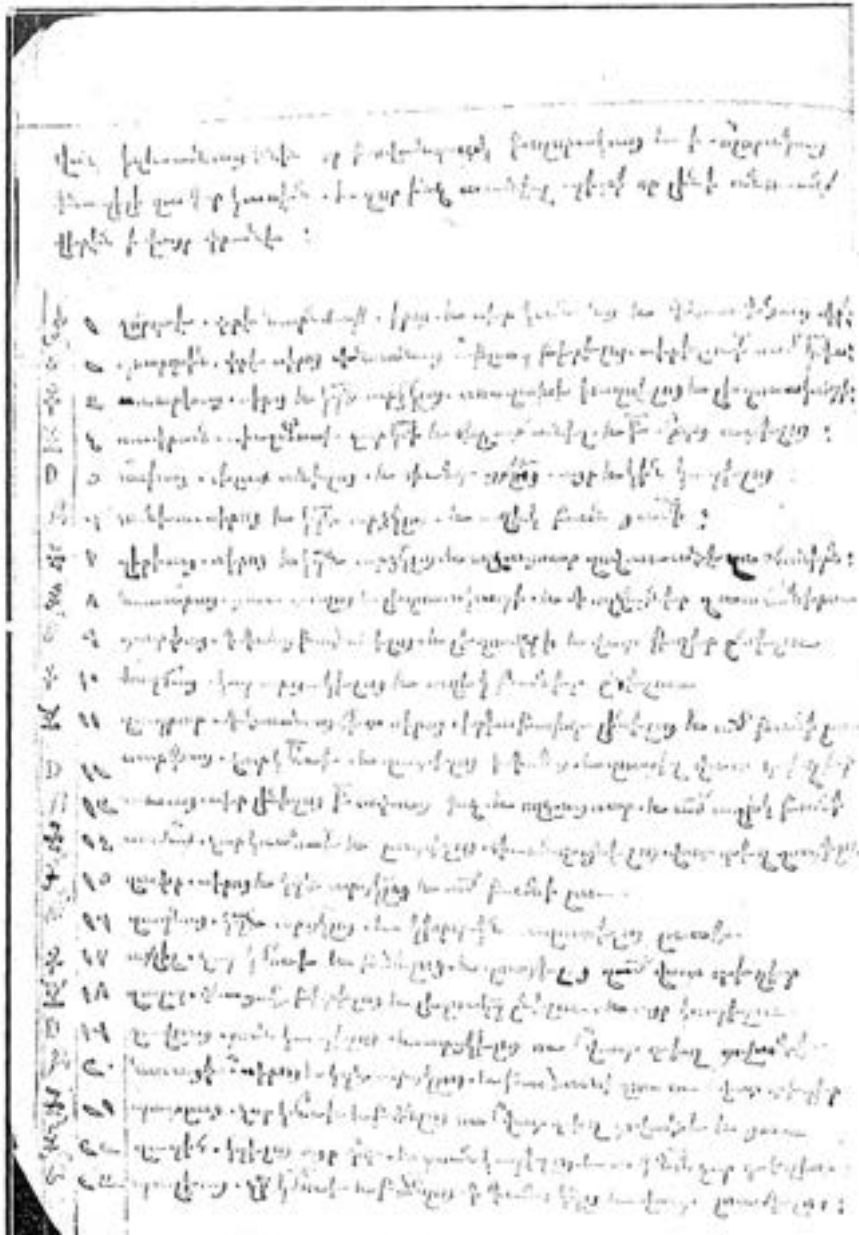
The ostensible object ... is to draw these celestial spirits down to earth and to induce them to enter into a material object (a talisman), which thereupon possesses well-defined magical powers. The rituals by which the drawing down is effected involve the use of terrestrial objects of mineral, plant, animal or compound natures appropriate to the spirit's celestial body; of images of either the celestial body or of the object of the operation; of words appropriate to the celestial body, either written with special inks or chanted; of incenses compounded of exotic substances; and sometimes of sacrifices of specified animals. Normally the ritual is performed at an astrologically determined time; in its most advanced form, the theory is that only at such moments does the ray of the celestial body penetrate directly into the talisman and permit the spiritual power to travel along it. And normally the magician must purify himself by austerities for the ceremony.¹²

But the MS contains heterogeneous material as well: It seems to have been a manual, a *grimoire* used for all kinds of magical and medical purposes. The astrological magic in the text has Greek, Indian and Muslim sources. But there are also prayers in the MS from a tenth-century Armenian mystical text, and others still invoke Christian saints. This is not at all uncommon in Armenian magical literature, but it seems most unlikely that a Sephardic Jew would have used Christian prayers. The owner was probably interested in the neutral, non-Christian parts of the MS and would have employed only those in any magical operations he undertook – unless his purchase and annotation of the book were meant merely to satisfy an intellectual curiosity.

12 David Pingree, 'Some of the Sources of the *Ghāyat al-Hakīm*', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes*, 43 (1980), p. 4.

I have translated below a few representative parts of the MS and have provided full translations of the chapters from the *Narek* that are invoked. The Armenian (Arm.) of the text is generally a mixture of Classical (Clas.), Middle (Mid.) and Modern (Mod.) Western (W.) forms in which the grammar is sketchy, the spelling inaccurate or inconsistent, and the grammar faulty or telegraphic. In short, the style of the Armenian is anything but elegant, and to polish the English would be misrepresentation. Armenian, well into the twentieth century, abounded in loan words from the languages of Muslim peoples: Arabic (Arab.) and Persian (Pers.) or New Persian (NPers.), filtered through spoken or literary Ottoman (Ott.) Turkish (Tk.) or borrowed without an intermediary. There is also an abundance of loans from Turkish itself; entire sections of MS 10558 are in Armeno-Turkish, which a Sephardic reader in the Ottoman Empire who had learnt the Armenian alphabet would have been able to read without much difficulty.

Transliteration is an issue for MSS such as this one. The so-called Hübschmann-Meillet system used by scholars was intended to render the pronunciation of Classical Armenian, whose sound system has largely been preserved in Eastern (E.) Modern Armenian. Here, however, one must take into account that the author, as a native speaker of Western Modern Armenian, would have pronounced unvoiced stops as voiced and vice-versa. He would also have used Classical Armenian diphthongs to render Turkish unlauded vowels, pronouncing as *müstakbel* the word he writes as *müvst'ak'pel*, 'future'. Turkish presents further problems: Where Redhouse's Ottoman dictionary lists a word as an Arabic (or Persian) loan and Hony's Modern Turkish dictionary of the reformed, post-Atatürk idiom does not, the word is cited as Ottoman, but Arabic and Persian words cited in their native forms are transcribed accordingly. There are also old loan-words in Armenian derived from older Iranian (Ir.) forms: Old Iranian (OIr.); Avestan (Av.), Middle Iranian (Mlr.), Parthian (Pth.); Pahlavi (Phl.); Sogdian (Sgd.); etc.



PARTIAL TRANSLATION

(Page 3)

Concerning the stations of the moon, which the entirety of the circuits and planets they call *minazilli lamer*,¹³ and whatever it is fit to do, the names are written from top to bottom.

[(Sign of) Mars] 1.¹⁴ *fordē*: write love spells;¹⁵ and the love of women and of prominent people love [...].

[Sun] 2. *piardir*: write for love of the rich and for bringing what you seek; being loved by whomever you wish.

13 Arabo-Pers. in Ott. Tk. *mandāl-i qamar*, 'stations of the moon'. These are given in the *Ghaya*; see Ritter and Plessner, '*Picatrix*' (above, note 4), pp. 14–21. The Armenian names appearing here are garbled (and, in line 1, abbreviated) forms of the Arabic ones found there. But the actions prescribed for the period of each mansion in the Armenian, mainly maleficent, do not correspond to those in the *Ghaya*. The lunar mansions, called *nakṣatras* in Indian astrology, are discussed in the letters of al-Kindī and are of importance also in the theurgic tracts of the Neoplatonist Ikhwān al-Ṣafā, the 'Brethren of Purity'. They were used for geomancy, weather forecasting and other purposes; see Emilie Savage-Smith (ed.), *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*, Farnham, UK: Ashgate (Variorum), 2004, esp. pp. 244–251.

14 The name of each mansion is preceded by the symbol of one of the seven planets and an Arabic number, evidently connecting it to one day of the four weeks of the lunar month. For the Armenian symbols of the planets see A.G. Abrahamyan, *Hay gri ev grē'ut'yan patmut'yan*, Erevan: Haypethrat, 1959, pp. 168–173.

15 Arm. *narēat*, i.e., Arab. pl. in Ott. *nirangāt*, from Pers. *nirang*. The original meaning of the word is 'power'; cf. Mod. Pers. *nirā*. In modern Zoroastrian usage a *nirang* is a short prayer recited for a specific purpose, consisting of a passage from the sacred scripture, the Avesta, enclosed between introductory and concluding passages, often in Pahlavi, with prescribed numbers (usually three or five) of repetitions of the two mantric prayers *Aham vohū* and *Ahuna Vairya*. Zoroastrian priests in India still write some *nirangs* for the laity to put on their doors for divine protection, but these prayers generally belong more to folk religion. They can still be purchased in Mumbai (Bombay), collected in small volumes printed in Gujarati or Perso-Arabic script. There are MSS of *nirangs* in Avestan script; see, e.g., *MS T3: Nirangs, Afrins, and Prayers* (Pahlavi Codices and Iranian Researches, 28), ed. Dastur K.M. Jamasp Asa, Shiraz: Asia Institute of Pahlavi University, 1976. After the Muslim conquest of Iran, the Persian term was borrowed into Arabic as *niranj* with pl. in -āt, with the derogatory connotation of an impiously magical spell.

[Venus] 3. *sureay*: for love and for releasing one bound;¹⁶ for freeing¹⁷ from hell¹⁸ and a binding of the tongue.

[Mercury] 4. *sap'ran*: for the enmity¹⁹ of an ill wisher and for killing;²⁰ and for making two men hate each other.

[Moon] 5. *haxay*: for killing and making sick; and for binding a man and a woman.

[Saturn] 6. *hanxa*: to release from love or binding, and a good thing in all.

[Jupiter] 7. *ziray*: to release from love or binding, and cure a person who is on his deathbed (?).²¹

[Mars] 8. *nasaray*: for giving pain and binding the tongue; and do not cure a person who is on his deathbed (?).

[Sun] 9. *tarfay*: for dividing (people) from one another; and for binding the tongue and making bad potions.

16 That is, by a binding (*kap*) spell. A common form of spell is that used to bind wolves (*gaylakap*), to whose natural harms Armenians and Iranians added the supernatural dangers of the werewolf. Such charms go back to the Avesta. In the 66th chapter of the tenth-century mystical prayerbook *Matean otbergut'ean* ('Book of Lamentation'), St. Gregory of Narek echoes the words of a contemporary *gaylakap* formula; see Appendix I.

17 Arm. *xalseloy*, from Arab. *khalās*, 'release'. Psalm 91 is employed in exorcism by Jews and by Christians, including Armenians. It is possible that the writer of MS 10558 read his Psalms in the popular Arm.-Tk. version as well as in Clas. Arm. If so, he would have encountered the words *Zira ǝ sēni ančēman tuzalutan, mūrhlīk' t'a'ntan xēlas ǝǝčēk' t'ir* [= Mod. Tk. *halds edecektir*] ('For he will deliver you from the ensnaring trap, from devastating pestilence') in verse 3. Lines 14, 15 and 16 also contain *xēlas*, as a compound verb and a noun. Admittedly the loan, as *alas*, *halas* and *xalas*, is not unusual even in Mid. Arm. In a ballad, St. Gregory of Narek and his inquisitors are said to 'leave for the sheep' (*alas kenir oč'xarin*) a wolf as shepherd – one more miracle for the holy man; see J.R. Russell, *Yovhannēs T'ikuranc'i and the Mediaeval Armenian Iyric Tradition* (University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies, 7), Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987, p. 155, note to l. 64). But given the magical associations of the psalm, the use of the term is still worthy of note. I thank Murat Çankara of Bilkent University, Ankara, for providing me with the Arm.-Tk. text. In Chap. 66 of the *Narek*, which employs magical terminology in abundance (see Appendix I), ll. 106 and 110 contain the Arm. term from Middle Iranian *arjak-*, 'release'.

18 Arm. *tuzaxē*, cf. Pers. *dūzak*, 'hell'. Standard Arm. *džoxē* derives from a Mlr. form of the same word.

19 Arm. *thēlmanut'e[an]*, from the Tk. pronunciation of Pers. *dādman*, 'enemy', for which standard Arm. has a loan, from a Mlr. form with devoiced first stop and metathesis of the cluster *man-*, *t'mami*.

20 Arm. *hellak' anel*, compound verb with Arab. *halāk*, 'perdition'.

21 Arm. *zōhaxern*. The next line has *z'ahaxeru*; both are corrupt acc. pls., perhaps of Oit. *rahāyūn*, 'doomed to die'. But the word may derive from Arab. *ruh* and have to do with the spirit – vapors or the like.

- [Venus] 10. *ēazhay*: for releasing (from a) binding (spell) and for doing good things.
- [Mercury] 11. *zaprar*: for love of the rich, being lucky, and everything good.
- [Moon] 12. *sarḡay*: for enmity; and dividing (people) from one another; and for compounding bad potions.
- [Saturn] 13. *away*: for love happening between 2 people; and do healing; and for every good thing.
- [Jupiter] 14. *samak*: for enmity and division; for making ill; for compounding an evil potion.
- [Mars] 15. *lafr*: for love and for releasing one bound and good for every thing.
- [Sun] 16. *zapmay*: for releasing one bound; and for freeing one bewitched²² it is good.
- [Venus] 17. *ak'ilil*: for enmity and division; and for compounding all evil potions.
- [Mercury] 18. *zalp*: to bring back what has gone away and to make a tongue-binding (spell); and to bind a male.
- [Moon] 19. *šavla*: to bind sleep; and to release someone to whom a bad potion has been given.
- [Saturn] 20. *naḡyim*: for love and releasing (from a) binding (spell); and for *healing²³ one to whom bad potions [were given].
- [Jupiter] 21. *patlay*: for enmity; and for *healing²⁴ one to whom bad potions have been given, and pain.
- [Mars] 22. *zapih*: for binding a male person; and for binding a house; and all evil potions.
- [Sun] 23. *palxay*: for enmity and for dividing (people) from one another, for binding and for evil compounding [potions].
- [Venus] 24. *savut*: for love and releasing (from a) binding (spell), and to heal one to whom a bad potion was given.
- [Mercury] 25. *axbiay*: for love and reconciliation; and do not make against a man the enmity you wish.
- [Moon] 26. *muladēm*: goodness and wickedness – whichever one you want, do it.
- [Saturn] 27. *muccar muvaxur*: for love and every good thing.

22 Arm. abbreviation for *kraḡn*, for *kavardakam*, 'relating to witchcraft'.

23 Arm. *baḡaneloy*, 'dividing', probably a scribal error – occasioned by frequent reference above to separating couples! – for *baḡeloy*, 'cure'.

24 See no. 20 and note 23.

[Jupiter] 28. *raṣay*: for love and for releasing (from a) binding (spell) and for doing all good things.

From the first degree²⁵ of Aries to the first degree of Libra is called the northern.²⁶ The first degree of Libra till the first degree [*sic*] is called southern.²⁷ That which is northern is better and stronger than the southern. And whatever is standing built in the north, and those constellations²⁸ that are in the north, are taller than the constellations of the south; but the constellations of the south are low and strengthless. For from the first degree of Cancer to the first degree of Capricorn, the sun declines and descends low; and from the first degree of Capricorn to the first degree of Cancer, the sun rises to its height, and zenith is better than nadir. When the moon is found at its height, whatever people do, whether it be spells [*narnēat*'] or other kinds of things, all are powerful and swift; and know that the opposition of a star is dangerous,²⁹ which is oppression³⁰ and sorrow, and *hput*' means descent;³¹ and the (meaning) of *šērēf*³² is height or kingship. Thus a star's *šērēf* is strong, like a king; but its *hput*' is sick and of little power. *Šērēf* is translated as kingdom and greatness and joy: just as a king in his castle and amongst his armies is powerful, so is the star in its *šērēf*. Then whatever you request will be swiftly accomplished, with incense and spiritual influence.³³

25 Arm. *tērēčē*, a loan via Tk. from Arab. *darajfa*.

26 Arm. *hēwšezayin*, for *hēwšayin*.

27 Arm. *harafayin*, for *haravayin*.

28 Arm. *purē*, from Arab. *burj*, lit. 'tower', in astrology a sign of the Zodiac and the part of the sky ruled by that sign.

29 Arm. *mukalip(n)*, from Arab. in Ott. Tk. *mukallibā*; Arm. *wapil*, from *wabil*, 'dangerous'.

30 Arm. *moxēl(n)*, perhaps from Arab. in Ott. Tk. *malyūl*, 'fettered'.

31 Arm. *e'acut'ir*, here rendering Arab. *habūt*, 'descent'.

32 Arab. in Tk. *šaraf*, 'honor, elevation'. Present-day Iranians particularly esteem the *šaraf* of four planets: *šaww*, 'Sun', *qamar*, 'Moon', *zohreh*, 'Venus', and *šar'at*, 'Jupiter'. A sacred stone in my possession, inscribed on the 27th day of Ramadan, is meant to invoke all four *šarafs*: there are four registers, with the sacred number 786 at the top followed by five Arabic h's; then two lines of magical symbols in red; then at the bottom in green the letters w h š m. A metal magic bowl also in the author's possession, the *kāre-ye Yā Šin* (named after the letters of mystical significance preceding a favored chapter of the *Qur'ān*), contains the *šaraf-e šaww* (to be said twice), the four verses beginning with *Qul* ('Recite!'), and *Mā šā Allāh* ('As God wishes!') It is chanted 1,000 times a day from the 1st of the month Rabi' I to the 18th. Both items and their explanations were given to me by Dr. Azhideh Moqaddam of the University of Tehran.

33 Arm. *rōhamiat* ('oven' (inst. sg. with def. art.), from Arabo-Pers. in Ott. Tk., *rūhamiyat*. This presumably would refer to the influx of spiritual influence of the celestial body in a position of power in the sky at the time of a magical ritual. I translate here as 'incense' Arm. *cux*, 'smoke'; the reference is most likely to suffumigation.

But if it is in *hput'* or danger, which is descent from the constellation (and) sorrow, then it is bad, and whatever you seek will not be accomplished. For it has departed from its house and *šērēf*, and is away from home.³⁴ And the *hput'* is that which is its house. Whose *šērēf* is six constellations, which is 180 degrees, the opposite is its *hput'*. Here is an example for you: The Sun in Aries, the 19th degree is its *šērēf*; and opposite, the 19th degree of Libra is its *hput'*. For Venus, the *šērēf* is 17th Pisces; and its *hput'* is 17th Virgo. Mercury's *šērēf* is 15th Virgo; and its *hput'* is 15th Pisces. The Moon's *šērēf* is 3rd Taurus; and its *hput'* is 3rd Scorpio. Saturn's *šērēf* is 21st Libra; and its *hput'* is 21st Aries. Jupiter's *šērēf* is 15th Cancer; and its *hput'* is 15th Capricorn. The *šērēf* of Mars is 28th Capricorn; and its *hput'* is 28th Cancer. The *šērēf* of the [ascending node of the Moon] is 3rd Gemini; and its *hput'* is 3rd Sagittarius. The *šērēf* of the [descending node of the Moon] is 3rd Sagittarius; and its *hput'* is 3rd Gemini. The ascending node³⁵ is hot and good for desire(?)³⁶ over the rich and powerful. And the Moon rises up from it: Then they say the ascending node adds good to what is already good but makes what is bad, worse. And it is male and of the daytime. And the descending node³⁷ is windy and bad: The Moon goes down because of it, and they say it causes what is good to be less so, whilst (adding) worse to bad. And it is female and nocturnal. And whatever star is in the constellation, its nature changes that nature, as its helper, and every *mut'alit'a*³⁸ is *hput'*, and an end of 3, that is, five bounded and boundary-keeping stars and three band [*goti*].

(Page 4)

Concerning the conversion of difficult names to plain ones.

İlimay which is to connect or bring to agreement; *ziran* which is like *išimay*; *lut'up*³⁹ *bēvē mut'alit'a* which is a sign of the Zodiac; *vef* and *yēf* a girdle; *numun*⁴⁰ a star; *k'ervik'eap* is erratic; *čavzayr* the head of the

34 The word *larip*, Arab. in Tk. *gharīb*, has the sense of a wanderer; in folk songs, a poor man forced to seek his bread in an alien clime (Arm. also uses the older, more 'native' – actually a Mlr. loan – *paḏaxr*). On this extended image of a ruler in his fortress and its resonance with a medieval prayer, see Appendix I.

35 Arab. in Tk.: *ras* or *tax*, lit. 'head'.

36 Unclear: Arm. *teš'il* or *tešil*, perhaps for *teš'al*.

37 Arm. *taḡazūn*, perhaps a corruption of Pers. *āmbāll*, 'belonging to the tail'.

38 See the copyist's Glossary on p. 4 of the MS, *infra*, for the explanation of this term.

39 Arab. *qayūb*, pl. of *qayb*, 'pole star, axis'.

40 The word seems to be a corruption of **nygūm*, the broken pl. of Arab. *nyjm*, 'star'.

dragon;⁴¹ *htavut*⁴² means boundaries; *mmlalip*⁴³ means movements; *t'epit*⁴⁴ means fixed; *nučimtan* is two signs suddenly in conjunction (?);⁴⁵ *mazi*⁴⁶ is past; *hai*⁴⁷ means now; *miwst'ak'pel*⁴⁸ means new coming; *mevčivt*⁴⁹ is *hazar*; ⁴⁸ *mativm* is *layiwp*; ⁵⁰ *k'evg* means exhausted; *zint'a* is living; *miwrt* is dead;⁵¹ *suka*⁵² is small; *miwfret*⁵³ is *far*; ⁵³ *muzacavac*⁵⁴ is a pair; *na-zar*⁵⁵ means looked, which is sight and recognition; *nut'ē*⁵⁶ is a term which means to listen and converse; *int'isa*⁵⁷ is connecting, reaching and conjoining; *infisal*⁵⁸ is completing, prohibiting and stopping.

The calendrical dates of the Armenians.

The calendrical system of Greater Armenia is movable. And from the departure of Adam from paradise till the flood is 2242 years; and from the flood to the tower [of Babel], 525 years; from the tower to Abraham, 15 years; from Abraham to the departure of Moses from Egypt, 495 years; from the Exodus to the construction by Solomon of the First Temple, 380 years; from the First edifice to the Second, 511 years; and from then till the birth of Christ, 518 years; whose composition is according to the Septuagint, of

41 This is plainly Arab. *jawzah*, Phl. *gōzihr*. Phl. *gōzihr sar* ('head') is the ascending node of the moon; *damb*, 'tail', is the descending node.

42 This renders Arab. *ḥudūd*, pl. of *ḥadd*, 'boundary, limit'.

43 Ott. Tk. from Arab. *munqalib*, 'turning', a word important to astrologers: *burj-i munqalib* is a sign of the Zodiac into whose first point the sun enters at the change of a season; and *munqalib wa khārīj* in geomancy is the designation of a figure in which fire or air takes the other's place (Redhouse).

44 Arm. *layiten*, perhaps a verb, pres. 3 pers. pl.; cf. MidArm. *layt'anel*, 'to form a string or chain', from Tk. *ghaytan*; **myām-dām*, with Pers. suffix, would be a 'container of stars'.

45 Tk. from Arab. *mazi*, 'past'.

46 Tk. from Arab. *ḥāḏā*, 'now'.

47 Tk. from Arab. *mūstakbel*, 'future'.

48 Tk. from Arab. *mevcud*, 'present'.

49 Tk. from Arab. *hazir*, 'present (place or time)'.

50 Tk. from Arab. *maḥwū*, 'nonexistent', *ḥayb* 'hidden'.

51 NPers. In Tk. *zinda* / *murd*, 'living' / 'dead'.

52 Tk. from Arab. *suḡra*, 'small'.

53 Both Tk. from Arab.; *mūfred* is a participle of *fard*, 'individual, separate'.

54 Ott. Tk. from Arab. *mūzevviḡ*, 'paired, coupled'.

55 Tk. from Arab. *nazar*, a very common loan in MidArm., often used specifically of the evil eye.

56 Perhaps from Tk. from Arab. *nutuk*, 'speech'.

57 Ott. Tk. from Arab. *ittiḡāl*, 'connection'.

58 Tk. from Arab. *infisal*, 'separation'.

Adam till the one in Christ, 8 and 198.⁵⁹ From Alexander to Christ is 351 years; from the Nativity of Christ to the emergence of [St. Gregory] the Illuminator from [Xor] Virap is 276 years; from St. Gregory to the invention of the Armenian script is 116 years; from the invention of the script to the Armenian dating [system] is 130 years; from the Nativity of Christ till the Council of Nicaea is 325 years; and from then till the Council of Constantinople is 74 years; and from then till the Council of Ephesus is 50 years; and from then till the second Council of Ephesus is 24 years;

(Page 5)

from then till the evil Council of Chalcedon is 27 years. From the Nativity of Christ till the Armenian dating [system] is 532 years, some say 553; from Adam till the Armenian dating [system] according to *Sep'ix* is 5711 years; and according to the five-hundred-year cycle, from Adam to us take 7976. Add the Great Armenian date and it is this: have 6289; and take the Great Armenian date, it is that of the Hebrews that they use, have 5751. And add the Great Armenian date from the *Sep'in* and you have 862; and add the Great Armenian date from the Alexandrian and you have 2000; and add the Great Armenian date from the Andreasian and you have 51; and add the Great Armenian date to that of the Creator of life and you have 303; and add the Great Armenian date to that of the Romans; add the Great Armenian date 76 and take the Assyrian from the Greek; add 76 to the Great Armenian date and you have the Assyrian one ...

Concerning enemies.

If you wish to harass your enemy, so that he may not cause you harm but be driven off by you instead, first you must repeat seven times the first stanza of the [prayer] 'I confess in faith'.⁶⁰ Then, from the second stanza till 'You who

⁵⁹ According to the tabulation, the total number of years, from Adam to Christ, is 4686. The Arm. letters representing 8 and 198 are incomprehensible as a coherent date, unless the initial *shva* be read as a corrupt *hshen*, equaling 7000, yielding 7198. If, however, at some point 198 was written with the separate letters for 1, 9 and 8, and that for 9, the aspirate *t* was a misreading of the similarly shaped *b*, i.e., 2, then the numbers 8, 1, 2, 8, put together, could represent the 'perfect' number 8128, on which see p. 177.

⁶⁰ See J.R. Russell, 'The Credo Poem *Hawratov xostovanim* ('I confess in faith') of St. Nerses the Graceful', in J.J. van Ginkel et al. (eds.), *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam* (Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta, 134), Leuven: Peeters, 2005; the translation of the prayer is on pp. 233–236.

care for the creations' go once; when you take 'You who care ...'⁶¹ in hand, recite it 40 times. Then recite thus: Make my enemies flee, and banish those hateful to me. Say this 40 times. After it say this: My God, make them like a wheel, and like a reed before the wind, like fire that burns the forests, like flame that consumes the mountains, so banish N.⁶² With your storm and by your anger bring N. distress. Fill their faces with dishonor; and may he seek your name, O Lord, and be abashed and vexed for ever and ever and perish full of shame. May he know your name is the Lord, and you alone reign high over all the earth. Say this 40 times. Then say: Come, Lord, arrive, Lord, and confound him in his life. [This say] 99 times. At last say once: Glorified Lord, accept the supplications of your servant, and fulfill for good my request by the intercession of the Holy Mother of God, till the end, say it: It suffices. If you wish, take some water, put a little mercury in it, with one measure⁶³ of soil of a corpse,⁶⁴ seven matches⁶⁵ and one measure of olive oil;⁶⁶ put them all in the water, then read above it and blow on the water. Take it to that man and spill it on the road over which he will pass. Then see how that man is, or say, I send him out.

(Page 6)

Keep a little of the water. Take it over to where he goes outside and walks and scatter it there.

[In Armeno-Turkish:

Sana bir kapı ki allahca ve gınahın af olur; bu niyazı itmeğilen, ve aklın bazı yer ider. Daha başlamadan ki beyandır ibtida yedi gece üçer kere Narekin yirmi yedinci kluxı ki Meghann p'oxı denilir okuyasın. Andan başla Narekin seksen dokuz kluxunu yedi gece doksan beşer defa her gece oku. Lakin ilk başladığın gece cuma akşamı başla ki 3(a)b(a)t' ağıarır. Ama ilk

61 That is, appositely, stanza 14: 'You who care for the creations, keep my soul and body by the sign of your Cross from the snares of sin, the tests of demons, and from unjust men, and from all the perils of soul and body. And have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, of multitudinous sins'. Note the invocation of the Cross here, as a possible high point of the spell; and compare the use of the sign of the Cross at the apex of the recitation in the Armenian folk religious practice of the *Kiprimoz*, discussed in the notes to Appendix I.

62 Ar. in Tk. *filan*.

63 Pers. in Tk. *dag*.

64 Arm. *me'eli hoł*, i.e., soil dug up over a grave in a cemetery.

65 Tk. *kibrit*.

66 Tk. *zeytin yağı*.

me'. Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded, saying with his divine mouth: Let the power be given ye of the 24 Prophets, the twelve Apostles, draw ye the bow [drawing of bow in text] of fire and dispel that pain from here (?),⁷² saying, Our Lord Jesus Christ 9 months dwelt in the womb of the Virgin, 8 days dwelt on the river Jordan, 7 days created the world, was crucified on the 6th day, harrowed hell, bound Satan: By those bonds we bind that aged infirmity of the lower back of this servant of God. The name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit now [*scil.* add: and forever and unto ages of ages] [magic symbols] [large round drawing of a demon]. We beseech you, O saints of God, receive somewhat and do not ignore my supplication: I bound by your name, the doctors who take no fee,⁷³ Kozma and Damianos,⁷⁴ I being unworthy. Saint of God, receive somewhat. Our Lord Jesus Christ binds the evil *dadar xami* or evil cramps. He bound the evil demon, the evil pain *t'at'ar xami* of cramps against this servant of God in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit now and forever and unto ages of ages, Amen.

72 Unclear: Arm. *ays pe[z]jen t' [ē]*.

73 Arm. *anarcat'*, 'without silver', a calque of Gk. ἀνάρπαξ and a standard epithet of these two saints in Arm. and Gk. (cf. the standard Classical Armenian dictionary, *Nor Bərgirk' Haykazean Lezmi*, I, 116, s.v.).

74 The twins Cosmas and Damian, who were physicians, lived in Cilician Aigeia during the reigns of Diocletian and Maximin. Refusing to abjure their Christian faith, they were imprisoned with Anthimos – who is invoked in Armenian spells along with them – and others, then martyred. Their feast day in the Eastern Churches is 27 October. In prayers collected in *Hay hmayakan ev zolovrdakan alat'k'ner* (*Armenian Incantations and Folk Prayers*), ed. Sargis Harat'yanyan, Erevan: Erevan State University, 2006, pp. 44, 88, 99 and 241 n., they are invoked to cure *xos-nok* (a stomach ailment) and toothache. One prayer, no. 68, can be translated thus: 'Ant'imos, Kozmas, / Damianos and Bakos / Came together / And by their will pulled teeth / And threw them in the sea / And asked of God, / If a person write / Our name on bread / And genuflect to God 12 times / And eat that bread / His tooth will not ache again' (Erevan, Matenadaran, MS 8428). These saints were venerated for other activities elsewhere in the East Christian world: In a Russian folk ballad (*bylina*), Kuz'ma and Dem'yan are wandering minstrel-clowns (*skomorokhi*) who come to the home of a widow to ask that her son Vavilo, who is out tilling the fields, leave and join them and make sport of the infidel king Dog (*tsar' Sobakr*). Unlike others who rebuff their summons and are punished, she wisely 'sees these here are no simple folk, / no simple folk at all, but saints' (*vidit, lyudi tut da ne prostye, / ne prostye lyudi-te, svyaty*). For instance, she offers them a roast chicken, but the bird comes to life and flies up to the rafters – a miracle attributed variously to Christ, Muhammed and the Armenian mystic St. Gregory of Narek. On the ballad, see Yu. I. Smirnov and V.G. Smolitskii (eds.), *Novgorodskie byliny*, Moscow: Nauka, 1978, p. 301, no. 70.

If a woman is barren take 2 drams of Venetian treacle⁷⁵ 7 mornings; she will sleep and be with child.

For when you start (?) to do something and finish it, but they tell you it cannot be accomplished, do not fear. Go to one field in the wild⁷⁶ and in one place go into a cave,⁷⁷ strip naked⁷⁸ so that not a shred of clothing remains, then turn your back to the moon so that your shadow is in front of you. Cry out in a loud voice, saying: *Ea melik' asvar azambiw alēyk'ē*⁷⁹ 3 times. Again say this: *yazambu va alēyk' iwm bi ismil lahiw til gahar ew ma alar*⁸⁰ and one vellat 'in vē pi ismi azam fi xat'emi siwleyman izni tavur⁸¹ they come and say to thee do not fear, readers.

This prayer is holy and has and gives the power of 12 things; this is the prayer: *imšima tančera apačiaman ōriraša abur suir tašača k'alt'ēn hazar hačapin i ōti ašata xašata e'an šr šattavel arsadaēl ačosia milam pamlač xoyš tačaxia melayay siča ayiunays ašiwčaxia melapalu ayčay i amaniōn muik'a ašimēša vula iwlpatin axaripn amudia axin ēlšpat t'ēalatanxi tanč'u lat'i vred ea musayil.*⁸² By God the binding [spell] is loosed.

Again in your dream they tell what you desire,⁸³ they come to you. Write the names of these four angels, take in your hand

(Page 31)

and go to sleep: *ea azrail, ea čibrail, ea mik' ēail, ea israfil ak pir yunifi mēnay mepiy oriš ēsrarim.*⁸⁴

If you wish to be free of fear of your enemy, pass four times by his door or

75 Arm. *t'breax varax*, Ar. in Tk. *tryšig fūriq*, 'reputed a sovereign remedy', declares Redhouse, s.v.

76 Arm. *eapan eazi*, Tk. *yabon yazi*.

77 Tk. *mağara*.

78 Arm. inchoative 2 pers. sg. imp. *ē'ipxe'ir*, from Tk. *çıplak*, 'naked'.

79 A much-garbled Muslim prayer, perhaps to be rendered: *Yā malik anvar, azzam bu aleyk*, 'O king of enclosures, greatness upon thee!'

80 Perhaps: *Azzam bu wa Bismillāh* [In the Name of Allah]... *ma'ara*(?).

81 Perhaps: *Wāfi al-Dīn wa bismi Azzam fi hātīm-i Süleyman ibn Dāwūd*, 'Master of the Faith! And in the name of the magnificent One, in the seal of Solomon son of David'.

82 On such voces mysticæ in Arm., see my article, 'Language of Demons, Language of Men', in S. La Porta and T. Van Lint (eds.), *Festschrift for Michael Stone* (in press).

83 Arm. *myuad*, cf. Pers. *myāz*.

84 The four angels, Azrael, Gabriel, Michael and Israfil, are invoked in their Muslim forms; the spell ends with the words 'a white ... my secrets' (Ar. in Tk. *aznir-imi*).

near him and say out loud for all to hear and blow in his face. He will swell up and bloat. This is it: *alubugal amielah t'amar gular hmin zari maxašax amlat' aravay para xarapisinē tivšmann twzerisinayē filančənə*.⁸⁵ If you wish to make him released⁸⁶ write this prayer and hang it on his house or from the wall; give [it] with your right hand and he will be released by God.

For this write 7 names on an apple and give it to him to eat or wash it in water and have him drink the water. Say thrice the things to be read: *mama hovinay istaki orpazi asanaki ušanay ərətion*.⁸⁷ It will be, by God.

...

APPENDIX I: CHAPTERS OF THE NAREK

The *Matean olbergut'ean* ('Book of Lamentation'),⁸⁸ by the tenth-century monk, theologian and mystic St. Gregory of Narek (Arm. Grigor Narekac'i), is a compilation of 95 penitential prayers, often referred to simply as the *Narek*. Its extravagant imagery, powerful alliterative patterns and repetitive litanies are meant to induce the emotional abreaction of tears, arouse spiritual awareness and effect prayerful repentance, to enable the worshipper to come close to God and plead with Him for salvation. Folk balladry accords numerous miracles to the saint, and hagiographical legends about him may be found in the epic cycle of Sasun.⁸⁹ Parts of the *Matean* have entered the Armenian liturgy, and we may fairly say that amongst the Armenians, down to modern times, it was the book most often commented upon and used for private devotions after the Gospel and the Psalter.

The *Matean* was often employed for magical purposes and as a protective talisman against the powers of evil. The text itself deployed the imagery and vocabulary not only of a millennium of Christian scriptural and

85 The final words are garbled Tk.: *dizman *əzerisine filančnu*, 'onto him, the enemy, N'.

86 Arm. causative 2-pers. subj. *xaləc'nes* < **xalas-ec'nes*.

87 This spell seems pseudo-Greek, with the words ending in diminutive *-aki* and the final **rhodion*, 'easier' (7).

88 Grigor Narekac'i, *Matean olbergut'ean*, eds. P.M. Xəč'atryan & A.A. Lazinyan, Brevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1985 (=M).

89 See my introduction to Grigor Narekats'i, *Matean olbergut'ean* (facsimile reprint of the Buenos Aires 1948 edition), Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1981; on Narekac'i in the Sasun epic, see J.R. Russell, 'The Shrine beneath the Waves', *Res: Anthropology and Aesthetics*, 51 (Spring 2007), pp. 136–156.

mystical tradition, but also of Armenian folk belief. According to J.-P. Mahé, for instance:

D'une façon extrêmement curieuse, c'est au 66-ème chapitre du *Livre du lamentation*, dans une méditation sur l'agonie du Christ et l'outrage de la Passion, que Grigor Narekac'i trouve des accents très proches des formules traditionnelles de *gaylakapi alôt'k'*.⁹⁰

The latter 'wolf-binding prayer' must remind one of the numerous binding (Arm. *kap*) spells in our text; and indeed the very first line of Chap. 66 seemingly alerts the reader both to the images of Christ's body to be invoked and to the magical vocabulary to be manipulated in the poem, containing as it does the familiar and oft-employed term of magical texts, *del*, 'potion'. At the beginning of the *Matean*, in an introduction whose cruciform shape contains key words at the points where the correspondingly symbolic parts of the body of our Lord would be,⁹¹ St. Gregory advertises his work as *spelanič*, 'cures', and *delk'*, 'medicines' against sin and harm. There are numerous lists, in both manuscripts and printed books, of the chapters of the *Matean*, describing their contents or prescribing them as prayers to be recited for particular purposes. Some call Chap. 66 *Vasn gerezmani*, 'For (or: Concerning) the grave', or *Ogevari*, 'For the deathbed'. Others are more detailed: *Netajgut' iwn yeress diwin netiwk' ē'arē'aranac'n K'ristosi*, 'Shooting the demon in the face with the arrows of the torments of Christ', or *Menamartut' iwn and Beliaray ē'arē'aranōk'n K'ristosi*, 'Single combat with Beliar by means of the torments of Christ'.⁹²

A general strategy of Christian typology is to take a symbol of corruption and death and show how by the divine economy it is made a means of healing and life. The Cross, an instrument of execution made of wood from the tree that caused the fall of Adam, is the most obvious example, and Narekac'i employs it in this poem. Armenians venerated the Cross, though,

90 Jean-Pierre Mahé, 'Échos mythologiques et poésie orale dans l'oeuvre de Grigor Narekac'i', *Revue des Études Arméniennes*, NS 17 (1983), p. 261. Sargis Harut'yunyan collected and edited several *gaylakap* spells in *Hay hmayakan* (above, note 74), pp. 147–151.

91 *M*, p. 245; on the structure of the text-picture of these introductory *drut' hrnk'*, 'Theses', see J.R. Russell, 'Bedros Tourian's Cruciform Prayer and Its Antecedents', *Journal of Armenian Studies*, 6/2 (2000–2001), pp. 27–45, reprinted in *AJS*.

92 *M*, p. 1075.

to a degree that suggested idolatry to their scandalized neighbors;⁹³ and it is correspondingly prominent. But the author's purpose in the deployment of typological strategies here is specifically to undermine magic and witchcraft; so the several invocations of the powers of the Cross may perhaps also be viewed with reference to a little prayer book popular among Armenians, where there are explicit references to magical practices. This is the *Kiprianos*, or Life of the early fourth-century St. Cyprian of Antioch. The latter began his career as a pagan magician; but his *defixiones* were powerless against the Christian girl Justine whom his client Acladius desired. Satan explained to Cyprian that the Cross was more powerful than the forces of evil – and at this point in the text, which is meant to be recited aloud, a large Cross is depicted. The story is known across the Christian world and contributed to the formation of the legend of Faust. A long recension of the Life of Cyprian exists in good Classical Armenian; so although the oldest known prophylactic magical scrolls (Arm. *hmayil*, from Arab.) come from half a millennium after the *Narek*, it may be argued from the existence of an old version of the text and the importance of the narrative that Gregory could have known of such a talismanic use of it among Armenian common folk and accordingly alluded to it here.⁹⁴

The saint prays that in the event of his untimely or sudden death, Christ will protect his unshriven soul from demonic assault and the devilry of witchcraft; and *Narekac'i* invokes in particular the protective power of the Cross – the holy Sign (Arm. *nšan*). The idea that the soul upon death is beset by the malign spells of sorcerers and the assaults of supernatural beings recalls more the milieu of the Tibetan Book of the Dead than the picture of the afterlife common among Armenian Christians; it seems incompatible, for instance, with the complex of folk beliefs about Gabriel, the angel of death. The Armenian author of JTS MS 10558 would undoubtedly have known the *Narek*, and this chapter, steeped in magical terminology, might well have been of particular interest to him. Both MS 10558, p. 3, and *Narek*, Chap. 66, ll. 91–94, employ somewhat similarly the extended metaphor of a nobleman defended within his fortress.

93 See J.R. Russell, 'The Armenians, the Holy Cross, and Dionysius Bar Salibi', *St. Nerses Theological Review*, 8 (2004), pp. 1–12.

94 See J.R. Russell, 'The Credal Poem *Ħanvatov xostovanim* ('I confess in faith') of St. Nerses the Graceful', in J.J. van Ginkel et al. (eds.), *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam* (*Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 134), Leuven: Peeters, 2005, p. 225 and note 61, for an analysis of the typical contents of a *Kiprianos*.

CHAPTER 66⁹⁵

Again, an addition to the same supplication of a chapter of prayer, of the repeated lament of the same vigilant one.

From the depths of hearts, speech with God.⁹⁶

I.⁹⁷

- Now, whosoever may take up the potion (*def*) of prayer
 Of this humble book and plead by its means,
 If the one making the offering be from amongst sinners,
 Then let me be by my word joined in partnership to him;
 5 But if the one stepping forward be from amongst the righteous
 Then let me be found by this the same, with him, given mercy by
 its means.
 But if this kind of person be rendered blessed by virtue of himself,
 And wretchedness be ascribed to me alone,
 Then I testify by myself to this.
 10 Still let him recall Solomon and the words of the same by the soul
 inspired:
 Who will be certain he has a pure heart,
 Or, Who yet will boast he is clean of sin?
 For there has not risen an earthborn man free of interrogations,
 Or one chosen by means of the self-locomotion of his own courings,
 15 Not even if he be raised in flight by the lifting of his arms,
 So may he be cautious, doubly in fear,
 Even if he is firmly established on rock, learning from Paul.
 Perhaps fallen to earth,
 He may come to resemble the shaper of this canon weighed in true
 judgment.
 20 But let him take up this clean rebuke, the stuff of diadems,
 In order not to descend in imprudence from a height unattainable,

95 *M*, pp. 506–512.

96 This is the common heading of each chapter. The plural 'hearts' may allude to the use of the prayers by many of the faithful; or it may imply one's innermost self, one's heart of hearts; or it may have reference to the five senses and other multiple groups of mental and spiritual faculties encompassed by the heart; or all or several of the above.

97 The chapters are traditionally divided into subchapters marked by alphabetic Armenian numeration (a, b, g, d...), which I replace with Arabic numbers.

- And the one condemned to punishment make it the occasion of
liberation,
By means of which, rising up from the destruction
Of spiritual death, he may live in hope.
- 25 And may the message of this logos be for me
An incised monument, entirely indelible,
That in place of my own wretched mortal self,
By the ceaseless sounding of tearful lament
Ever resounds, never to be still.
- 30 For my dismembered bones
In the earthen sheath of the cloak of the grave,
May there be confession of this in soundless voice;
And for my body dissolved in the ground may there reach
You, seer of the hidden, in strengthless speech this same
supplication.
- 2.
- 35 Lord of mercies, spring of compassions, gifts of good things,
Son of the most high, Lord Jesus Christ,
Have mercy, spare, love mankind,
Look upon my peril, take notice of my broken state,
Incline to me in my misfortune,
- 40 See the misgiving of my extreme agony.
Arrive to be with me, the lost, in my need.
Touch as a physician my most ignoble malady,
Incline sweetly your ear to my piteous groans,
Listen to my soundless moaning from the depths of the abysses of
the tomb of death.
- 45 May there enter the ear of your hearing, you who are hearer of all,
The sound of the pleas of my ruined limbs.
And since the bestowal of my life is imperishable,
May your compassion be likewise unchanging.
Be a partner in meekness to my vicious frailty.
- 3.
- 50 Preserve no enmity towards my perished image,
Enter not into inquisitive judgment against my form bereft of
breath,
Do not multiply the blows rained upon me, tortured to death,

- Do not make strong battle with me, a broken clay vessel,
 Do not redouble fury against me, already beaten down by decree,
 55 Do not deliver punishment to me, a destroyed edifice,
 Do not cast stones at me, a slain dog,
 Do not thunder ferociously against me, a crushed louse,
 Do not mutter menacingly against my dishonored soul as though I
 were arrogant,
 Do not summon me, who am rejected ash, to a judgment of choice,
 60 Do not regard my scattered dust as your opponent in war,
 Do not consider my foul mud as an opponent,
 Do not vanquish me, disgusting and pitiable, as though I were a
 fighter,
 Do not save me, a rejected stumbling block, as firewood for
 Gehenna:
 To me, rebuked in all these multitudinous words,
 65 Do not attach accusation anew.

4.

- These are for the most wretched and dark-confining (*xawarargel*)
 grave here
 The heartbroken and multiply sorrowful entreaties
 (*argahatur 'iwnek*).⁹⁸
 Let your word, O blessed One, be established firm and unchanging,
 In accord with my entreating heart.
 70 For even now whilst still alive I speak,
 I am dead to you, inaccessible one,
 Just as even at the perdition of death, of destruction,
 I am incorruptible in faith, at your omnipotent command.
 Now I beseech you, Lord Jesus Christ,
 75 Look upon me in compassion,
 And do not abandon me to be the housemate of Beliar;
 And that death-declaring herald of the tomb,
 Of lifeless thud and piteous interment,

98 Note Narekac'i's parallel use of two verbal homonyms with positive and negative connotations, as a phonetic signature of his rhetorical oppositionalism: Arm. *arg-*, 'value' (positive), and *argel-*, 'confine' (negative). Cf. in ll. 103 and 120 the double *yawt'k*, 'fecund' (positive) vs. *yaw'ur'k*, 'talismans' (often beads) used in conjuring (negative).

- The clamour of the voices of sobs and cries of those entreating you⁹⁹
 80 Do honour to heed, sole beneficent one,
 Lover of the soul, powerful one, lover of mankind (*Hogesēr*,
hzawr, *mardasēr*),¹⁰⁰
 And may your good spirit dwell with me,
 Making for me light in the darkness.
 Let there remain by me your life-creating Passion's revered
 relics,
 85 So that they may offer them to me as the consignment of a treasure
 kept in you
 For the renewal of life.
 Let them be furnished to me as equipment of imperishable arms,¹⁰¹
 Stones of the slings of spiritual contrivances (*hmaric*)¹⁰² ever
 beside me
 To repel the legion (*zgunnd*) of the evil one.¹⁰³
 90 The attacker that is against me by you, Lord, be repelled;
 For if he rise up against me in war,
 Seeing the city empty of its armies,

- 99 In ll. 78–79 Narekac'i evokes by alliteration (*t' nahnant t' hnarnt t' alman*) the sound of steady spadefuls (cf. Arm. *t' i*, 'shovel') of earth falling upon the coffin whilst the troupe (Arm. *jayd*) of 'mothers of mourning' (*eleramark*) wails.
- 100 The triad may encode Holy Spirit (*hogt*), Father (*hzawr*, 'powerful', and without the *z* the gen. of *hoyr*), and Son (*mard*, 'man'), joined together at beginning and end by *sēr*, 'love' (the latter implicit in the middle member only in the continued alliteration of the *r*, God the Father being the sternest in judgment of the Trinity).
- 101 Arm. *mčark* '... *zōmc*', a pair of loan words identical to the compound expression *sēr abzār* of Pahlavi and New Persian.
- 102 This word has overtones of evil and the magical world: *hmark* are evil spirits who lie in wait under bridges to lure people into the water and drown them – not unlike *Ricakli*, the malign undines of the Slavs, or the *Lorelei* that stalks the cliffs above the Rhine. See J.R. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia* (Harvard Iranian Series, 5), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987, p. 456 and note 177.
- 103 The association of the forces of evil with darkness, and their description as 'legion', are standard features of Christian demonology, and their appearance here is to be expected. Such characterizations are as old in Armenia as Christianity itself: The demons routed by St. Gregory the Illuminator when he destroyed the Zoroastrian temple at Aštisat are called (Arm.) *sewagund*, 'black legion', by Ps.-Yovhannēs Mamikonean in his *History of Taron*. See J.R. Russell, 'Truth Is What the Eye Can See: Armenian Manuscripts and Armenian Spirituality', in T. Mathews & R. Wieck (eds.), *Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Art, Religion, and Society*, New York: Pierpont Morgan Library, 1998, p. 161, note 15 (=AIS, p. 923).

And the sentries warning of the fight bereft of their voices,¹⁰⁴
 I have you, Lord, as an eternal and unslumbering protector
 (*pahapan*).¹⁰⁵

5.

- 95 For if even now, earlier hastening forth than the day of fulfillment
 Death's scourge prepare for me a place of confinement (*argelan*)
 with no path [out] (*anšaviš*).¹⁰⁶
 I dispatch the dominical prayers towards him,
 And if he contrive to strike me down,
 Then may my fall be a genuflection to the Maker.
 100 If a hand make me fall into the ash of earth,
 Then may the impress of the face of God upon the same repel him.
 If he contrive for me the hard labors of pains,
 Then may the fecund (*yivt'i*) sweat, with blood compounded,¹⁰⁷
 Of the Saviour of the world cause him vexation.
 105 If he take hostage my breath away from running to do good,
 Then let the bonds (*kapank'*) of the Creator of all release
 (*arjakesc'ē*) me.
 If he force me to renounce the gifts of the light,
 Let the patience shown to abuse by God's enemies
 Silence (*karkesc'ē*) those same, along with him.¹⁰⁸
 110 If he release (*arjakesc'ē*) against me the strikes of arrows of
 weapons drawn in secret,

104 Arm. *ēw zardolakanac' n gorci apvjaym*. Here I take *gorc*, 'work', as a calque on Pers. *kār* in the sense of 'war'.

105 God is the never-sleeping guardian of Israel; cf. Ps. 121 (Arm. 120).

106 In Chap. 2, Narekac'i speaks of the *amemagraw nlin soskali*, 'the awful road that takes all' upon which the soul must set forth at death, hoping that an angel of God's peace will meet him there.

107 Ll. 102 and 103 appear to contrast the sweat of hard work – the curse put upon the sons of Adam – with the blood of our Saviour in Gethsemane.

108 The reference to the bonds (*kapank'*) of Christ, which are endowed with positive powers to release one from the magical *kap*, 'binding (spell)', leads the poet to imagine the imposition of the *lezvakap*, 'tongue-binding (spell)', often mentioned together with the general *kap* in our MS and elsewhere. On releasing a bond (Arm. *arjak-*, l-w from Arab., (*x/h*)*al(a)s-en*) see note 17 above, on Arm. *xalrelay* and its use in the Armeno-Turkish version of Ps. 91. It is noteworthy that in the Narek, *arjak-* is used in a positive sense, in connection with Christ, and in a negative sense, of the arrows of the enemy (line 110) – another example of Narekac'i's rhetorical oppositionalism.

- Let the trap of the contrivances (*hmaric* ') of the bow (*alelan*) of the glory of the Father from his quivers meet the same.¹⁰⁹
 If in the mask of light of the tenebrous one he come shameless into my eye's sight,¹¹⁰
 May the striking of his head wrapped in its cowl
 Torment him till the fullness of all.
 115 If he stray to bind the sureness of my hands,
 May the reed offered to the right hand of the Creator of being
 Torment and muzzle him.¹¹¹
 If he mock¹¹² me with the strokes of contempt,
 Let the forbearance of ridicule by the Omnipotent deride him.
 120 If by some spells (*bžžanawk* ') of talismans (*yurt* 'ic ')¹¹³ he craftily
 bewitch (*kaxardel*) me,

- 109 The magical associations of the bow and arrow are extremely ancient. In passages of the Zoroastrian hymn to Mithra that evidently are derived from older spells, Yašt 10.20–24, the god repels the worshipper's enemy, stops his horses and chariots, turns back his thrown spear and keeps him from hitting 'with thrusts of far-flying arrows' (Av. *nōt̥ t̥haōš para paθivatoš ava aθnaōti tanuaoγō*); see Ilya Gershevitch, *The Avestan Hymn to Mithra*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1967, pp. 82–85. In Islamic magical MSS, a drawing of a small bow often concludes the text of a spell; a tiny drawing of a bow follows the word for bow in the admonition to Sts. Cosmas and Damian, *k'ašec 'ēk' alelu hrešēnt*, 'Draw ye the bow of fire', on p. 30 of our MS. Arrows are mentioned in Ps. 91:5 – the Psalm employed in exorcism. See the comment *supra* on *kap*. The bow here may also be the bow set in Heaven by God for Noah as a sign of the first covenant with man, after the Ark rested upon the mountains of Ararat (Gen. 9:13, 14, 16).
 110 Presumably, Lucifer.
 111 The reed offered in mockery as a scepter to our Lord by his tormentors here becomes the magic wand of a magician releasing a man from a spell's paralyzing effect. The other incidences and instruments of the Passion are enumerated in the lines following.
 112 In Arm., the (*xel*)/*katak*, clown or jester, is condemned as a bearer of satanic and pagan falsehood in the sermons attributed to the fifth-century Catholicos Yovhannēs Mandakuni (though probably three centuries newer).
 113 The *locus classicus* in Armenian literature for this word is the myth of Ara the Beautiful in Movsēs Xorenac'i, *History of the Armenians*, I:15–18: Queen Semiramis (Arm. Šamiram, Akkadian Šammuramat) tried to revive the dead Ara by sorcery (*dhot* 'ut 'eamb vhušut 'ean) but later threw her magic implements (*zyuwt* 's), which were beads (*alunk* '), into Lake Van – a short distance from the hill where Narekavank' was to be built, so this is a local legend that Gregory could easily have known. In Chap. 93:18 (*M*, p. 632), he hails the holy chrism as *xap'aušē' yurt* 'ic ' , *k'aktiē' huayekac* ' , *nahanšic* ' *jetnacnac* ' , *xaytar'aktiē' kaxardac* ' , *gšid* ' *alawdic* ' , *hpnaxoyean dhnac* ' , 'canceller of charms, destroyer of spells, banisher of conjurers, disgracer of witches, discoverer of heresies, strong opponent of demons' (*knayekac* ' is the *lectio difficilior* but probably an original scribal error). In

- Let the slap to the face of mighty God
Mightily shame him.
If at the gloom of nightfall
He strive against me, emboldened to deceit by the dark,
125 May he be disgraced, O Lord, by the rays of light of your
appearance.¹¹⁴
If by the trials of the midday heat
The destroyer on the hot wind, who incinerates with sun-flare,¹¹⁵
Think to shake me from my roots,
By the power of your Sign (*nšaniḏ*) of light,¹¹⁶ may he be torn up
and wither.
130 If he contrive to render me barren of the breath of grace,
Then let the spittle that the Lord of the Cherubim accepted with
me, a sinner,
Rebuke him.
6.
If he bare to me devouring fangs,¹¹⁷
May the silence of the mouth of the heavenly one strike him dumb.

75:10 (*M*, pp. 552–553), the *yur'ut'k'* are not little talismans fingered by witches, but the stuff of idolatry itself – the steles or statues (*arjank'*) of demonic deception (*dīwaparār*). These idolatrous steles are to be contrasted to the stele of the Cross-stone (Arm. *xac'k'ar*), the *mah-arjan*, 'grave monument', that St. Gregory intends his own book to be. Realia of the Van region may have inspired this conceit: Steles inscribed in Urartean cuneiform, as well as the huge, cigar-shaped *višap* ('dragon') stones, were re-used by Armenians as *xac'k'ura*.

- 114 Chap. 12 of the *Narek* is often employed as a talismanic prayer to protect the home at night. See J.R. Russell, 'Grace from Van: A Micro-Historiola', *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, 7 (1994), p. 42 (= *AS*, p. 616).
115 Cf. Ps. 91:6: *Midever bā'ofel yahalokh, miqetev yāšād pāhārāyim*, rendered in Armenian (Ps. 90) as *Yirē (!) or šrji i xawari, i kayē'akht' enē dīwān i hasarak anur*. Biblical Heb. *dever*, here misunderstood as *davar*, 'thing', and translated into Armenian as *ir*, is of course 'pestilence'; see Karel van der Toorn et al., *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Leiden: Brill, 1995, col. 438 f.
116 That is, the Cross: Cf. line 143 and the note there. *Via Crucis, via lucis*; but Armenians regard the Cross as literally luminous: Images of the Cross often depict not the body of Christ, but a sunburst (*čac'and'*) at its centre. Christ himself is regularly hailed in the Hymnal as *aregakti ardarut'ean*, 'Sun of righteousness'.
117 Arm. *Er'ē žanik' caxoḏk' inj c'uc'awic'ē*: Some MSS have *xacoḏk'*, 'biting' (*M*, p. 1076, note), which is equally apposite (and cf. *xacmouts* two lines down!), since the devil and his minions are generally likened to ravening beasts (Arm. *gazan*, 'beast', is itself a loan from a Mlr. act. part. meaning 'biting, stinging', and the

- 135 If he sway my soul with sweet bites,
 Let the blows to the nails hammered into the Maker of all from
 naught¹¹⁸ grieve him.
 If he make me stray into the paths of iniquities of thoughts,
 Let the nails driven into the feet of the unapproachable One bind
 him (*kapesc* 'ē).
 If he give me abominable potions of attraction to imbibe,¹¹⁹
 140 Let the vinegar mixed with gall given to the beneficent One to drink
 Embitter him.
 If he discover me by the first tasting of the tree,
 Then let him be utterly condemned, encompassed by the awful
 mystery of the Cross.¹²⁰
 If to be stiff-necked against obedience
 145 To the command of the Lord he teach my soul,
 Let the burden carried by the neck of the undefinable One destroy
 him.

association is as much Zoroastrian as Christian, and indisputably more anciently so). However with the act. vb. one would expect an acc. pl. *šanis xacotē*; so the MS tradition probably reflects a late misunderstanding of the ending -k' as the nom. sg., perhaps of a *pluralis tantum*.

- 118 Arm. *hastol būnēc*: *būn*, 'basis, essence' (cf. Mlr. *būn-dahēn*, 'creation'), in the inst., means 'at all', in modern Arm. with the overtone of a negative. Taken as a substantive pl. here and elsewhere by Narekac'i, it could have the overtone of creation *ex nihilo*. It would be enticing to surmise that the Arm. usage retains an echo of the Phl. sense of *būn* in the specific context of the Zoroastrian cosmogony. One recalls that Gregory was writing scarcely a century after the Pahlavi *Zand āgādh*, or *Bundahīšn*, had been written in the form that has come down to us.
- 119 Arm. *šrapoyr*(k'), 'charm', here as a magical potion designed to affect the victim given it to drink. The term appears in Agathangelos, always with the sense of misleading one towards an evil act; E. Benveniste, in 'Études iraniennes', *Transactions of the Philological Society* (TPS), 44 (1945), p. 73, derives it from Mlr.: Olr. **fra-pawda-*, 'attract', verbal base **pād-*; cf. Pth. *pōd-*, 'marcher, courier'. Perhaps this is also the derivation of NPers. *frōyān*, 'deceive'. It is somewhat ironic that in latter centuries people variously afflicted might be given to drink water in which a page of the *Narek* had been dissolved.
- 120 The wood of the Cross, called in aretalogies the *p'ayt kenac*, 'Tree of Life', is traditionally believed to have come from a tree grown outside the walls of Jerusalem (where the medieval Georgian Monastery of the Cross now stands, in the valley below the Israeli Knesset) from a seed of the tree in Eden where the first human couple sinned. Here the pattern of standard Christian typology, in which divine economy makes an evil thing into an instrument of good, reinforces Narekac'i's own thematic strategy.

- If he vanquish and wound me with death and perdition,
 Let the hard lance,¹²¹ the weapon penetrating
 The side of the Creator of Adam, repel him.
- 150 If he surround me with the pangs of hellish griefs
 Let the cloth of the winding sheet of Him who holds existence
 contain him.
 If he contrive wickedly to observe me upon death's floor,
 Let the dwelling of the living One in the rock of death slay him.
 If he laugh aloud at my human failing,
- 155 Let him be lost again, impotent in will,¹²²
 When the undying God, risen in glory,
 Renews¹²³ with Him all who ever have died.
 If he rejoice at the loosening of slight millennial bonds,¹²⁴
 Let him tremble, stilled again indeed in the final chains
- 160 Of the terror of indissoluble captivity in the severest place of
 unending torment.
 If he labour under the first blow,
 Then let the woe of perdition at the final destruction of
 inextinguishable Gehenna
 That is prepared for him and for his angels,
 Be recounted to him, that is on the great day of the great Judgment.

121 Arm. *hēg*; also called *gelard*, it was kept by the Armenians as a prized relic in the 'Cave Monastery' *Ayrvank*.

122 The Arm. is an alliterative figure, *karkameal kamose*.

123 Arm. *norogean'*, aor. indic., probably a scribal error from original aor. subj. *norogean'ē*, a form indeed found in some MSS (*M*, pp. 857–858).

124 Arm. *Et'ē and lucanel p'ok'r kapanae' hazaramēdic' berkrese't*: The strophe refers, presumably, to the release of the Antichrist from his six-thousand-year imprisonment during the tribulations of the end times. An Armenian employing this chapter for magical purposes would obviously have noted this strophe for its resonance with the magical text *Fēe' hazarean* itself, a version of which is to be found in our MS. In Armenian belief, there are two rather ambiguous apocalyptic beings chained in rock caves till doomsday: King Artawazd, in the chasm of Greater Ararat, at whose chains dogs gnaw; and Mithra the Younger (P'ok'r Mher – cf. Narekac'i's p'ok'r, perhaps an indirect reference to a local epic figure!), behind the blind portal *Mheri durn*, Tk. *Meher kapur*, 'Mithra's Gate' at Van, a few miles from Narekavank' (cf. the Zoroastrian designation of a temple where rituals are performed as Pers. *dar-e Mehr*). The first is known from the *History of Movses Xorenac'i*; the second, from the oral epic of Sasun.

7.

- 165 But as for me, taking my refuge in you, Lord Jesus,
Sole king, monarch, mighty One,
Creator of heaven and earth
And of every adornment therein,
I who await your coming,
- 170 And hope expectantly in your mercy, O Savior,
Fall at your feet and kiss the tread of your footsteps,
Confess my guilt and advertise my sins.
I am pelted with stones of rebuke and scorched by the groans of
my heart,
My conscience is wounded to the quick,¹²⁵ and the acrid smoke¹²⁶
of my breath aflame consumes me.
- 175 I burn with the salt dew of my tears and am inflamed with the
ardour of my vitals.
I dry in air emptied of hope and wither in the bitter blast of the wind,
Tremble with my supplicating word and shake with cries and
groans,
Suffer in severe agony and shiver in my soul's fever,
Rock in a storm of sobbing; and totter, buffeted by waves.¹²⁷
- 180 I am terrified by the fullness of my reputation, lost in the memory
of terror.
I melt at the images of the judgment and die at your threats, great
One:
Hear! You of multitudinous mercies, atoner, lover of mankind,
generous One,
Ineffable sweetness, day of grace and longed-for dawning,
For you are capable of every thing.
- 185 Of great salvation even at the departure of my last breath.
And to you with the Father, by your Holy Spirit, glory eternal.
Amen.

125 The Arm. is an alliterative figure, *i xēt' xēlīs xoc'otim*.

126 Arm. *čēnčēr* refers to the acrid, thick stench of burning flesh: In the first chapter of the *Matean*, St. Gregory contrasts this unpleasant odor of the sacrifices rejected by God to the incense-like aroma of a prayer received in heaven.

127 Chap. 25 expands upon this image of the soul as a ship imperiled by a storm. See J.R. Russell, 'A Shipwreck Awesome and Marvellous: Chapter 25 of the Lamentations of Narekatsi', *Raft: A Journal of Armenian Poetry and Criticism* (1988), pp. 57-63, reprinted in *AIS*.

The recitation of Chapters 27 and 89 of the *Narek* is recommended in an Armeno-Turkish text on p. 6 of our MS. The number nine is stressed in the magical practice: a text is to be read nine times, or ninety-five; one chapter is to be recited eighty-nine times; the other, the even more potent 27 (= $3 \times 3 \times 3 = 3 \times 9$). The Slavonic adaptation of the treatise on poetic figures by the Byzantine author Choïroboskos contains 'definitions, subdivisions and illustrations of twenty-seven fundamental poetic devices: three to the third degree – the Triple Trinity': Russian MSS beginning with the Codex of Svyatoslav of 1073 contain that text,¹²⁸ and perhaps the rhetor Narekac'i knew of it as well. At any rate, he stresses his numeration (*zdrut' hwn t' uoc's yarmarec' i*) in line 2 of Chap. 27.

CHAPTER 27

Again, an addition to the same supplication of a chapter of prayer, of the repeated lament of the same vigilant one.
From the depths of hearts, speech with God.¹²⁹

1.

And since to the poems in a voice of lamentation offered above
I harmonized the placement of these numbers,
Moans and sobs, groaning with cries,
A crying of bitterness and a song of tears,
5 I shall begin again this oration of supplications
In the manner of a confession, in a mode of penitence,
Declaring in plain speech what is hidden in concealment,
For by beginning referring back, and by words conclusive,
The same style unified into one plea of prayers to the same One
10 For soul-sustaining humility shall I here set down.

128 See Roman Jakobson, 'The Puzzles of the Igor' Tale', in idem, *Selected Writings*, IV: *Slavic Epic Studies*, The Hague: Mouton, 1966, p. 382.

129 *M*, pp. 349–352. The chapter sometimes bears the heading *Melanac' n*, 'The one of sins'; and accordingly Erevan, Matenadaran, MS 5650, fol. 362a, notes with reference to line 6 that this chapter is a point of transition: *mine' e' ayžu olbaverēn asac' i, ard p'oxem zbars xostovanarēn, zi mela-n xostovanut' hwn ē*, 'till now I spoke in the manner of a lament; here I change my words to the form of confession, for "I have sinned" is confession'. The Armeno-Turkish text in our MS similarly calls this chapter *Melay p'ox*. Its overtly repetitive character as a confessional litany suits it well to the kind of self-hypnosis required by the magical rite.

2.

I have sinned against your great beneficence, I, unworthy, have sinned;

I have sinned against your dawning rays, I, the dark, have sinned;

I have sinned against your grace of uncountable bounties, truly I have sinned;

I have sinned against your love of supernal mercy, I have openly sinned;

15 I have sinned against you who received me out of nothingness, verily I have sinned;

I have sinned against your supreme caresses' encompassing embrace, endlessly I have sinned;¹³⁰

I have sinned against the enjoyment of your undimming light, I, the deceitful, have sinned;

I have sinned against the tasting of your ineffable life, I have multiply sinned;

I have sinned against the free bestowal of your unapproachable gifts, daily I have sinned;

20 I have sinned against your praiseworthy body, O God, to death's measure I have sinned;

I have sinned against your worshipped blood, O Creator, in truth I have sinned.

3.

Behold, verily, blessed is the part of these words

Of a heart placing its hope in this 'I have sinned'.

This is the very precious trust (*awand*), the unforgettable precept,

25 Paternal gift, custom of the primordial fathers,

Provision (*t'adzak*) given to all, irrefutable word,¹³¹

Powerful response, bridge of life,

Savoured by the One on high, beloved of the saints,

130 The Arm. is an alliterative figure: *gerunak gogoyd grganac*."

131 The *awand* or *grawakan* is a thing given in trust: the soul, to the body, for the ten of life, to be returned to its Maker at death. Narekac'i in his prayers often associates this image with the parable in the Gospels of the talent entrusted by a master to his servant. The idea is, thus, that the gift is transitory. Similarly, Arm. *t'adza*, an Iranian loan (cf. Pers. *tdle*), means provisions for a journey – again, with its overtone of transit, of the temporary.

- Bond not to be severed (*anxzeli kap*),¹³² wondrous speech,
 30 Irreversible cause, longed-for petition,
 Desired table,¹³³ heartbroken call,
 Means of impossible things, vanquisher of hardness,
 Definition of the worshippers of God, book for the heathens,
 Canon of olden times, intimate to Christians,
 35 Victorious for creation, mighty bulwark,
 Awful separator, art of the highest,
 Immeasurable depth, vision of rapture,
 Sealed mystery beyond which there is naught for anyone to pass,
 Unless he perceive this one of the swiftness of thought ungraspable,
 40 Fortunate, miracle-bearing voice
 That was not memorialized at the sealing of the final judgment of
 the rank cast away:
 Maybe by the same irrevocably cutting (*xzeal*)
 The vengeful decree against the one reaching death
 From whom election has been revoked as useless,
 45 He will break down the eternal boundary.
 Adornment of the glory of greatness,
 Wherewith He himself, divinity, is diademed in luster!

4.

For who, turning to and taking the horns of this altar of holiness,
 And not for a brief time escaping punishment, was found without
 blemish?¹³⁴

- 50 And if Achan the Zarhite,¹³⁵ Saul of Kish¹³⁶ and Judas son of Simon,¹³⁷

132 For the user of this text for magical purposes, the word *kap*, used of a binding spell, will stand out; cf. the intentional use of it by Narekac'i in a sequence of magical terminology, in Appendix I above. In line 42, though, Narekac'i will employ the same verb *xzem*, 'cut', in a complex passage suggesting that God by His grace can sever for the penitent the very bond of damnation at the Judgement, while similarly breaking down (*k'aktesc'ē*) the barrier between heaven and hell behind which the 'castaway rank' of the rebellious and fallen angels is confined eternally.

133 This presumably refers to the altar on which the body of Christ is offered and taken in spiritual nourishment.

134 Cf. 1 Kings (= Arm. 3 Kings) 2:28 f, on the death of Joab.

135 Arm. Ak'ar Zamrean, in Josh. 7:18 f.

136 Arm. Sawul Kisean, in 1 Sam. 9.

137 The first of these three sinned by theft; the second, by violence; the third, by betrayal: All were caught out and forced to confess their transgressions.

All saying the same, were not justified,
 And I bear witness, truthfully confessing this measure of speech,
 That for those constrained against their will love is not perfected,
 Hence neither is salvation entire.

5.

- 55 But I kiss by my own will, again repeating
 That which is intimate to my own baptism of your happy word:
 I have sinned by forgetting your gifts (*eraxteac* 'd), once more I
 have sinned;
 I have sinned by raising the body's hand against the soul, a fool, I
 have sinned;
 I have sinned in perfidy against your life, verily and verily have I
 sinned;
 60 I have sinned by slighting your word (*apaxt arneloy*), savagely
 have I sinned;¹³⁸
 I have sinned on the day of destruction, by myself compelled, I,
 the meanest, have sinned;
 I have sinned, I who am condemned to a death without revival,
 worthy of castigation, I have sinned;
 I have sinned without feeling rebuke before your highness, I,
 repulsive, have sinned.

6.

- Redoubled spiritual pity be my end,¹³⁹
 65 For it appeared to me for perdition and for destruction,
 For I was routed without the possibility of turning back,

138 The same juxtaposition, as an alliterative and pseudo-etymological figure of *eraxt-* (line 57) and *apaxt-* (presumably understood as *aperaxt*), occurs in the fifth-century *Epic Histories* of P'awstos Buzand, 3:14: *p'oxamak eraxteac'n apaxtis hafic 'ēk*, 'in return for benefit you repaid me with neglect'. Its appearance here more likely rests upon a deep pattern in Armenian poetics than upon intentional borrowing, however.

139 Arm. *axrav*, 'mourning, lamentation, complaint' (Bedrossian); but as the word derives from Pth. *axad*, 'mercy', now cf. also Bactrian *aš(a)ra*, 'grace, indulgence', in Nicholas Sims-Williams, *Bactrian Documents from Northern Afghanistan*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 184. I have opted for a gentler shade of meaning in the English rendering, as 'pity'.

- For I, the son, was inscribed an enemy,
 For I was cast down from the heights of heaven,
 For I heaped up the tares of my life's harvest.
- 70 And yet more lament with this resounds,
 For I dishonored my self by my self,
 For I was discovered a pagan altar of the destroyer.¹⁴⁰
 Some other grief there is still to my savage heart,
 For they take me for what I am not:¹⁴¹
- 75 An outwardly shapely cup, unclean,
 A whitewashed wall, plastered with dung,
 Adorned in my vain pride,
 My light turned to gloom,
 My eye, carrying its beam, unfortunate,
- 80 My torch of glory put out.
 Harmful am I, in every matter, in all things, in every way,
 Towards the dispositions of the Lord,
 Towards revelations of the divine,
 To the manifestations of the Creator's scripture,
- 85 To humiliations stricken by fear,
 To that which I beheld with my very own eyes,¹⁴²

140 Arm. *bagin*, from OIr. **bagina*-, 'place of the god', is a common designation of shrines of the pre-Christian faith, where images of the Zoroastrian divinities, the *yazatas*, were worshipped.

141 The editors of *M*, on pp. 1025–1026, propose that this is an autobiographical statement. They compare it to Chap. 71, ll. 83–89: 'I am ranked in the circles (*par*; the word also means 'dances') of the meek, and perform the lewd partridge dance (*k'ak'araw*) with demons (*ayrs*); / I am praised by men, but You, who see, condemn me'; and Chap. 72, ll. 62–64: 'I am called a master of instruction (*pet waršic*'; cf. the nearly identical title *wardapet*, a celibate priest of high rank), whilst a prosecutor within myself; / I was named "Rabbi, rabbi!" but to God refuted this praise of mine'.

142 Dr. Xač'ik Rštuni suggests that this passage refers to Narekac'i's vision of the Blessed Virgin holding the Christ Child, above an islet in Lake Van. When she called to him 'Accept thy Lord!' (*Aš xTēr k'o*), he replied: *Aš, Tēr, zayn lu*, 'Take, O Lord, my soul!' Popular etymology and tradition explain thus the name of *Aštēr* island; on this legend, see Russell, 'The Shrine' (above, note 89). The editors of *M*, on p. 1026, cite this tradition, as well as another according to which Mary appeared to him in his cave and told him who she was. Since he doubted this, she returned the next day with Christ in her arms. The saint fell to his knees and on the spot composed his famous lyric, *Meledi enulean*, 'Melody of the Nativity': *Aš k'u cov i cov cicalaxit caralanayr yarananum erku p'aylakajew aregakan mian*, 'Her eyes, sea into laughing sea, dilated in the dawn like two lightning-formed suns'. For a translation and study see J.R. Russell, 'A Poem of Grigor Narekac'i', *REArm*

- 90 To which greater is my responsibility,
 Than to all that is the Gospel
 Of marvels and ecstasies,
 Consuming cares, impossible concerns,¹⁴³
 Uncountable enumerations of thoughts,
 Uncompleted departures, uncertain descents,

NS (1985), pp. 435–439, reprinted in *MS*, pp. 31–35. The image is widely diffused through Armenian poetry and is reflected in Alexander the Great's description of his own *ac'ers im covacinal*; see the fifth-century Armenian translation of the Alexander Romance, *Patmut' hyn Alek'sandri Makedonac' woy, haykakim xmbagrut' yomer*, ed. Hasmik Simonyan, Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1989, p. 352. Chap. 20, ll. 70–71, may also refer to this vision: 'I even saw you, worrying about me, / Which cannot be written here (*zor d'ē ast greli*), yet I was not ashamed'. Narekac'i, for all his candour about his own failings, shuns mention of the specifics of such experiences, perhaps because they might detract from the pure intentionality of his prayers, in which the soul approaches Christ with only one earthly or historical backdrop: the *Heilsgeschichte* of Scripture. Chap. 2:2, in which Narekac'i prays for God to grant him completion of 'this Book (*matean*) of prayers of Lamentation (*olbergut'ean*) begun', even naming the title of his text (l. 48), includes a powerful litany (ll. 83–93; *M*, p. 252): 'Let it not be for me to labour (*erknel*) and not give birth (*cnanel*), / Lament, and not shed tears, / Meditate (*xorhēf*), and not sigh (*harac'el*), / Cloud over, and not rain down, / Run, and not attain, / For me to call, and for you not to hear, / To plead, and to remain unseen, / To moan (*kolkolēf*), and not to be pitied (*oformil*), / To plead, and not to be helped at all, / To be sacrificed, and not give off smoke, / To see you and depart empty (*zē'ez tesanel ew datark elanel*)'. The various images of trying and not attaining remind one forcefully of the prayer-like Part Five of T.S. Eliot's poem 'The Hollow Men' (1925), where verses of the Paternoster are interspersed between repetitive strophes with the burden 'Between the idea and the reality ... falls the Shadow'. Narekac'i's images of labour and birth, and of rain, may distantly echo the Armenian song of the birth of Vahagn, while the other parallelisms rely partly on semantics and partly on phonetic patternings: *XorHēf-Harac'el, kolkolēf-OLormil*. Though the poet fears remaining unseen by God (*antes ninal*), his greatest fear, kept to the last, crushing line, is to behold God himself and be unmoved by the experience. Since, as seen above, there is every reason to be certain that Chap. 2 was composed for the beginning of the *Matean*, had the author then not yet had his vision of the Virgin and child, as it would overtly seem? Does he deliberately put it in the future, since the rest of the book is still ahead? Or does he anticipate another vision entirely, perhaps in the afterlife? One may exclude the latter possibility, since it seems unlikely that an enfranchised soul vouchsafed the full radiance of the Divine could or would depart from it, much less depart empty. Of the first two suggestions, the former is likely to be right if St. Gregory composed the chapter early in his life and did not reshape it when assembling the prayer book.

[43] Arm. *audac'mmē*, acc. pl. of *audac'mm*, from Mlr.; cf. Phl. *hamdāxtan*, *hamdāz*, 'consider'.

Fitting despairs,
 Suitable rebukes, proper castigations,
 95 Just anathemas, curses deserving to be meted out.
 Now, these are the reproaches against me, a sinner,
 Tortures whose blows I mete out to myself.

7.

And since you can forgive all these debts
 And cure all the stings of death,
 100 Lord of mercies, God of all,
 Christ the king, Son of the lofty Father,
 Creator, merciful, beneficent,
 Blessed, munificent, rich,
 Awesome, mighty, compassionate,
 105 Guardian, helper, sustainer,
 Reviver, curer, restorer,
 Generous in thought, never vengeful, refuge,
 Physician, praised, heavenly,
 Ineffable, light, life,
 110 Resurrection, renewal, repentance.

8.

If you look in your love of mankind,
 According to which are your accustomed ways,
 Looking at you, I cry.
 If you hear, I sigh.
 115 If you bring your ear close, I plead.
 If you heed, I petition.
 If you pardon, I beg.
 If you turn to me, I praise you;
 But if you leave me unseen, I am ruined.
 120 But if you despise me, I weep;
 If you do not grant me sustenance, I die;
 But if you show your awful face, I am slain.
 And if you chastise me, I tremble.
 If you look at me with aversion, I am terrified;
 125 If you are severe, I am frightened.
 If you banish me, I groan;
 If you beat me down, I am rejected;
 If you take not the flame of my despair, I am fevered;

- If you are angry, I flee.
 130 Then if you threaten, I fall;
 If you examine, I am fit for stoning;
 If you scrutinize, I plummet.
 If you do not preserve me, I am cast out;
 If you do not summon, I am held in distrust;
 135 If you do not fix your eyes on me, I am abashed;
 If you give voice, I fear –
 Having betrayed the gift of good,
 Abandoned beatitude,
 Deserted grace, scattered the covenant,
 140 Forgotten the life entrusted,
 Lost the certainty of courage,
 Enraged you, creator of my essence,
 Despised the ineffability of your grace,
 And distorted the likeness of honor.
- 9.
- 145 But if to this death-choked cry of pain
 You arrive to me, in love of man, Lord Jesus Christ,
 To be fullness in me of the Scripture proclaimed;
 If healing bring a halt to the mightiest sins,
 Whereby in most abundant sweetness conjoined to you
 150 Your likeness of light on the spirit portrayed,
 Again found, I will be strengthened, atoned for and remade
 For the salvation of immortal and incorruptible life:
 And to you, with the Father and your Holy Spirit glory forever,
 Amen.

CHAPTER 89

Again, an addition to the same supplication of a chapter of prayer, of the repeated lament of the same vigilant one.
 From the depths of hearts, speech with God.

- God and Lord, life and maker,
 Merciful, compassionate, light, generous in thought,
 Never vengeful, loving mankind, most pitying, giver of gifts,
 Savior, blessed, praised, glorified,
 5 Strong fortress, secure rampart,

- Goodness without deceit,
 Beam of light without darkness,
 Atoner of sins, healer of wounds,
 Contrivance of impossible things,
 10 Tangible of things unapproachable,
 Escape from hopelessness,
 Your name is confessed as the Son of God,
 And to your Father with you, powerful and awesome,
 And to your omnipotent Spirit and to you, to whom I bow down,
 15 Glory and worship of thanksgiving forever,
 Amen.

APPENDIX II: MAŠTOC⁴ THE MAGICIAN

Maštoc', His Milieu and the Creation of the Armenian Alphabet

The late Prof. Morton Smith of Columbia University wrote a book, *Jesus the Magician*, in which he sought to situate Christ in the context of contemporary thaumaturgists. Since many of the latter were mountebanks and quacks, there is some irreverence, no doubt intentional, in the author's choice of the title of his book.¹⁴⁴ More importantly, Smith's study underscores the need to understand the place of a literary work or other creation of the intellect in the culture and thought of its time. In the following pages, I explore the relevance of late antique esoterica to the appreciation of St. Mesrop Maštoc', inventor of the Armenian alphabet, and to the manner in which Anania of Širak (Širakac'i) employed that alphabet. In particular, I am interested in the

144 Morton Smith, *Jesus the Magician: Charlatan or Son of God?*, San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1978. Prof. Smith's scholarly and popularizing books on Clement of Alexandria and the 'Secret Gospel' of Mark (both published in 1973) suggest there may have been amongst some early Christians a belief that Christ had initiated young male disciples into the mysteries of the kingdom of Heaven by having sex with them overnight. The publications created a scandal that has not abated; even after his death, some writers have accused him of forgery – of faking the Greek document he translated and of intentionally misleading his colleagues, out of resentment, malice or playfulness. Prof. Guy G. Stroumsa, who edited *Morton Smith and Gershom Scholem: Correspondence 1945–1982* (Leiden: Brill, 2008), observes that Smith approached his old and revered friend in Jerusalem in private letters with candid, searching questions about aspects of the text of the 'Secret Gospel' over many years. He concludes, persuasively, that this rules out imposture. None of this means that he did not necessarily want *épater les bourgeois* – but that can be accomplished rather easily with facts.

genesis and meaning of the mathematical table based on the number 6,000, attributed to Anania, that forms the basis of the heterogeneous magical texts called *Vec' hazareak*, a fairly long version of which is in MS 10558. In addition to Manichaean and Indian considerations, I will investigate in particular a roughly contemporary Jewish work, the *Sefer Yetsira*.

The life of Maštoc' has hitherto been studied mainly in the context of Christian hagiography; it was the genre his disciple, Koriwn, would have known best and considered suitable to employ in his encomiastic 'Life of Maštoc'', the *Vark' Maštoc' i*. Most studies of the alphabet Maštoc' invented to write Armenian have tended, correspondingly, to look westward to Greek and Christendom, seldom southeast to Syria and Iran, and never to pagan magic, Manichaeism, Jewish mysticism and science. However, Maštoc' fits poorly into the Procrustean bed of sainthood: Though he was guided by divine inspiration, he did not perform miracles, nor was his earthly career 'perfected' by martyrdom at its end, though Koriwn pointedly calls him a 'perfected man' (*ayr katareal*) – a term replete with meaning for early Christians, with their concept of the *theios anēr*, the godly or divine man. Of course, Maštoc' was a preacher, liturgical poet and theologian, but it was the invention of a new alphabet and the immediately following creation of a school of translators (collectively canonized by the Armenian Church) that was his great achievement.

Maštoc' had learned Greek as a boy and then served as a secretary in the chancellery of the royal court – a job that would also have required some proficiency in Middle Persian and Syriac. One thinks of St. Augustine's housemates of a century before, ambitious young men on the make in the imperial service. Maštoc' was also a well-trained soldier. He subsequently left secular life 'for the service of God, Who loves mankind', becoming an effective and charismatic preacher, and at the end he practiced *askesis*. But that seeming trajectory of the early Christian warrior saint or anchorite – the successful career of service, followed by retreat from the world or martyrdom – is deceptive. Maštoc' embarked upon the religious life in the company of pupils and founded a school. He did so not to dedicate his days to worship, but for the practical purpose of creating an alphabet for Armenian and translating the Holy Scriptures and other books of immediate need into the language. He secured royal patronage for his project, and this suggests political acumen, not otherworldliness, especially in an age when acrimonious relations between Armenian divines and their secular lords had become a *topos*. When he had accomplished his mission, he returned with the goods to the capital, Vałaršapat, rather like a modern academic after a productive sabbatical term. Though he settled down to dwell in a cave, he never retired from his work.

Maštoc⁴ created the alphabet through a mixture of research, linguistic acuity and inspirational vision achieved through mortification of the body. But he was an aesthete, too: He evinced a sensitivity to design, as he sought to create a type of script with the *gravitas* of the best imperial epigraphy and a Greco-Roman appearance. This shows that the subtleties of political thinking at court had not deserted him.

In order better to understand this most important of men in Armenian history, it is necessary to construct a picture of his intellectual context beyond the customary *topoi* of the genre of hagiography. Thus, one seeks to locate in his era a type encompassing callings that may now seem somewhat incongruous: religious practitioner and mystic, linguistic scientist and *mathematicus* (magician and mathematician – in antiquity, the two were often considered identical). Such a type exists in the Pythagorean who was also a kabbalist, the linguist who was also a mystic, shaman and magician. By examining aspects of the proto-kabbalistic *Sefer Yetsira*, 'Book of Creation', with its linguistic and cosmological theories, and the mathematics of the Pythagorean school, I will try to enlarge the scene within which the intellectual activity of Maštoc⁴ is to be viewed. Then we will observe some of the inner workings of his alphabet through the eyes of the man who was perhaps his sole intellectual equal and kindred spirit in ancient Armenia, the seventh-century *hamarol* (*mathematicus*), astrologer, astronomer, theologian and preacher Anania of Širak.

Without Maštoc⁴, it is most unlikely that Armenia would have endured as a Christian nation, or perhaps even as an ethnic entity at all. The fourth century and much of the fifth witnessed a struggle between forces that were often rather evenly matched: Iran and the ancient traditions (*hayreni awrenk*) of better than half of Asia, as against the Roman Empire and Hellenistic culture, with the developing Christian civilization of the Mediterranean basin. In the fourth century, many Armenians were abandoning Christianity. The *naxarars*, or hereditary dynastic houses, were divided on the new faith, a division that persisted through the mid-fifth century, as Elišē vardapet's list of the opposing parties in the war of 451 shows. Either way, the Armenians would have been partially or wholly assimilated into a larger, metropolitan culture – as the Phrygians and Cappadocians were Hellenized, and the Parthians and Medes, Persianized. The creation of a script, the swift transformation of a highly developed oral literature into a sophisticated, scholastic written one, the translation of a critical mass of texts and the rapid shaping of an indigenous corpus, gave the nation, in essence, an impermeable cultural self-sufficiency. The same factors also decided Armenia's paradoxical fate: to survive and to stand alone, not only as a Christian island in the rising Muslim sea, but also as an isolate in the Christian *oikoumene*.

In all these respects, Maštoc' completed and augmented the missions of the Apostles and of St. Gregory (insofar as one can glean something of historical value about them out of a mass of mythological storytelling). The legend of the latter seems to have taken shape only around Maštoc's time.¹⁴⁵ And if, as I have suggested, the name of Maštoc' means 'good tidings', from a Middle Iranian form deriving from Avestan *mīzda-*, 'recompense, reward', then he may stand behind the mysterious Messenger of Good (Tidings), the Agathangelos, whose *History* gave literary shape to the legend of the Illuminator, relocating the Cappadocian missionary in the context of the royal Armenian Arsacid epic.¹⁴⁶ But this hypothesis cannot be conclusively proven on present evidence; nor do we know what the name Mesrop means or why it was later added to Maštoc'. Perhaps it is, via Greek *mastoubios*, a secondary deformation of his original name, or else it is a reverential epithet from Syriac. If Maštoc' was the Mastoubios to whom Theodore of Mopsuestia dedicated his work refuting Persian 'magic' and religion,¹⁴⁷ then we may at least suppose the interests of

145 The Armenian legend of an Apostolic mission is early, allowing for its recasting by the Manichaeans: See J.R. Russell, 'A Manichaean Apostolic Mission to Armenia?', in N. Sims-Williams (ed.), *Proceedings of the Third European Conference of Iranian Studies*, I, Wiesbaden: Reichert, 1998, pp. 21–26, reprinted in *AIS*, pp. 893–898. It also absorbed aspects of the Armeno-Alan epic cycle of the Artaxiad era: See J.R. Russell, 'Scythians and Avesta in an Armenian Vernacular Paternoster and a Zok Paternoster', *Le Muséon*, 110 (1997), pp. 91–114, reprinted in *AIS*, pp. 785–808.

146 See J.R. Russell, 'On the Name Mashtots', *Annual of Armenian Linguistics*, 15 (1994), pp. 67–78, reprinted in *AIS*, pp. 597–608: from an Iranian form; cf. Av. *mīzda-*, 'recompense, reward' (with Gk. *mīsthas*, OCS *m'zda*, Rus. *mešt'*, vozmezdě, etc.), Phl. *mīzday*, NPers. *mōzda(-gan)*, 'good tidings', with an Arm. ending *-ots*; and the name is attested also as *Mašdōc*. As Artashes Martirosyan reminded us in his important monograph *Maštoc'* (Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1988), the image of the Illuminator in the *History* of the Agathangelos is late and largely a construct of legend. And one may add to this, following the insights of Prof. Nina Garsolian, that the legend belongs to the corpus of Arsacid epic. Martirosyan derives the name from Iranian *mazda-*, 'wisdom', the second word of the name of the Zoroastrian Creator God, Ahura Mazdā, 'Lord Wisdom', Arm. *l-w* Aramazd. But a change of *z* to *zh* is not found in other attestations of a theophoric name with this element: (Atr-)Ormīz, Hořmazdyar, Mazdak, etc. (For further epic aspects of the legend of Tiridates the Great in particular, see J.R. Russell, 'The Scepter of Tiridates', *Le Muséon*, 114/1–2 [2001], pp. 187–215, reprinted in *AIS*, pp. 1135–1163.)

147 *Peri tes en Persidi magikes*, 'Concerning the Magic in Persia', epitomized by Photius and possibly enlarged by Maštoc's pupil, Eznik Koghbaç'i, in his own work *Elc ałandoc* ('The Refutation of Sects', also called *De Deo* in recent scholarship,

Maštoc' himself to have included such matters. Since Koriwn reports that he evangelized backsliders from the Christian faith in the region of Golt'n, some practical knowledge of Iranian beliefs would have been useful for polemical purposes, since some kind of Zoroastrianism was undoubtedly what the poor souls were sliding back into.

As for the hagiography written by his pupil Koriwn, its genre is hybrid, and the division of its chapters bears the unusual term *elanak* ('mode'¹⁴⁸). Comparisons of the inventor of the Armenian alphabet to Daniel and Moses adhere to the usual rule, formulated by Abraham Terian, of 'Armenian X is better than the non-Armenian precursor Y'.¹⁴⁹ The flattery is pleasurable and ingeniously formulated, but perhaps Koriwn also betrays a fundamental uncertainty about the category to which his hero should belong. Moses received tablets – in modern Armenian sculpture and painting, the 36 letters of Maštoc' replace the Ten Commandments, on one round-topped tablet, though they could have evenly occupied two, with 18 characters apiece – and Daniel read a divine inscription on a wall. Moses beheld the wicked impiety of the Israelites and smashed his stones; Daniel read a cryptic sentence of doom. By contrast, the Armenians greeted Maštoc' with holy reverence; his letters clarified rather than obscuring; and the message they spelled out brought good tidings (cf. Agathangelos!), not evil ones. But both Moses and Daniel were obedient servants and messengers, as saints should be; and neither was the inventor of a system of writing. There is no such person, no such inventor, in Scripture – but

which I think misses the essentially practical, polemical purpose of the treatise). See R.C. Zaehner, *Zarvan: A Zoroastrian Dilemma*, New York: Biblo & Tannen, 1972, pp. 419–420. The Persian religion is magical in the circular sense that its priests were the Magi, after whom magic was named, though what were then termed 'magical practices' were largely alien to Zoroastrian doctrine, which is ethical and does not countenance the selfish manipulation of nature for personal gain, far less – with its uncompromisingly dualistic abjuration of demons – any truck with supernatural maleficence. The Persian nocturnal rites involving blood and *omous* mentioned by Plutarch in *De Iside et Osiride* are culturally Iranian but as repugnant to Zoroastrians as the Black Mass is to Roman Catholics. The 'ash trick' (Gk. *planē tōn anthrakōn*) of the Magi of the Byzantine period, with its overtones of sleight of hand, seems rather to reflect the practice still common amongst Parsis of keeping glowing embers in a bed of ash in a fire-chalice (Gujarati *gfar-ganyar*, Pers. *āteshān*) and then feeding them fuel and oxygen to set ablaze the flame needed for ritual prayer.

148 Other early usages for 'chapter' (*kēphalaion*, cf. the literal rendering *ghex*, 'head') include *draug*, 'episode', and *čivl*, 'branch' (in epic).

149 See Abraham Terian, *Patriotism and Piety in Armenian Christianity: The Early Pamegyrics of St. Gregory*, Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2005.

the Bible does not concern itself with human creativity in any case. The invention of the Hebrew alphabet is attributed by most scholars to the pagan Phoenicians, about whose ostensible achievement Scripture is silent, despite the appearance there of such Tyrian notables as Hiram and Jezebel. The Greeks attributed the invention of their alphabet to various people with Punic connections – Cadmus and Linus.

The Iranians of the Arsacid and Sasanian periods had writing: It, too, goes back to Aramaic (the so-called *Reichsaramäisch* of the Achaemenian chancellery scribes) and ultimately to the Semitic prototype. But they disliked and distrusted it as harmful to the art of memory and inferior to the actual sound of the chanted sacred word, the *mantra*. The latter, it was believed, possessed an intrinsic power and truth content that the written word, without sound or visible, living speaker, was less likely to have. That is why Armenian, steeped in such pre-Christian tradition, uses the loan *margarē*, derived from Old Iranian **manthra-kairya-*, ‘*mantra*-maker’, for ‘prophet’. So even though Old Persian cuneiform, which is more alphabetic than syllabic (and rather resembles Ugaritic in this respect), is ingenious and suitable to its purpose, it did not come to be widely used, and nothing is known of its creator. It did not endure past the collapse of the Achaemenian state. Instead, Parthian, Middle Persian, Zoroastrian Book Pahlavi and Sogdian employed a far more difficult, heterographic, Aramaic-based shorthand.¹⁵⁰

A much more easily legible alphabetic system invented for the transcription of the holy books in Avestan around the fifth century shows, beyond reasonable doubt, the influence of Armenian. But the use of this superior alphabet was severely restricted to its original, sacerdotal purpose; and

150 An easy example of English heterography is the ampersand symbol ‘&’, which is a rapid cursive form of Latin *et*, but which we read and pronounce ‘and’. In ancient Iran, the king might dictate in Persian to his Aramaic-speaking scribe, who wrote a letter in Aramaic, with some Persian names and terms. The Sogdian or Parthian satrap who received it would have it read out to him, in his own language, by his Aramaic-speaking scribe. Any reader of a Beijing newspaper in Guangdong today is doing the same thing without the middleman. When the Achaemenian empire fell and the scribes went home, their script, and many of their words, remained: imagine a written English in which more than half the symbols were ampersand-like constructions. So in Middle Persian one wrote *lakhmā* and *mukā* but read *mayn*, ‘bread’ (modern Pers. *nān*, Arm. *nganak*), and *šāh*, ‘king’. The oft-heard suggestion that Arabic script emerged victorious in Iran because Pahlavi was difficult makes little sense: The Latin alphabet of English has not replaced Chinese or Japanese Kanji. The decisive factor in the Iranian case was more likely the extreme violence of the Arab conquest and the ruthless totality of the imposition of Islamic rule.

even after the Muslim conquest in the seventh century, when it was used to transcribe some Pahlavi books (this is the so-called Pazand), it still did not become popular. There is no evidence to suggest that the Sasanians, who used heterography, intended to restrict literacy to a priestly caste, as has sometimes been suggested; that suggestion seems to be a corollary of the twin fictions that Sasanian society was priest-ridden and that the Muslim Arab invasion was somehow liberating or culturally stimulating. But the Pahlavi papyri from Egypt and elsewhere were scrawled by soldiers, merchants and administrators, and, except for the latter, few are likely to have been Magi. The Arsacid Parthians had used such a heterographic system, too; and unless the labeling of wine jars in one's cave was an esoteric priestly code, or only certified Magi could write graffiti, the wide usage of that script, beyond sacerdotal confines, is also plain. The Sogdians had no centralized government, never mind a centralized priestly caste: Buddhists, Zoroastrians and others used an old heterographic form of writing like that of Pahlavi or Parthian, whilst Christians and Manichaeans employed the Estrangela Syriac and Manichaean alphabets. And Iranophone Jews used Hebrew script.

One must observe, however, that the alphabet of Maštoc' was so lucid and easily learnt as to become current, widely and instantaneously, across the social and economic boundaries of Armenian society in the fifth century: Soldiers scribbled it on papyri, pilgrims scratched it on rocks. It immediately evolved cursive forms. It became permanently inseparable from the essential components of Armenian identity: Armenian was never again to be written otherwise, and even Armenians who spoke alien tongues used their own script to write them. The overall effect was at least as galvanizing and dramatic as the outcome of the mass literacy campaigns of modern revolutionary societies.

As for the inventors, subsequent to Maštoc', of alphabets for languages employed by Christians, none enjoyed quite the same exalted, legendary reputation with which Armenian tradition swiftly endowed him. Not only did Bishop Wulfila, or Sts. Cyril and Methodius, never found or guide schools to rival the scope of the Armenian Golden Age (*askedar*); but, useful as their Gothic and Slavonic creations were, their receptors also did not face the existential crises that confronted the Armenians, for whom the alphabet and its rapid employment meant national and religious salvation. Maštoc' is not just unusual; he is very prominent and comes at a critical time.

If Maštoc' did not create the Georgian and Ałuan ("Caucasian Albanian") alphabets himself, as Koriwn claims he did, then unknown clerics of those nations simply imitated his model – so closely similar are their systems – and did so almost at once. The shape of the Georgian letters was gradually

changed from forms closely resembling Armenian to a more rounded, cursive style that does not require thick verticals – possibly an accommodation to the styles of writing used by Muslims. The script of the Caucasian Albanians fell into disuse, and no manuscript in it was known until the fortuitous discovery a decade ago of a palimpsest in the library of St. Catherine's monastery in Sinai. These scripts devised for (or by) Armenia's closest Transcaucasian neighbors were not the only ones; as noted above, a fully alphabetic script was invented around the same time in Iran for Avestan. Several striking features of the latter – the doubling of *u* to make the *v*, and the addition of a subscribed hook to lengthen a vowel – were most likely copied from Maštoc's system, where, for example, two *hims* (*w*) make a *vev* (*v*), two *res* form a *ra* (the trilled *r*), and a line added to *ech* (*e*) gives us the long *ē*.¹⁵¹ Maštoc's innovation was so ingeniously useful that it immediately affected every nation, large and small, on Armenia's borders, to the north, east and south.

Where, then, are we to seek the inspiration for Maštoc's invention? Followers of ancient dogmas disliked innovation; and the only thing worse than doing something new was following an evil precedent. So if Maštoc was to some degree inspired by the founder of the Manichaean religion, a creed feared and detested by Christians and Zoroastrians alike as a peculiarly insidious heresy, we can scarcely expect Koriwn or anybody else to mention such an inconvenient influence.¹⁵² A century before Maštoc, the

151 This is not to say that such an approach was unique to Armenian, only that the Armenian case is most proximate to Western Iran. In India, both the Brahmi and Kharosthi scripts, which are also of Semitic origin, attach short horizontal bars to vowels for the purpose of lengthening.

152 The Manichaeans offered a Docetist Christology together with a Gnostic formulation of cosmology that neatly inverted the essence of Zoroastrian doctrine: Mani preached not that a good God was the author of a valid, though defiled, Creation, in which and for the sake of which we are manfully to struggle against wickedness, but that the Creator was a deceitful demon; his cosmos, an intrinsically evil prison; and man's sole possible spiritual masterpiece, escape by means of the acquisition and use of esoteric knowledge – gnosis. This knowledge is esoteric precisely because it is in the interest of the Demiurge that we swallow the lies of the Torah, Bible, Avesta, and so on, and abide as fattened victims of his parasitism and predation. This sort of cosmology is appealing to men embittered by resentment and fascinated by conspiracy theory, never an unusual mix, especially in the Near East. So the teachers of the life-affirming, canonical faiths had their hands full coping with Manichaeism. The word then came to be applied indiscriminately in Christendom to any sort of heretical doctrine; and the same thing happened in Iran and later in the Dar al-Islam, where Arabic *zandīq*, from Pahlavi *zandīg* '(mis-) interpreter', i.e., Manichaean, becomes the brand of every fatalist and freethinker.

religious visionary Mani had adapted the Aramaic alphabet to the purpose of writing Persian phonetically, adding both vowels and new consonants to the twenty-two bare bones of the old script. He did this specifically in order to propagate his new revelations – *evangelyonig*, as they were termed in Middle Persian – through books. He was a masterful politician and a skilled orator. He was also a famous painter in his own right and recognized the efficacy of the illuminated manuscript (his great didactic painting called the *ardahang*, remembered as the *aržang* in classical Persian literature, is lost, though a written commentary on it survives). Manichaean iconography in various media, including codices and scrolls, is very rich.¹⁵³

The Manichaeans, like their Christian rivals, were also most attentive to the advantages the relatively new form of the codex offered over the more cumbersome scroll. Mani addressed two epistles to the Armenians; and other evidence, such as the Manichaean recasting of an Apostolic legend whose locus is a Christianized Armenia, suggests that his movement had considerable impact there. In the legend, the Christian rulers convert to Manichaeism, backslide at Easter, but are returned to the Manichaean fold, thanks to the ministrations of one of Mani's Apostles. In a world accustomed to Christian evangelistic vigor, such vacillations may seem strange; but we know from documents discovered in Egypt that it was not unusual in the fourth century for members of a single family to convert from Manichaeism to Christianity and back again. St. Augustine just did it one way.

Mani's script is written right to left and cursively, with most letters joined – much like later Arabic and Persian-in-Arabic. The horizontals are thick; the verticals, thin. Maštoc', though helped in the actual shaping of the letters by a scribe named Ruphanos, combined artistic and political craftsmanship in much the same proportions as his heresiarch precursor. For Mani's writing system has an 'Oriental' feel calculated to please proselytes in the

Since I am about to propose that aspects of grammar and cosmology in the *Sefer Yetsira*, and, in parallel, in Maštoc's work and its interpretation by the scientist Anania of Sirak, are exotic in the Near East but commonplace in India, it may be apposite to suggest a Manichaean vector, among others. One recalls St. Ephrem, *Contra haereses*, 3:7: *wa-šlat be-Mani, tubbi, šugra de-sin Hindu*, 'And it has attained domination through Mani, again – the Lie, from India'.

- 153 As I have argued elsewhere ('Soteriology on the Silk Road,' lecture at the University of Toronto, 7 October 2005), a funerary bas-relief from the tomb of a Sogdian who passed away in China in the sixth century is also likely to be Manichaean. I believe it depicts the tragic predicament of the soul immediately after death, as described in the funerary hymn cycles *Augud rāšnān* and *Huyōdagmān*.

East; in the West, the Apostle's teachings were transmitted in Latin, Greek, and Coptic anyway. Maštoc', though, was concerned to re-orient Armenia westward in every way, so his letters are written left to right and are not connected. The verticals are thick; the horizontals, thin, just like in the Greek and Latin scripts. Where Maštoc' used the Aramaic letters *yod*, *waw* and *het* to make *i* (*ini*), *w* (*hiwn*) and *x* (*xe*), he attached each to the right side of a thick vertical bar. Thus, Armenian manuscripts have the look and feel of Western Christian ones, and the gracefully spaced, rounded letters of Armenian epigraphy remind one of the finest Greek and Roman official inscriptions.

Predictably, the biography of Maštoc' has nothing to say about any Manichaean precedents; but Mani himself wrote mainly in Aramaic, and that language, especially its Syriac dialect, was well known in Armenia and had long been employed in inscriptions. Some of these might have been heterographic; at the very least, Armeno-Iranian names like Artaxias and Zariadres were transcribed in them.¹⁵⁴ In the Middle Ages and later, one finds examples of Armenian written in Syriac script.¹⁵⁵

The enigmatic 'Danielian' letters Maštoc' examined, and rejected as inadequate, were probably some form of 22-letter Aramaic. The comment of Koriwn that they 'happened to be from other literatures, buried and resurrected' (*yayloc' dprut'eanc' t'alealk' ew yaruc'ealk' dipec'an*),¹⁵⁶ evokes the image of an Artaxiad boundary stone dug up with its Aramaic inscription, containing, perhaps, a transcribed Armenian royal name. Did the finders of such an object then attempt to write Armenian using the characters inscribed upon it? It would seem that this might have been the case. One recalls that the writing style of Hebrew in the learned community of Egypt was affected by the scribal style of the few Dead Sea scrolls discovered around the tenth century. If these had the prestige of sacred texts, the boundary-markers, if such the sources of the Danielian script were, might have reminded Armenians of the legendary archives of the *mehean*-temples of Artaxias I and his successors. At any rate, the late Artashes Mat'evosyan, in his restoration of the correct order of the text of Koriwn's biography, established that Maštoc' himself, with his expert eye, did not experiment with the Danielian script for long, but abandoned it almost immediately.

154 See Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia* (above, note 102), Chap. 3.

155 See J.R. Russell, 'On Armeno-Iranian Interaction in the Medieval Period', in R. Gyselen (ed.), *Au carrefour des religions: Mélanges offerts à Philippe Gignoux* (Res Orientales, 7), Louvain: Peeters, 1994, pp. 235–238, reprinted in *ALS*, p. 593, note 1; and idem, 'The Epic of the Pearl' (above, note 7), p. 1301 and note 67.

156 Koriwn, *Verk' Maštoc'*, ed. Manuk Abelyan, Erevan 1941, § 6, l. 3.

The Manichaean script, however, could have influenced the Armenian researcher. Notably, Mani adopted the Coptic letter *djandja* to represent the sound *j*, which Aramaic does not have, and Maštoc's letter *ē* is the same. To the best of our knowledge, the first sentence written in Armenian was Prov. 1:1, and *ē* was the first letter of its first word, *ēmaē'el*.

Another figure who comes to mind when one considers the life of Maštoc' is that saint of ancient scientists and magicians, the great Pythagoras, the essential features of whose *Vita* come as close as the career of a pagan can to the life of a Christian holy man. He wandered and studied in foreign lands for twenty years, and then lived for some time in a cave, in prayerful meditation. After these peregrinations, Pythagoras founded a school at Croton under the patronage of Milo, the local ruler, where he and his disciples studied the mysteries of mathematics, harmonics and speech. Substitute Syria and Byzantium for Egypt and Babylon; and Viamšapuh for Milo – but save the cave, the disciples and the miraculous insights. There will presently be more to say of Pythagoras.

So if Maštoc' did have technical and literary precursors in the contemporary Near East and the classical tradition, they were rather inconvenient to the aims of Christian hagiography. For all practical purposes he was an innovator, for whom no precise precedent might be found in biblical and Christian tradition. He combined the characteristics of the intense, driven holy man, the visionary, with those of the inspired, creative intellectual, the linguistic scientist. It is an odd combination, but there is a telling though distant parallel in Silas John, the nineteenth-century Apache shaman who saw hieroglyphs in a dream and copied them down upon waking, in order to write down hymns of spiritual power to help his beleaguered nation. In the era and region of Maštoc', the closest one can come to a model that combines mystic and scientist, within the monotheistic religions, is that of the proto-kabbalistic mystic in Judaism. Indeed, one recent scholar has used the model of Siberian and Native American shamanism to reconstruct the character, activities and psychology of the practitioners of ascent to the *Hekhalot*, the divine Palaces, and descent to the *Merkava*, the divine Chariot.¹⁵⁷ The linguistic theories of these prac-

157 See James R. Davila, *Descenders to the Chariot: The People Behind the Hekhalot Literature* (Supplements to the *Journal for the Study of Judaism*, 70), Leiden: Brill, 2001. I am indebted for this reference to Prof. Maria Subtelny of the University of Toronto. She proposes to derive Arabic *Sufi* from Hebrew *tsafe*, 'seer of a vision', and to explain the vexatious term *yerida*, 'descent', by analogy to an Arabic term for the singing of a litany. These brilliant hypotheses, whether or not they are susceptible of conclusive proof, underscore the importance and the

tioners are of particular interest when one seeks to set *Maštoc*⁴ in an intellectual context. They, in turn, have affinities outside the boundaries of Judaism and Christianity with various sorts of magicians, especially those who display Gnostic characteristics; and, farther afield, with the linguistic and mathematical thinkers of Greece and even of Hindu and Buddhist India.

Letters, Sefirot and the Sefer Yetsira

The proto-kabbalistic *Sefer Yetsira*, the 'Book of Creation' (henceforth: *SY*), datable perhaps to the third century CE at the earliest, the sixth at the latest,¹⁵⁸ is an extremely concise work. On the basis of the doctrine that God created the world in ten utterances (Mishna *Avot* 5:1; cf. BT *Hagiga* 12a) – an idea probably Pythagorean in its ultimate origin, reflected in Gnostic thought of the second century¹⁵⁹ – *SY* presents ten *sefirot* that define the universe. The word *sefira* (pl. *sefirot*) appears in this form in the Hebrew language for the first time in *SY*, but its root clearly is *sfr*, from which are formed the verbs *safar*, 'count, number', and *siper*, 're-count, relate'. A parallel to the semantic connection between the two may

prominent visibility of early Jewish mysticism and esoteric learning to the adherents of other religions in the Late Antique Near East. The Jewish theoreticians of divine language and related matters did not operate in isolation: as we shall see presently, there were very close Armenian parallels, though it is harder to say at this stage whether the latter also benefited from interaction and cultural contact.

- 158 Pace Steven M. Wasserstrom, 'Further Thoughts on the Origins of *Sefer Yetsira*', *Aleph: Historical Studies in Science and Judaism*, 2 (2002), pp. 201–221, who argues for a dating to the Islamic period on the grounds that the book would have been anomalous in the intellectual context of the (post-)Second Temple period, while the approach of *SY* to numerology as a key to language is familiar to esoteric Muslim thinkers such as the above-mentioned Brethren of Purity (see above, note 13). But such thought has Pythagorean and Platonic sources for the Mediterranean region that long predate Islam. There are books that are written long before their time, disappear from currency and are 'buried and resurrected', if you will, when the need for them arises and the new religious, scientific or aesthetic context is right. Otherwise what are we to do, postdate Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* by a century, since his contemporaries could not and did not appreciate his epic, as Prof. Francis O. Matthiessen was to do long after the writer's death? Must one further conclude that all texts are in step with their age, and there are none that are anomalous, audacious, unique?
- 159 Cf. the Gnostic ten *logoi*; Hippolytus cites one Gnostic to the effect that the Son of Man is both a monad (literally, the title of an iota, i.e., a Hebrew *yod* – a point) and a decad; see Moshe Idel, *Kabbalah: New Perspectives*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988, pp. 113–114.

be discerned in the mention by Movsēs Khorenac'i of Arm. *t'neleac' ergk'*, the 'songs of (re)countings' – most likely historical narratives – of the pre-Christian bards, the *gusank'*. The word *sefira* might have been coined because it sounded similar to Greek *sphaira*, 'sphere', or else the fortuitous correspondence was swiftly noted (and, since the ancients were more craftsmen of the word than systematic philologists in any modern sense, the correspondence might have been welcomed as serendipitous even if it was regarded as fortuitous).¹⁶⁰ For the ancients, whose sense of etymology welcomed the hide-and-seek game of poetics and punning, such a similarity of sound could indicate deeper resonances.

Let us examine the character of the *sefirot* and the qualities and symbolism of the *sphaira*. The word *sefirot* in *SY* is always accompanied by the

160 Gershom Scholem notes that Moritz Steinschneider, in *Mathematik bei den Juden*, argued long ago 'that the original term [*sefira*] acquired its specific kabbalistic meaning as a result of similarity to the Greek word [*sphaira*]'. He insists this has not been borne out, though, and argues that the new term, in place of the expected *mispar*, 'number', indicates not ordinary numbers but metaphysical principles (*Origins of the Kabbalah*, Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1987, pp. 26–27). It is likely that Gk. *sphaira* is unrelated to Heb. *sefira*. It probably derives from Proto-Indo-European **sp(h)er-*, 'hasten'; cf. Av. (*fra*)*sparaiti*, 'hastens' (Pokorny, *Indogermanisches Etymologisches Wörterbuch*, I, p. 992). In *Odyssey* 6:10, the *sphaira* is a ball to play with (*paizein*); the Pythagoreans and Anaximander, followed by Plato (who first proposes a spherical earth in *Phaed.* 97D), lend the ball a cosmological seriousness. But the adoption of a playing ball is itself interesting. Consider the famous fragment of the pre-Socratic philosopher Herakleitos of Ephesus: *Aion pais esti, paizon, pessonon: paidos he basileia*, 'The aeon is a child playing with knucklebones: the kingdom is of a child' (XCIV, D. 52, M. 93, apud Hippolytus, *Refutatio* IX.9.4). The editor, Charles H. Kahn, understands the aeon to be the period of vitality or of a human life, in which living and dying, youth and age, and sleeping and waking all follow rules of transposition in a kind of board game played with dice (Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1979, p. 228). This ingenious explanation of the hermetically enigmatic fragment perhaps fails adequately to take account of the lightness of this cosmological idea. The whole kingdom, of all time, is literally child's play. Hindu cosmology regards this entire universe and epoch as the game (*lila*) of Rama; the vast epic *Mahabharata*, which chronicles a total war leading to the end of a world, begins with a game of dice. One may see in Herakleitos' dictum, then, not just the idea of a game played with rules, but also the sense that it is just a game, that the veil of illusion should not be taken to be all that serious – or even real. The sphere as the perfect form is also the type and prototype of others, it would seem. Grigoriĭ Perelman, the Russian Jewish mathematician who recently solved Poincaré's conjecture, puts it thus: *Est li trekhmernaya poverkhnost' v chlenno pakhozha na sferu, to ee možno raspavit' v sferu*, 'If a three-dimensional surface is in some respect similar to a sphere, then it can be resolved into a sphere'.

qualifier *belima*, which should signify 'closed' or 'limited' (thus Sa'adya Ga'on, in the tenth century, renders these two words as *a'dad* and *mah-zura*, 'numbers with a limit'), though it has also been understood very often by way of *einheimische Volksetymologie* as *beli ma*, 'without anything', i.e., void, spaceless (like a geometrical point).¹⁶¹ Scholem suggests that the qualifier is a translation of an unidentified Greek term, perhaps *horos*, 'limit'. In Valentinian Gnosticism, the *horos* bears the important mystical name IAO, a Greek vocalization of the Tetragrammaton, God's unpronounceable name in Hebrew, YHWH. Horos/lao is the force that drives Sophia-Akhamoth away from the Pleroma – the true Heaven – when she pursues Christ. Akhamoth is a Greek rendering of the plural of Hebrew *hokhma*, 'wisdom', translating Greek *sophia*. The ten *sefirot* have names, and *hokhma* is the name of the second, which is closest to the first divine *sefirah*, *Keter*, 'the Crown', in the Tree of Life of developed Lurianic Kabbalah. That is, the *horos* is the active being that acts as a definitive limit Heaven, or, in Pythagorean arithmetical terms, the barrier between the first nine numbers and the divine tenth; it could also be visualized as the point at which the sphere of perfection touches the lesser geometry of the world. This cosmological scheme echoes some of the doctrines of Plato and carries over into mediaeval cosmology: At the centre of the cosmos is the habitable world of the four elements.

Scholem understands the *sefirot*, these limited, mathematical quanta of the divine qualities at work in Creation, as 'living numerical beings'. On the style of SY, he offers this summation: 'The author finds concrete and appropriate designations for notions that, until then, Hebrew did not know how to render in adequate terms'. The book, in his view, is a work of Jewish Gnosticism.¹⁶² The *sefirot* in SY represent the ten 'directions' of the universe, the spatial 'infinities' of up, down, South, North, East and West, as well as the temporal directions of beginning and end and the moral ones of good and evil. The ten *sefirot* are presented together with the 22 fundamental letters, which are divided into three primary (*yesod*) ones, seven double ones (*kefulot*) and twelve simple ones (*peshutot*): 'God engraved 32 ways of wondrous wisdom; He created His world in three books: *sfr*, *sfr* and *sfr*'. Sa'adya interpreted the latter as *khata*, *a'dad* and *nutq*: writing, numbers and speech. As we noted above, Maštoc' also constructed the letters of his new

161 A. Peter Hayman, in *Sefer Yesira: Edition, Translation, and Text-Critical Commentary* (Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism, 104), Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004, translates *belima* on p. 64 as 'basis'.

162 Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah* (above, note 160), pp. 28, 32–33.

script systematically, with a category of perceived phonetic doubles represented graphically as well: the letter v (vav) is composed of two w's (hivv), y (hu) can be seen as two i's (ini), and rr (ra) is made of two joined r's. The second half of *SY* explains the origins of language. The roots of words are the 231 possible two-letter combinations of the 22 letters in the Hebrew alphabet, arbitrarily generated by the symmetrical motions of two wheels. At the conclusion of these revelations, Abraham, to whom they were vouchsafed, understands the secrets, and when he reaches that sublime degree of comprehension, God embraces and loves him. As Prof. Joseph Dan argues in his brilliant summation, the author of *SY* presents his theses with no attempt at revelatory, pseudepigraphic or even hermeneutic foundation in pre-existing tradition. The original text of the book, insofar as it can confidently be established, contains no mention of Israel, or of ritual, prayer or sacrifice; no religious ethics, messianism or redemption; and it refers to no change or purpose in Creation. No human or communicative purpose is essential to the view of language in *SY*. Binary divergences, like the human sexual divergence of male and female and even that of good and evil, are merely the result of a pre-existing structure of duality:¹⁶³ a cosmic binary system!

Dan's apophatic catalogue is chilling, if one is predisposed to view *SY* as a traditionally religious Jewish book. It describes an amoral, mechanistic cosmos. Were it not, indeed, for its assertion of God's existence as prime mover, it would be a nihilistic composition. Abraham appears without any of the spiritual virtues of the heart, the self-sacrifice, obedience, piety and faith that animate his biblical persona; all that matters to God is the Patriarch's intellect. This is not the God whom the biographer of Maštoc⁴ hails as *mardasēr*, *philanthrōpos*, but the God of Spinoza, whose definition rules out love of mankind. However, if one views *SY* as a scientific treatise containing some religious aspects, the omissions are less disturbing, and the book looks more like an exposition of the ideas of *mantra* and *yantra* adapted to Jewish use, with some of the grammatical methods of

163 Joseph Dan, 'The Language of Creation and its Grammar', in Christof Elsas et al. (eds.), *Tradition and Translation: Festschrift für Carsten Colpe zum 65. Geburtstag*, reprinted in Joseph Dan, *Jewish Mysticism, I: Late Antiquity*, Northvale, NJ-Jerusalem: Aronson, 1998, pp. 142–150. Hayman, in *Sefer Yesira* (above, note 161), pp. 34–35, echoes this characterization: In the earliest, and briefest, recension of *SY*, the number 12 alludes to the Zodiac, not to the Twelve Tribes of Israel; and the mention of men and women has to do with humans (*nefesh*), not specifically with Jews. Later recensions contain pious interpolations that bring *SY* into the rabbinic, ethnocentric mainstream.

the Sanskrit grammarian Panini added. These concepts in Indian thought are all related to religion, but can be explicated without reference to it – as science, or magic.

SY seems to have been intended from the start to be put to magical use: According to the Talmud, Rabbis Hanina and Oshaya studied the '*halakhot* [customary laws] concerning Creation' and by means of these created a calf, which they ate.¹⁶⁴ The dual combinations of letters correspond to, describe and have power over the various dual organs of the human body (hands, feet, eyes, ears, nostrils, buttocks, testicles, lungs, ventricles, etc.), even as the Zodiacal signs and hours have power over times and destinies. They can therefore be manipulated to good or evil ends.

There are palpable Indian affinities. The use of sound in *SY* must remind one of the practical exploitation of *mantra*. Prof. Shlomo Pines suggests that there were originally seven *sefirot*, and that the system was modified to ten by the introduction of Indian mathematical ideas; and he determines the classification of the letters in *SY* to be Indian as well.¹⁶⁵ The number ten, *inter alia*, is most significant in the kabbalistic context, where the first of the ten *sefirot* is divine and qualitatively different from the others, and is thus closest to the Pythagorean scheme of the *tetraktys*, where the tenth number of the decad, completing the triangle described by the array of the ten as points, corresponds to divinity. Moshe Idel compares the techniques of visualization of colors, circles and letters employed by later kabbalists in contemplation of the *sefirot* to the Hindu and Buddhist theory and practice of *mandala* ('circle').¹⁶⁶

I would add another consideration from the Indian context to the cosmology of *SY*. Mahayana Buddhism, the kind in currency in Iran, northern India and Central Asia down to the tenth century, postulates a cosmos in which

164 Scholem, *Origins of the Kabbalah* (above, note 160), p. 31, citing BT *Sanhedrin* 65b and 67b. Presumably the calf materialized already cooked, since kindling a fire on the Sabbath, when these meetings are said to have taken place, is forbidden. This would place the legend in the category of St. Gregory of Narek's magical roast pigeons, and similar miracles worked by Jesus and Mohammed; see my Introduction to Grigor Narekats'i, *Matean olbergut'ean* (above, note 89), p. xxi and note 45. Jewish tradition prohibits the teaching of certain topics, including the Work of Creation (*ma'ase bereshit*), to callow youths, lest they fall into esotericism and heresy.

165 Shlomo Pines, 'Points of Similarity between the Doctrine of the *Sefirot* in the *Sefer Yezira* and a Text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies', *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities*, VII/3, Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 1989, pp. 63–142.

166 Idel, *Kabbalah* (above, note 159), pp. 107–108.

good and evil may be seen as binary dimensions along with the others of the cosmos, since the heavens and hells above the axial cosmic mountain, Mt. Meru, and below this world, which is defined as the clime of Jambudvīpa, are simply the vertical expression of the results of actions in the entire world of contingent being, generated by the acts resulting from the consciousness of sentient beings. However, neither heaven nor hell, neither the bliss of a god nor the anger of a demon, has any more permanence or reality than any other phenomenon: All are relative, even illusory, and with enlightenment they are extinguished in the oneness of reality, which is permanent and undivided Buddha-nature and enlightenment. Good and evil, if one understands them in this context, are not the transcendent, irreconcilable elements of the Zoroastrian cosmology, or even the two great moral categories whose creation Deutero-Isaiah attributes, perhaps in response to the dualist Magi, to the sole and transcendent God. They are just directions on a compass to a temporary heaven or hell, different genders of cosmic speech. Gender is no less arbitrary and relative.¹⁶⁷

What appears uncanny against the background of Judaism becomes philosophically obvious and commonplace in the context of Indian thought – in this case, Buddhism. When one considers the capacity of the yogic practice of *bhakti*, 'devotional worship', and *advaita*, 'non-duality', to neutralize the moral dilemmas of Arjuna in the *Bhagavad Gita*, then the ideas of *SY* are cognate to Indian religion more generally. There is nothing particularly unusual about the presence of Indian thought in a work of Late Antiquity from the Eastern Mediterranean basin, though the persistent efforts of the Rabbis to make a fence (*seyag*) around the Torah perhaps insulated Jews more than others from such intellectual interchange. That, perhaps, is why *SY* seems so isolated and alien a book.¹⁶⁸

167 In the *Vimalakīrtinirdeśasūtra*, a Mahayana text very popular across Asia, from China and Tibet to Sogd, a disciple of the Buddha who had been attached to his masculinity as though it were an actual identity is miraculously transformed into a woman.

168 One vector of transmission into Judaism in the Second Temple period and later might have been esoteric sectarian movements. Justin Taylor suggests that Jews in Alexandria might have adopted aspects of Pythagoreanism and incorporated these into their own movements in the Land of Israel proper; see *idem*, *Pythagoreans and Essenes: Structural Parallels* (Collection de la Revue des Études Juives, 32), Paris-Louvain: Peeters, 2004, p. 106. An Alexandrian Jewish philosopher, Aristobolus, who probably flourished in the reign of Ptolemy VI Philometor (180–145 BCE), views Moses as having been followed by Pythagoras, Socrates and Plato in their contemplation of the arrangement of the universe, and claims that Pythagoras 'transferred many of our [i.e., the Jews'] doctrines and integrated them

Cosmic Spheres

We have noted the symbolic importance and special properties of sphere (*sphaira*, **sefira*) and circle in the cosmic esotericism of ancient philosophizing about language. The circle, of course, is the two-dimensional figure from which a sphere is generated in three dimensions. Let us consider the ancient traditions concerning spheres, their transmission and their specific relevance to the theory of language. The sphere belongs to the realm of solid geometry, hence mathematics; and, as Richard Feynman said, 'The glory of mathematics is that we do not have to say what we are talking about'.¹⁶⁸ An oft-reproduced painting of antiquity portrays the Seven Sages sitting in rapt contemplation of a sphere. They are not equipped with captions to tell us what they might have been talking about; but maybe they did not need to say anything, because they shared a tacit understanding about the object of their musing. Ourania herself, Muse of epistemology and wisdom, is shown in the House of the Vettii at Pompeii pointing to a sphere.¹⁶⁹ Why? What is so interesting about it? What are they not talking about as they mathematicize?

Plutarch has one of the Seven Sages, Thales of Miletus, answer nine questions that spell it out:

Ti presbytaton? Theos. Ti megiston? Topos. Ti kalliston? Kosmos. Ti sophotaton? Khronos. Ti koinotaton? Elpis. Ti ophelimotaton? Arete. Ti blaberotaton? Kakia. Ti iskhurotaton? Ananke. Ti rhaston? To kata physin. (*Septem sapientium convivium* 9.153c)

into his own system of beliefs'; see idem, *Proep. Evang.* 13.12.1, 4, cited by David Dawson, *Allegorical Readers and Cultural Revision in Ancient Alexandria*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992, p. 79. The Renaissance humanist Pico della Mirandola, a student of esoteric doctrines, saw it the other way around. Referring to the Kabbalah, he declared: 'In those matters that regard philosophy, you may really hear Pythagoras ...'; in S.K. Heninger, Jr., *The Cosmographical Glass: Renaissance Designs of the Universe*, San Marino, CA: The Huntington Library, 1977, p. 90. Either way, Pythagoras and ST and the subsequent Kabbalah are intellectually kindred, and aspects of the Hebrew and Hellenic philosophies of antiquity were considered to be related.

169 Quoted by Gregory Benford, 'Effing the Ineffable', in G.F. Slusser and E.S. Rabkin (eds.), *Aliens: The Anthropology of Science Fiction*, Carbondale, IL: Southern Illinois University Press, 1987, p. 19.

170 The Philosopher Mosaic, Rome, Villa Albani; Urania, Pompeii, Casa dei Vettii.

What is oldest? God. What is greatest? Space. What is most beautiful? Order. What is wisest? Time. What is most common? Hope. What is most useful? Virtue.¹⁷¹ What is worst? Evil. What is most powerful? Necessity. What is easiest? That which is according to nature.

Diogenes Laertius adds:

Ti hediston? To epitynkhanein. Ti to theion? To mete arkhen mete te-leuten. (*Thales* 35)

What is sweetest? Good fortune. What is the divine? That which has neither beginning nor end.¹⁷²

This series of superlative maxims is cosmological, proceeding from the One God of Xenophanes and the basic coordinates of space through wisdom and intellection to necessity and nature. It resembles the enumeration of the *sefirot*. It also suits the contemplation of the perfect, divine figure, the *sphaira*: Otto Brendel has argued that each question can be answered with one or another characterization of the sphere. The sphere, for instance, is the most beautiful (*kalliston*) of figures, the point at which *kosmos* in the senses of 'world' and of 'ornament' coincide.¹⁷³ Aristotle (*De caelo* 286 b 11) praises the sphere as 'the primary shape in nature' – a formulation important, *inter alia*, to speculations about origins, about Creation. Beauty is truth, truth beauty – and both are definable as a perfect, perfectly symmetrical mathematical entity.

171 Gk. *kosmos* can mean both 'order, adornment' and 'universe'; the word *arete*, cognate to Skt. *ṛta*, Av. *aša*, Arm. *ard*, *ard-ar*, etc., is clearly different from 'order' in the Greek understanding, though excellence in the performance of a craft, or moral excellence, could not be chaotic. The semantic direction of the word is towards righteousness, excellence of moral character, as is, I think, the case with Avestan *aša*. Recent translations of *aša* as 'order', or of the possessive *ašavan* (cf. Pth. *aršun*, below, note 174) as 'orderly' or 'upholder of order', avoid the moral attributes of truth and righteousness at the heart of the Zoroastrians' own perceptions of blessed *ašavans* vs. accursed *dragvants* ('followers of the Lie'). But the history of German fascism in the twentieth century shows that order and evil are very compatible indeed. These renderings seem not to take adequately into account that Zoroastrianism is a religion.

172 See Otto J. Brendel, *The Symbolism of the Sphere: A Contribution to the History of Earlier Greek Philosophy* (EPRO, 67), Leiden: Brill, 1977, pp. 14, 19.

173 Heninger, in *Cosmographical Glass* (above, note 168), p. 7, notes that Plutarch attributed to Pythagoras the use of the word *kosmos* as a term 'to express the beauty and the orderliness of the created world'.

Frēstag ō ardaw pad andarwāz wast. Wāxt, Če burzistar? Ardaw wāxt, Man ispēr.¹⁷⁴ Frēstag wāxt, Mas, až im če wuzurgistar; wāxt ku Zamīg.

via O. P. Jindal Global University and Google Googlebot - Web Crawler SEO

ke harw čiš bard. Mas wāxt ku, Až imīn če wuzurgistar? Ardaw wāxt ku *āsmān... wāxt ku až im če wuzurgistar? Wāxt ku, Mihr ud Māh. Mas če rōšnistar? Wāxt ku... žīrīft. Ažyān Tūrān Šāh wāxt ku, Až imīn harwīn tō wuzurgistar ud rošnistar ay, če pad rāštīft tō wxad Būt ay.

The Apostle [Mani] led the righteous one into the air. He said, 'What is highest?' The righteous man [i.e., the departed spirit] said, 'My sphere'. The Apostle said, 'Then, what is even greater than that?' He said, 'Earth, for it bears every thing'. Then he said, 'What is greater than these?' The righteous one said, 'Heaven(?)'. ... He said, 'What is greater than that?' He said, 'The Sun and Moon'. 'Then what is still more luminous?' He said, 'The wisdom [of the Buddha]'. Thereupon the king of Turan said, 'You are greater and more luminous than all of these, for in Truth you are yourself the Buddha'.¹⁷⁵

In this text, one is to imagine the concentric spheres of the cosmos, and their superlative qualities.

Except for that of the wisdom (Pth. *žīrīft*, cf. Arm. loan-word *žir*, *žira-čan*, etc.) of the Buddha, the spheres correspond to those of the mediaeval cosmos: The lowest region is our world, compounded of the four elements; above it, in concentric, unchanging, crystalline spheres, are: (1) Moon, (2) Mercury, (3) Venus, (4) the Sun, (5) Mars, (6) Jupiter, (7) Saturn, (8) the Zodiac, (9) the ranks of the Angels, and (10) God. All of these, as they move, make a celestial music, to which, as Anthony Grafton memorably put it, the sublunar world dances. The study and prediction of the steps in the dance is astrology.¹⁷⁶ God Himself is symbolically to be conceived of as an infinite sphere: *Deus est sphaera intelligibilis cuius centrum ubique circumferentia nusquam*. As an infinite figure, the crowning (cf. Heb. *keter*) sphere of the Divine is thus qualitatively different from the nine inferior

175 For a discussion of this text, see Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Gnosis on the Silk Road*, San Francisco: Harper, 1993, pp. 206–208. Simon Magus was the first false prophet to levitate and was brought down with a bang. On Mani's levitation, see also Eugenia B. Smagina, 'Die Reihe der Manichäischen Apostel in den koptischen Texten', in G. Wiessner and H.J. Klimkeit (eds.), *Studia Manichaica*, Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 1992, pp. 361–362, who discusses a negative reference to 'Terebinthos-Buddha' trying to do it. The latter is taken to be an episode colored by the career of the despised Simon Magus in *Acts*. The Manichaeans were necessarily at pains to refute Christian claims that they were magicians and heretics.

176 See Anthony Grafton, *Cardano's Cosmos: The Worlds and Works of a Renaissance Astrologer*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 7.

spheres of Creation. That is the Christian reflex of a Pythagorean idea that we have already noted.

The geometry of the sphere lends itself well to the imagining of infinitude and incommensurability: The only way a sphere can touch any other plane or solid, for instance, is at a point – a literally spaceless yet manifest location. And man, created in God's image, attains the fullness of that image in the resurrected state, when he is, according to Origen, *sphairoeides*, 'spherical in form'.¹⁷⁷

I wish to stress the currency of these esoteric ideas in late antiquity. The doctrine of the *sefirot* in a Hebrew text on the origins of language and the cosmos and a Manichaean conversion legend involving levitation into the cosmic spheres both find a source in the esotericism of the Pythagorean schools, with their meditations on the geometric sphere. This is the intellectual world Maštoc' inhabited: one in which men who speculated mystically upon language believed letters were generated by interlocking circles

177 Brendel, *Symbolism of the Sphere* (above, note 172), p. 32. The Zoroastrians believe that the first human, Gayōmard, was a spherical androgyne whose divine oneness and perfect form was destroyed by the archdemon Ahreman at the time of his deleterious incursion into the universe: Gayōmard was split into male and female halves. In his playful but quite serious discourse in the *Symposium*, Aristophanes retells the Zoroastrian myth, but with a Hellenic twist: It is the gods who envy the self-sufficiency of the happy, wheel-like first humans, and who break primal unity into evil duality. The humans come in three types: male, female and abnormally androgynous. After division, everyone seeks his or her other half, and that is how love begins: Men look for other men; women, for women. But the poor androgynes become heterosexual. Americans innocent of the Bundahishn and Plato will know this myth from the song on the origin of love from the musical play and movie 'Hedwig and the Angry Inch', with its animated cartoon – a kind of latter-day Manichaean cosmological serial and narrative painting, an *aržang*. In the *Bṛihad-aranyaka Upaniṣad*, I.4.3.4, the Self (*atman*) desired delight (*rajan*) and so made himself into the form of a man and woman locked in erotic embrace. He then divided this pleasure-body in twain; so the body became half of the self. The male half then pursued the female half, and the latter fled, assuming different forms: When she was a cow, he became a bull; when she was a mare, he became a stallion. They all mated, and the diversification and multiplication of species proceeded from there. As is often the case, the Indian idea – one of several cosmological possibilities mulled over in the Upanishadic literature – presents multiple ideas, of which the Greek and even Iranian expressions are but facets. Oneness makes duality-in-oneness out of desire; duality engenders desire, the temporary earthly return to oneness in coitus; and the outcome is the serial generation of earthly life, in which beings ponder the primordial, blissful, divine, *advaita* oneness. *Fırkatın sonu vâsilettir*, 'The end of separation is union', promises the Turkish mystical proverb.

in Heaven that are in turn to be associated with spheres. These letters had numerological and cosmic significance. Spheres are symbols of perfection, bearers of circles, and hypostases of divine qualities. Now let us turn to the letters themselves.

Letters and Numbers

The original order of the 22 letters of the Semitic alphabet and those derived from it, including Greek and Latin, was held to be unchangeable and even sacred. The letters all by themselves, written in their proper order, were sufficient to form a spell. Of the major alphabets whose ultimate origin is Hebrew/Phoenician, Aramaic and Greek, only the Indian scripts, which are organized on linguistic principles, and Arabic, which is ordered by letter-shapes, have a different order. And in Arabic the older order of alpha, beta, gamma, delta, referred to by the acronym *abjad*, is used in any case, whenever the letters themselves are required to bear mystical or magical importance. Maštoc' held to this order in general for the earlier letters in his alphabet: *ayb, ben, glm* – but thereafter the order of the whole register of 36 characters was up to him.¹⁷⁸

That there was method in the order Maštoc' decided upon is obvious. To take an easy example, the final letter of the Armenian alphabet is *k'ē*, which is simply the Chi-Rho symbol of Christ's name, affirming the Lord's declaration that He is both Alpha and Omega. This is the point at which, if one accepts that Maštoc' might have taken arithmetical symbolism seriously, it may become possible to uncover a certain intellectual affinity to Pythagoras – and to other thinkers of his stripe, such as the unknown author of *SY* with his mixture of cosmological and linguistic speculations. *SY*, as it seems, did not find a known receptive readership until at least several centuries (as many as seven) after the time of its composition. Similarly, one must look beyond the time of Maštoc' to the seventh century – only two

178 The number 36 was itself arbitrary: For instance, Maštoc' could have added an individual letter for the u sound, but he preferred, on the model of Greek, to employ a diphthong, o + w (cf. Gk. omicron + upsilon). It would seem that he was determined to have thirty-six letters, no more, no less. The number is overtly symbolic of completion and entirety. It is of great astrological and calendrical significance. The total number of decans – the lunar mansions – into which the 360-day year was divided for divinatory purposes is 36. It was believed in antiquity that the members of the human body corresponded in number to the days of the year: 360 or (with intercalary days) 365. The Upanishads correspondingly count 72,000 veins in the body ($2 \times 36 \times 1,000$).

centuries, though still a hiatus of generations – to discover another kindred mind in Armenia that was sufficiently insightful and audacious to extract a most elegant cosmological scheme from the seemingly random order of the latter half of the Armenian alphabet. But to understand what Anania Širakac'i found, it is necessary first to do a little math homework.

Pythagoras and his disciples were interested in plane and solid geometry – the line, triangle, circle and sphere – and in the properties of numbers. Spheres are interesting, as we have seen: Aristotle noted in his *Categories* (4b25–26) that the difference between discrete and continuous quantities is that the latter have, and the former lack, 'a common boundary at which their parts join together'. And the parts of a continuum have no actual existence until a division into them is made (*De generatione et corruptione*, I2, 317a4–13). Since a true sphere can touch anything else only at a point, and a point is not space, the sphere does and does not join at a boundary – a geometrical expression of the asymptotic relation of the Creator to His creation, as it were. The idea in *SY* of the *sefirat belima*, noted above, probably also bears a relationship to these Greek mathematico-mystical observations about the properties of the sphere. The three-dimensional sphere generates the two-dimensional figure of perfection, the circle; and we have seen how twinned circles, as expressions of emanation out of perfection, bear the 22 sounds of the alphabet, which, when paired, make words.

Pythagoras rightly regarded numbers with mystical reverence. Though numbers are invisible – you can see five things, but nobody has ever seen 'five' itself – they are everywhere the same, whether one is a Persian, a Greek or a Martian. They also have discoverable properties, much as a person you get to know has traits that you can gradually discover. But what is special about numbers is that these traits are everywhere and always unchanging, and they can be educed by proofs. In the material world, we may perform scientific experiments; for an experiment to be deemed to have yielded a successful theory, the experimental result must be repeatable. However, as discovery in the world of matter yields new physical evidence, theories are subject to revision and change. None of this is the case with mathematical proofs: They are right once, or they are not; and numbers by definition do not change.

This is of interest to a mystic, because it is the form of thought closest to the idea of the world inhabited by an invisible, unchanging, perfect and profound being called God. Numbers are already perfect in their way; but there are particular, rare numbers defined as 'perfect' by Pythagoras and his school, and they are of very great interest to his followers. A perfect number is one equal to the sum of its divisors. Thus, $6 = 1 + 2 + 3$; and $28 = 1 + 2 + 4 + 7 + 14$. (The next perfect numbers in the series are 496 and 8,128.)

Perfect numbers lead to all sorts of other interesting discoveries: Euclid, for instance, proved that perfect numbers are multiples of two numbers, one of which is a power of two; the other, the next power of two minus one. Thus, $6 = 2^1 \times (2^2 - 1)$, and $28 = 2^2 \times (2^3 - 1)$. The perfect number 28 was of enduring interest to cosmologists and esotericists (who were, more often than not, the same people). Nicolas LeFèvre, for instance, divides the three worlds into triads with three parts each. This is the world-soul, the cube of three: 27 . (Pinax of Thebes, a Neoplatonist of ca. first cent. AD, defined 27 stations in human life.) God, who is One, stands above and outside: the perfect sum, $27 + 1 = 28$. LeFèvre writes: 'Cette suite de nombres procedant de 1 a 28, second nombre parfait & cube du 3 declare le secret & mystere de l'ame & du monde descript & demonstre par Platon au Timee'. (Plutarch had also, in his discussion of Pythagoras, alluded to the *Timaeus* of Plato.)¹⁷⁹

You will notice that Euclid's proof illustrates another aspect of arithmetic of very great interest to the Pythagoreans: the extremely interesting properties and qualities of binary numbers and of duality – of the number two.¹⁸⁰ That is not surprising, since unity is a static and otherworldly kind of state – a primordial state, as we have seen in the myth of the spherical first man – but a great many worldly things, here in this broken, dualistic cosmos, come in twos, or at least are most usefully defined in a binary fashion: day and night, yes and no, left and right, up and down, male and female, life and death, and, of course, good and evil. The perfect numbers, by the way, are all divisible by two. We recall that in *SY*, the divine language is generated by two rotating wheels, which, when they touch, throw off double combinations of the twenty-two letters. Though most Semitic verbs have triliteral roots, one might propose that the theory in *SY* relates not to all possible roots producible by the 22-letter alphabet (in which case, why stop with three-letter ones?), but to those of the exact minimum number of letters needed to fulfill the linguistic requirement of mutability, by way of conjugation and declension. You cannot do much of anything linguistic with a single letter: As with human relations, the fun begins with two.¹⁸¹

179 Heninger, *Cosmographical Glass* (above, note 168), p. 92 and pl. 55 on p. 93.

180 Interest in problems involving the qualities of two begins with Pythagoras and continues down to the most profound reasoning in modern mathematics. In the seventeenth century, Pierre de Fermat proposed his last theorem: There are no whole-number solutions to the equation $x^n + y^n = z^n$ for any n greater than 2. Fermat's last theorem is based on Pythagoras' most famous one: In a right-angled triangle, the square of the hypotenuse is equal to the sum of the squares on the other two sides, i.e., $x^2 + y^2 = z^2$.

181 In *Bṛihad-aranyaka Upaniṣad* 1.2.4, the addition of speech (*vāc*) to mind produces

To return to the script of *Maštoc'*, it seems that Armenia's greatest ancient scientist indeed perceived in it a powerful numerical symbolism. In the seventh century, the mathematician, astronomer, astrologer, linguist, scientist and esotericist¹⁸² Anania Širakac'i (b. 610, d. ca. 685) compiled a division table called 'The Six Thousand' (*Vec' hazareak*). In later centuries, that name was applied to a magical text around which various superstitions cluster to this day. As Anania wrote, the library of the Greek scholar Tykhikos, with whom he studied at Trebizond, contained a wealth of books both exoteric and esoteric (*yaytnik' ev gatnik'*). Tykhikos' energetic and inquisitive Armenian pupil learned both theology and the sciences of the pagans, from mathematics, astronomy and grammar to astrology, mythology and magic. He knew Pythagorean numerology and mathematics, for he cites the *Phwt'agoreank'*, the Pythagoreans, in his treatise on numbers.¹⁸³

Of his table of division, Anania boasted: 'Ganj ē cackeal i yerkins Hayoc' ew akn t'aguc'eal i tann T'orgomay, zi mayr e amenayn aruestic' handerj amenayn bažanmamb', 'It is a treasure hidden in this land of the Armenians and a precious jewel concealed in the house of Togamnah, for it is the mother of all arts, together with every division'.¹⁸⁴ It might seem difficult to appreciate why a table of a simple arithmetic operation should be the object of such hyperbolic acclaim – unless the numbers themselves have particular symbolic significance. In the treatise bearing, in MSS, the title *Anania Hayoc' vardapeti saks bac' ayaytut' ean t' uoc'* ('Anania, doctor of the Armenians, concerning the exposition of numbers'), Anania speaks

the year, i.e., sequential temporality, and the capacity of the being to conceive of time. The first word spoken by the being, as death attacks it, is the exclamation *bha*. The latter is a formal construction of a labial plus a, the root *bha-*, 'speak'. Cf. the Arm. cognate *ba-* > *ban*, 'word, logos', *bay*, 'verb'.

- 182 In the Renaissance, astrologers, cosmologists and other savants interested in occult matters defended their preoccupations against charges of sorcery and heresy by citing Scripture. Particularly popular for this purpose was Ps. 19:1 (MT 19:2): 'The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth His handiwork'; see Heninger, *Cosmographical Glass* (above, note 168), p. 8. Interestingly, Anania invoked the same verse, apparently for the same purpose: 'Asac' Dawit', t'ē erkink' patmen zp'at's Astucoy', 'David said, "The heavens declare the glory of God"'. In *Anania Širakats'u Matenagrat'yuma*, ed. A.G. Abrahamyan, Erevan: HSSR Matenadaran hratarakē'ut'yun, 1944, p. 238, l. 17.

- 183 *Anania Širakats'u* (above, note 182), p. 241.

- 184 See Russell, 'Book of the Six Thousand' (above, note 8), p. 222 (*MS*, p. 320). In Erevan, Matenadaran MSS 8098 and 699, too, we find: 'Ays e arhest Z-R-eakin, or govē Anania Širakac'in ew asē: ganj cackeal ēir yerkins Hayoc'', 'This is the craft of the Book of the Six Thousand, which Anania Širakac'i praises, saying, "Thou wert a treasure hidden in this land of the Armenians"'.

approvingly of the role of numbers in cosmogony and the shaping of the created things: 'Since the secrets concealed in this are most sublime and divine, and so very brilliant, that some of the wisest of the pagans consider it to be the container of these material beings; some even say the world has come into being by means of number'.¹⁸⁵

The number 6,000 itself was of very great cosmological importance to religious believers and remains so to this day. Christians expecting the Parousia in the time immediately following Christ's Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension had eventually to reconcile themselves with the obvious. Though obliged by faith to believe that He would come again, some reason had to be discovered why that Second Coming was not going to be any time soon. The Zoroastrians assign six millennia to the world as we know it, and the Christians adopted this ready-made chronology. The *Book of Revelation* accordingly was introduced into the New Testament canon. It provides a detailed guide to the destruction that is to come upon the world on Doomsday, at the close of the sixth millennium, and of the grim tribulations of the long reign of the Antichrist before the Second Coming. There will be signs of the end, and the faithful who perceive and heed them will be abstracted to Heaven and saved from the suffering to be endured by those left behind.

If only one knew when exactly that will be! Apocalypticists have been at work calculating it for two millennia, and various dates (1666, for example, which incorporates the number of the Beast) have been selected. Inevitably, disappointment followed; but religious faith persists, and so does apocalypticism.¹⁸⁶ For the Zoroastrians, the present six millennia are but the second half of a 12,000-year-long cosmic epoch, the first part of which ended with the incursion of evil into what had been a perfect but static cosmos. The *Agathangelos* uses this 12,000-year schema (§§ 295, 667–671), and it is reflected in the *Vêc' hazareak* as well; but most Christians keep just the six millennia, rationalized as expansions of the six days of Creation. The end-times are thus a kind of cosmic Sabbatical.¹⁸⁷

185 *Annamia Širakats'u* (above, note 182), p. 237: 'Ew zi barjragoyñ astuacayin gon cackeal xorhurdk' i sma, ew aynê'ap' paycatagoyñk', minê'ew cek' i het'anosac' imastagoyñk' êin, zsa kareel gol balkac'ue'iê' niwt'akan goyite's, minê' asel omanc': i t'uoy goyanal zašcarhs'.

186 The readers of this article will in all likelihood be unaware that America's best-selling books are not the novels of Philip Roth or Paul Auster, but the serial volumes of T.F. LaHaye's *Left Behind* (1995–2007). At the start of the end-times, the Christian elect will be bodily assumed to Heaven in the Rapture. Everybody else will be – you guessed it – left behind to enjoy Armageddon.

187 The Zoroastrians pointedly call the seven sacred creations of Ahura Mazda good.

Perhaps the key to Anania's treasure, like the purloined letter of fiction, has been placed right before our eyes. For numbers, to him, have an intrinsic relationship to letters that they ceased to possess when mathematicians began adopting the Indian system of mathematical notation universally employed today. In Anania's system, as in that of *SY* and as in ancient Greece and Rome, numbers are represented by letters of the alphabet – in his case, the alphabet invented by Maštoc', of course. It is thus appropriate to try to discover some of the same important properties in the letters that the Pythagoreans discerned in numbers. And, given the importance of the order of the letters, a number's ordinal position is worth considering in this respect.

Since Maštoc' had to determine for himself the order of the letters in his alphabet after the Classical 22, it is particularly those ordinal numbers and their corresponding letters, if they indeed possess some significance, that may reflect their inventor's own knowledge of esoterica and his intentions. Anania's special number, 6,000, can be written in two ways in Armenian. One is simply the 33rd letter, *ts'o*. Thirty-three is an interesting and significant number all by itself: The Pythagorean tetraktys, a pyramid of 9 – i.e., 3×3 – dots, capped by a separate tenth one, is also used by esotericists to denote a century: $33 \times 3 = 99$; $99 + 1 = 100$. *Ts'o* is the expression used in Anania's table, which is divided into columns of three letters, thus:

<i>a ts' ts'</i>	1 6,000 6,000	(i.e., $6,000 + 1 = 6,000$)
<i>b v ts'</i>	2 3,000 6,000	(i.e., $6,000 + 2 = 3,000$)
...		
<i>k'g ts'</i>	9,000 3 6,000	(i.e., $6,000 + 9,000 = 3$ [?] ¹⁸⁸)

The other, and frequent, way of writing 6,000 in Armenian is Z-RR, $6 \times 1,000$ – that is, *za*, the sixth letter, which is also the letter 6, followed multiplication-wise by the letter for 1,000, the trilled *r*, *ra*. Anania's table, for instance, includes the formula *z r c'*: 6 1,000 6,000, i.e., $6,000 \div 6 = 1,000$.

As Prof. David Sperling has observed to me in conversation, God's characterization of the six works of His first week as good or very good, in Genesis, a late book, is unusual and may be Persian. The chapter fits ill: Why would God regret creation later on in the book, when He rains on His own parade, drowning all save Noah and his company, if at first He had declared it all good? But then, the later offshoot of Judaism, ostensibly a religion of love, guarantees catastrophes still more horrific than the Deluge.

188 Perhaps for 2/3; this is not the only formula in the table whose result is inexact.

This table is given in Erevan, Matenadaran, MS 4066, 9b, as the *Vec' haz-areak*. The editor, Abrahamyan, argues that this is the original text, the magical texts by the same name being ignorant distortions whose authors took advantage of Anania's learning and reputation. Abrahamyan notes that the magical texts differ from this 'primary' version in that they are not arithmetical and are called *k'erakanut'ivn*, 'grammar', or *k'ert'olakan*, 'rhetorical, poetical'.¹⁸⁹ Neither of these objections holds up: The magical texts do prescribe the performance of arithmetical operations; and we have already seen that it is the soul of linguistic speculation in antiquity to connect the generation of language and the order of grammar to the operations of numbers. Part of this objection may arise from a cultural prejudice of the modern age, one that imposes a myopic view of the past. There is in fact nothing intellectually disreputable, in the context of antiquity or the Renaissance, in esotericism. Isaac Newton had his mystical side. As proof of Anania's hostility to magic, Abrahamyan cites his criticism, in his polemic *Ar xostac'ealsn*, of believers in fate and astrology; but that did not stop Anania from composing guides to astrology. It may be that the stars do not determine our destiny; but it seems to be Anania's position that, as natural phenomena, they affect our lives much as do climate, national origin and other variables that operate according to systems we can study and work with.

The letter *ra* is actually made of two *re*'s fused together: It is a double letter. *Za*, the sixth letter, represents six. (In Armenian, the mystic number seven is the next and seventh letter, long *e*, corresponding both to Greek *eta* and to the Armenian third-person verb of being, *E*, 'He is', which is a designation of God; cf. Greek *ho ón*, 'the being', for Christ. Maštoc' received all seven vowels in a vision. Pagan mystics and *mathematici* used the Greek heptad as spells.) But *ra*, a thousand – the Millennium, if you please – is well outside the old 22-letter alphabet and has no Greek or other equivalent, so Maštoc' was free to put it anyplace he wanted. And he made it the 28th letter, 28, as you will recall, being the next Pythagorean 'perfect' number after 6, and the one symbolizing the World Soul plus God, that is, the perfection of the *kosmos*. So 6,000 is formed in Armenian by combining the two letters corresponding to the only two Pythagorean perfect numbers ever likely to be significant or useful to any human being. Remember, the next perfect number is 496, followed by 8,128, both probably irrelevant to human life: How many things coming in 496's is one likely to encounter in a day?

189 Abrahamyan, in *Anania Širakats'u* (above, note 182), pp. 57–61, 226.

But both 6 and 28 are preeminently useful and significant perfect numbers, and Maštoc', evidently knowing this, incorporated these and other numbers into his alphabetic system, thereby stressing their significance to the discerning: With the sixth letter representing 6 and the twenty-eighth, 1,000, together they represent 6,000. Armenians studied and commented upon St. Basil of Caesarea's *Hexaemeron* (Arm. *Vec' avreak*: a title Anania likely had in mind in coining the title *Vec' hazareak*);¹⁹⁰ and the lunar cycle, about which Anania Širakac'i just happened to write a treatise, is always 28 days long (as noted, the letters of the Armenian alphabet number 36 – the same number as that of the lunar mansions).

And if you think 'So what?' – well then, try to navigate without knowing about tides or moonlit nights, or to stay heterosexually married without taking into account the changes, physical and psychological, of the menstrual cycle. The solar year is more accurate in some ways, but even after the moon landing in the summer of 1969, we continue to live in a sublunar world. The regularity of the moon, amongst the various luminaries of Heaven, is so striking that Muslims, good astronomers, acknowledge its fidelity and preserve the lunar as against the solar calendar. The astrological religion of the moon-god Sin endured amongst the 'Sabaeans' – *Sabier* with their *Sabisma* – at Harran, a stone's throw from the city of Urfa/Edessa with its long and intimate connection to Armenia, down to mediaeval times. Thus, in Armenian, thanks to the scheme laid out by Maštoc', the number of the present world era before the Sabbatical millennium equals pre-Sabbath week (6) times lunar month (28), which is also the product of the two perfect numbers, a harmonization of Christian cosmology, astronomical and natural science, and Pythagorean arithmetic, in a linguistic system – a phonetic alphabet.

We may recall, too, that the letter *va* itself, arbitrarily placed 28th in the series, is itself a *binary* creation of Maštoc': Both phonetically and graphically, it is a combination of two *r*'s. In the MSS of magical texts based upon Anania's original book, binary combinations of the Armenian letters in ordered series are used as spells believed to have power over the four elements and various signs of the Zodiac. For example, in British Library MS Or. 6471, 233a–b, a somewhat garbled and brief text of the *Vec' hazareak*, the user is apparently instructed to start by forming the series a.b.a.g.a.d, down to a.k', and then to proceed with the other letters (b.b.b.g.b.d ... b.k', etc.). This seems to be an attempt at the production of an arithmetical series;

190 See Barsel Kesarac'i, *Yalags vec' avreak arare'ut'ean*, ed. K. Muradyan, Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1984.

and it also resembles the combinatory scheme of *SY* for the generation of the roots of language.¹⁹¹ It is thus both *t'ubananakan*, 'arithmetical', and *k'erakanakan*, 'grammatical'! The introduction to the text mentions that Anania and Mesrop (i.e., Maštoc') were amongst the possessors of these secrets. As you see, the use of binary combinations of the sort that form the roots of the divine language in *SY* is attributed to Anania as a part of his system. These binary combinations, in the Hebrew text, are generated at the point(s) where two interlocking circles, each with the 22 letters on it, meet – and these are most likely to be two circles inscribed on a sphere. So let us look once more at spheres.

The binary roots of the primordial language of *SY* are generated at the meeting of two circles – wheels (Heb. *galgalim*). But which two wheels are they? Well, take a look at the celestial sphere, as modelled, for instance, in a painting from the Casa dell'Argenteria at Pompeii by the stunning Sun-god Apollo, better known to the Iranian world, with his characteristic radiate nimbus, as Mithra (or Mihr or Mher). On it may be seen two interlocking circles: One is the celestial equator; the other, the plane of the ecliptic. This sphere rotates on the *axis mundi*, to which the Hebrew word *teli*, 'hook', in *SY* indeed seems to refer.¹⁹² Roughly speaking, one circle has to do with the

191 It can also act as the generative pattern for a system of cryptography, in which a particular count of unimportant and misleading words and/or letters is followed by one that is part of the actual message. Successive counts, adding to the gap between significant letters each time on the same principle, follow. This system was employed, for instance, by Johannes Trithemius (1462–1516) in his *Steganographia*, as explained by Gustavus Selenus in his *Cryptomenytices*, Luneburg 1624 (ed. and Eng. transl. by Adam McLean, Edinburgh: Magnum Opus Hermetic Sourceworks, 1982, pp. 117 ff).

192 Sefer Yetsira, §18: 'Esrīm ushtayim otīyot yesodam qavvā' beteli, begalgal bamatayim ve'esrim ve'eḥad she'arim. Ḥazar galgal panim ve'aḥor. Veze sinan im letova lema'ala me'aneg ve'im lera'a lemata menagea'. 'Their foundation is 22 letters attached to a hook, on a wheel with 221 gates. The wheel rotated forward and backward. And this is the sign: If for good, upwards, it delights; and if for evil, downwards, it oppresses' (ed. Hayman [above, note 161], p. 98). The pun is on the roots 'ng, 'pleasure' ('it delights'), and ng, 'pain' ('it oppresses') – good and evil are merely permutations of the same letters. The double letters (which, strung together, form the Hebrew mnemonic begedkephret) are seven, and there are seven opposites (temurot): life/death, wisdom/folly, wealth/poverty, prosperity/desolation, beauty/ugliness and mastery/slavery (Hayman, p. 127, §37). There are also seven firmaments, earths, hours, times, planets, days and bodily apertures: The connection between math and language, both linked to the operations of cosmology, astrology, fate and creation, could scarcely be clearer. The word *teli* is found in the shortest (and probably oldest) recension of *SY*, so it seems that the later

earth's rotation and our days and nights (6 in the *Hexaemeron*); the other, with the Zodiac (about which the astrologer Anania Širakac'i wrote in detail) and our months (of 28 days, by the lunar calendar). Where they intersect at the sign of Aries is where, in the Zoroastrian scheme, time started moving, on the day of Ormazd of the month of Farvardin in the year 6000, when Ahriman invaded the universe; and that is where the world will be renovated and perfected, too, on the same date in the year 12000. (This day, the first day of spring, is still the Iranian New Year, *Nō Rūz*.) Aries, the Ram of the vernal equinox, stands right over the head of Mithras in the Roman tauroctony (bull-slaying) scene, which in my view telescopes the beginning and end times (the slaying by Ahreman of the Uniquely-created Bull in the year 6000, and the sacrifice of the bull at the final *yazna* in the year 12000). This conjunction is a good point for the verbs of Being itself to pour forth, since language and creation, remember, are linked, and in the Armenian *Book of the Six Thousand*, each letter is said to tell 12,000 things – to reflect, one supposes, the inner structure of the whole 12,000-year cycle. And a word on the holder of this sphere: As already noted, Anania Širakac'i, while still a student of science and mathematics at Trebizond, dozed off one morning in chapel and was vouchsafed a vision of the Sun coming down to him.¹⁹³ From various analogous visions, we may surmise that what he saw was probably a being very like the figure from Pompeii, an Apollon-Helios-Hermes-Mithras. In the account given in Anania's treatise *Yalagx erkri*, 'Concerning the Earth', the Sun is a radiant, beardless youth with golden lips, in white raiment. Allowed a question by this delectable creature, Anania asks whether humans live in the Antipodes – implying that he knows the earth is a sphere. After all, what does Apollo usually hold in his hand? The armillary *sphere* or celestial globe hanging from the *axis mundi*, the *teli* of *Sefer Yetsira*, that's what – on which the two planes, as circles, intersect: one for measuring the six days; the other, for the twenty-eight; both, for generating the binary roots of the divine language and determining

copyists and commentators, who tended to add rather than to subtract, might have forgotten what was meant by the original description.

- 193 See Russell, 'Dream Vision' (above, note 8); and Fr. Yeghishe Durean (Tourian), 'Širakac' *iin eraz*', *Masis*, 45/1 (22 June 1896), pp. 99–104. Tourian, b. Mihran, a scholar of broad talents and a great national and spiritual leader, was to become the Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem. He was the younger brother of Bedros Tourian (Petros Durean, 1851–1872), the first real poet of Modern Western Armenian; see J.R. Russell, *Bosphorus Nights: The Complete Lyric Poems of Bedros Tourian* (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies, 10), Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006.

man's shape and fate.¹⁹⁴ (In his cave behind *Meher kapısı* at Van, the apocalyptic hero of Armenian folk epic, P'ok'r Mher, i.e., Mithra the Younger, is said to hold, *mutatis mutandis*, the *ĕarx-e falak*, the Zodiacal wheel of fate. In Mithraic scenes of the tauroctony mentioned earlier, the Zodiac either arches over Mithras, with Aries at the centre, or else encircles him.) The next day, Anania reported his vision, with the angel's reference to Job, to his teacher, Tykhikos, who responded, a bit testily, 'Why did you not inform me of this?' He then insisted that his pupil read a pious commentary on Job in which it is asserted that there are, indeed, no Australians. Perhaps there was some anxiety in this: Too much esoteric knowledge of the spheres could cause trouble. In subsequent Armenian legend, Anania is supposed to have been banished for his employment of magical arts.

So, I suppose, Anania decided to conceal some of his insight in what he knew would be *angitac' anpet*, 'useless to the ignorant' – a simple table of arithmetic. Buried within it, yet in plain view for those able to see, was the treasure hidden in Armenia that was to serve as the foundation of the country's principal indigenous magical text, around which the others would coalesce: That rich fusion of cosmology, mathematics, and symbolism in the letters as perfect numbers – the numerically perfect alphabet itself, the enduring creation of Maštoc', saint and national hero, linguist, mathematician and magician.¹⁹⁵

194 The solar *angelus interpres*, with his celestial sphere, was of perennial interest: *Pictura sapientis* seems to be the message of such a winged figure atop a celestial sphere on the title page of a Latin translation of *SY* published in Amsterdam in 1642, as shown in Joseph Dan, *Kabbalah: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 12. Visionaries see what they are conditioned by the prevailing images of their time, place and beliefs to see; and few symbols were more powerful and widespread than that of the Sun god, which was popular even in synagogue mosaics; see J.R. Russell, 'The Four Elements and the Cross in Armenian Spirituality, with an Excursus on the Descent in Merkavah Mysticism', *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, 4/4 (1997), pp. 357–379, reprinted in *AIS*. Why the Sun god? Copernicus cited an utterance attributed to Hermes Trismegistus: The Sun is a 'visible god' (Heninger, *Cosmographical Glass* [above, note 168], p. 47).

195 It remains to be noted that, even as the secret in plain view of the Six Thousand could not be seen by those not equipped to see it, so many gradually came to doubt the very existence of the *Book of the Six Thousand* itself; see J.R. Russell, 'A Tale of Two Secret Books, or: How and Why the Armenian Magical *Book of the Six Thousand* Exists but Some People Think It Doesn't, and H.P. Lovecraft's *Necronomicon* Doesn't Exist but Some People Think It Does, and Why They're Both Wrong', paper presented on 3 May 2011 at the conference 'Knowledge to Die For: Transmission of Prohibited and Esoteric Knowledge through Space and Time', the Free University of Berlin and the Max Planck Institute, Berlin, 2–4 May 2011; forthcoming in the conference proceedings, edited by Prof. Florentina Badanalova.

Note: Since this lecture was prepared for publication, I have become aware of a short list from the Cairo Geniza of Cilician Armenian words and phrases transliterated into Hebrew script, with their Judeo-Arabic equivalents. See James R. Russell, "On an Armenian Word List from the Cairo Geniza," *Iran and the Caucasus*, 17 (2013), pp. 189–214.

James R. Russell is Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University; he was twice a Lady Davis Fellow, and a Visiting Associate Professor of Iranian and Armenian Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His principal books are *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, *Armenian and Iranian Studies* and *Bosphorus Nights: The Complete Lyric Poems of Bedros Tourian*.

The lecture was delivered on December 20, 2009.

October 14th, 1995.

Mr. William S. Burroughs,
P.O. Box 147,
Lawrence, Kansas 66044

Dear Mr. Burroughs,

I trust this finds you well. In your recent book, *My Education*, you devote much attention to dreams. This interest seems to pervade your work- of which I am an avid and attentive reader- and I was very interested to notice that the five Cities of the Red Night derive their names from Ibn Khaldun's spell in the *Muqaddimah* to induce the dreams of one's desire. A vision in the conclusion of the trilogy follows precisely the same pattern as the heavenly ascent and vision of the solidified waters that one finds in the literature of the Kabbalah, from the tractate *Hagigah* on down. In particular, though, it has an affinity with a meditation on the Epiclesis (the part of the East Christian liturgy when one invokes the Holy Spirit) by a tenth-century Armenian mystical saint whose writings I've been working on since the age of twenty. I'm forty-two, now. Though I'd love to be able to talk about all this with you if ever you revisit your old college, that is not the purpose of this letter.

Are you aware of the existence of a mediaeval book called the Voynich Manuscript? With your interest in the indefiniteness of boundaries between the mechanical, botanical, and biological, it should warrant immediate attention. (But perhaps you have known of it for years. If so, forgive my presumption.) The book, some 120 pages in length, is written entirely in a cipher that has resisted all attempts at decipherment ever since it was publicized, some seventy years ago. The diagrams and pictures in it seem to portray all sorts of natural phenomena, but in unnatural and baffling combinations- my description does not do it justice. I'm enclosing herewith a blow-up of a sample page, out of a book of articles on the manuscript. The fact is that anybody who studies it comes away with a nasty feeling that is so strong it is the separate subject of some comments in a National Security Agency monograph about the Voynich. The manuscript dates, most likely from the fifteenth century, though authorship is attributed to Roger Bacon. John Dee and Athanasius Kircher both owned it, as it seems, at diverse times. Voynich was an American rare book dealer who bought the thing at a villa outside Rome.

The Voynich affects people. A dean at Penn devoted the last years of his life to what turned out, tragically, to be a misguided decipherment. His *Nachlass* was published by R. Kent, the great scholar of linguistics, whose grammar of Old Persian I use in my own classes. Panofsky studied the Voynich and was utterly certain of its authenticity, yet he could not connect the style of the intricate illustrations to any known school of art. Colin Wilson wrote a wonderful story, "The Return of the Lloigor", about the Voynich. He connects it there to Lovecraft's invented *Necronomicon*. My own first encounter with it was at age six: there was a page of it, in all its baleful original color, on the cover of *Scientific American*. My mother was in the kitchen, but seemed a million miles away. The manuscript inspired a bleak feeling, and a sort of dread. The shadows even lengthened a little.

My conviction that you ought at least to be informed about all this was enforced by a passage in I.B. Singer's novel, *Enemies: A Love Story*. The hero, Herman, is in his room in the Bronx thinking about his dreams, in which he is writing in Rashi script, on yellowish paper, a mixture of a story book, Kabbalistic treatise, and record of scientific discoveries, all illustrated with pictures. Maybe the Voynich is some lone scholar's dream, but one that is stupendously long, learned in an unearthly way, and able to affect us over the abyss of centuries. It even reminds me of your Mayan book, though I've not found any centipedes in it!

If you are not familiar with the Voynich, you have a real treat in store; and your insights would be at least as valuable as those of any academic who has stared at the thing. If you do know it, then pardon me for taking up your time— at all events, you have a devoted reader, and two friends (me & my Cat), back at Harvard, who wish you good health and happiness.

Yours sincerely,

James R. Russell,
Mashtots Professor of Armenian

Enclosure.

Letter of J.R. Russell to W.S. Burroughs.



Plate VII
Another Biological Drawing: folio 86 verso
Courtesy of Wilfrid M. Voynich

'Four-way' drawing from the Voynich MS, from W.R. Newbold, *The Cipher of Roger Bacon*, ed. R.G. Kent, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1928.

Nov. 1, 1995

Dear Mr Russell

Many thanks for your letter and the transcript.

I had not heard of the Voynich Manuscript and find the transcript fascinating. I think it is intended to be rotated and read in four directions. I have seen similar four way grids in Moroccan manuscripts. I did not know the source of city names.

Brian Gysin, a painter who used the four way grid in his painting, gave me the names but did not know their source.

Last night I had a dream faces in shells which clearly derives from the transcript you sent.

I now have six cats

sincerely

William S Burroughs

William S Burroughs



James R. Russell Esq
6 Divinity Avenue
Cambridge Mass. 02138

W.S. Burroughs
Box 147
Toultaine, Kansas
66094

Letter of W.S. Burroughs to J.R. Russell; Burroughs envelope, recto; Burroughs envelope, verso.

[illegible]

በፊት ለፊት ሲሆን ስምዖን ስንዳርቅ
በፊት ለፊት ሲሆን ስምዖን ስንዳርቅ

החלטתו של בית דין, לרבות (אם לא כולל) את

THE ISRAEL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
PROCEEDINGS

Volume Six

- 1 J. BLAU, *An Adverbial Construction in Hebrew and Arabic – Sentence Adverbials in Frontal Position Separated from the Rest of the Sentence*. 1977. 103 pp.
- 2 J. BLAU, *On Polyphony in Biblical Hebrew*. 1982. 79 pp.
- 3 A. WASSERSTEIN, *Galen's Commentary on the Hippocratic Treatise, Airs, Waters, Places, in the Hebrew Translation of Solomon ha-Me'ati*. 1982. 119 pp.

Volume Seven

- 1 G.H. HARTMAN, *The State of the Art of Criticism*. 1987. 19 pp.
- 2 H.B. ROSÉN, *Early Greek Grammar and Thought in Heraclitus – The Emergence of the Article*. 1988. 42 pp.
- 3 S. PINES, *Points of Similarity between the Exposition of the Doctrine of the Sefirot in the Sefer YeZira and a Text of the Pseudo-Clementine Homilies – The Implications of this Resemblance*. 1989. 80 pp.
- 4 J. ASSMANN, *Akharyati's Theology of Light and Time*. 1992. 34 pp.
- 5 H. DAIBER, *What Is the Meaning of and to What End Do We Study the History of Islamic Philosophy? The History of a Neglected Discipline*. 1998. 23 pp.
- 6 M. GOODMAN, *Josephus and Variety in First-Century Judaism*. 2000. 13 pp.
- 7 H.M. COTTON and W. ECK, *Governors and Their Personnel on Latin Inscriptions from Caesarea Maritima*. 2001. 26 pp., 2 figures, 1 plate.

Volume Eight

- 1 R. LEENER, *On Speaking in the Language of the Sons of Man*. 2002. 18 pp.
- 2 J. VAN ESS, *60 Years After: Shlomo Pines's Beiträge and Half a Century of Research on Atomism in Islamic Theology*. 2002. 23 pp.
- 3 P.W. VAN DER HORST, *The Myth of Jewish Cannibalism: A Chapter in the History of Antisemitism*. 2008. 14 pp.
- 4 C. D'ANCONA, *Man's Conjunction with Intellect: A Neoplatonic Source of Western Muslim Philosophy*. 2008. 34 pp.
- 5 C. MARKSCHIES, *Compassion: Some Remarks on Concepts of Divine and Human Compassion in Antiquity*. 2011. 14 pp.
- 6 J. HABERMAS, *A Philosophy of Dialogue*. 2013. 15 pp.
- 7 J.R. RUSSELL, *On an Armenian Magical Manuscript: New York, Jewish Theological Seminary, Ms 10558*. 2013. 86 pp.

This paper examines some unusual features of a modern Armenian magical manuscript. The manuscript belonged to a Sephardic Jew, who annotated it, translating and transliterating some terms into Hebrew – a rare phenomenon in the Armenian context, since Armenia has no indigenous Jewish community, and the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, a distinct *millet* (a defined religio-ethnic group), were often hostile to the Jews. The Jewish owner also inscribed an ancient spell known from Arabic magical literature at the beginning of the manuscript, and its use and significance are explored. The manuscript contains diverse spells, lists, magic squares and characters, and voces mysticae, with texts in Classical and Modern Western Armenian as well as in Armeno-Turkish. Representative portions of these are offered in translation, with commentary. The mystical prayers employed from the tenth-century Armenian *Narek* are translated in full, in an appendix; these are of interest insofar as they illustrate a nexus of canonical and folk religious concepts. The manuscript also contains a version of *Vec' hazareak*, 'The Book of the Six Thousand', a designation broadly employed to describe Armenian magical texts that often differ widely from each other. A final appendix considers some reasons why the original of this book, a mathematical table, was of intellectual importance in the context of early Christian Armenia.

James R. Russell is Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University; he was twice a Lady Davis Fellow, and a Visiting Associate Professor of Iranian and Armenian Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His principal books are *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, *Armenian and Iranian Studies* and *Bosphorus Nights: The Complete Lyric Poems of Bedros Tourian*.

The lecture was delivered on December 20, 2009.

The Script of the Dove: An Armenian Hetaerogram

James R. Russell

Cryptography, the study of codes, ciphers, and the storage and transmission generally of information in a secret manner, is today more a science dominated by mathematicians with computers, than an aspect of textual and historical research studied mainly by philologists and paleographers, as it was in the past. It is reasonable that this should be so: as human technology has become more sophisticated and complex, secret codes have become much harder to decipher than in previous ages. They were always an important feature of the security and military capability of states; but as wars have grown in scope and political systems have become capable of greater domination over everyday life, the stakes are greater than ever before.

So, the decipherment by Alan Turing and others of the German Enigma code was very important to the Allied effort to defeat Hitler in the Second World War. A by-product of Turing's work was the prototype of the modern computer.¹ Protection of the security of internet communications, financial and other, against viruses and hackers, is an issue that affects many aspects of life today. However great and intricate the advances of

¹ On cryptography generally, the best book is still David Kahn's magisterial *The Code-Breakers* (New York: Macmillan, 1967). Andrew Hodges in his biography *Alan Turing: The Enigma* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1983), discusses how Turing's work on code-deciphering machines during World War II led to the invention of the computer. But with the onset of the Cold War, Turing's left-wing convictions and homosexuality isolated him from the authorities and society and led to his untimely death.

science, in scholarship one must still steadily resist as fallacy the impression that because we have over time developed more complex machines now than our ancestors did, it must follow that we are as individuals more intelligent than they were. The writings of the ancients are still our fundamental classics; and even in the field of cryptography, the mastery of the men of the past endures. For it is after all a mediaeval cipher, not the mechanized encryption of a modern intelligence service, that still resists the combined efforts of scholars and scientists to decipher it. The Voynich MS, a book written entirely in an unknown code and illustrated with enigmatic anatomical, astronomical, and mechanical pictures, is perhaps the most popular manuscript in the world: drawings of what look like the cellular walls of the skin, and the structure of galaxies, have proved particularly intriguing and controversial, since the manuscript undoubtedly predates the invention of microscope and telescope. It belongs to the Beinecke rare book library of Yale University, the American National Security Council and Bell Labs are among the institutions that have commissioned studies of it, at least one scholarly career has been wrecked by a failed and misguided decipherment of it—and to this day nobody has any idea what it says.²

The writing in the Voynich MS, if it was not from the start a sort of scholastic joke with no plain text behind the encrypted one, must then be a code of extraordinary complexity, probably involving either an artificial language or a permuted natural one. The simplest codes, by contrast, are substitution ciphers, in which a symbol, number, or other letter is substituted for a letter of the alphabet in transcribing straightforwardly the spelling of a word in a natural language. When the language in question is English, it is a straightforward matter to crack the code, if the enciphered text is of moderately sufficient length, simply by counting the occurrences of each symbol and then applying the list of frequency of letters in the English language: *etoon irshd lucmpf jkqcx*. A few years ago a dealer in antiques in New Eng-

² See Gerry Kennedy and Rob Churchill, *The Voynich Manuscript* (London: Orion, 1992). The president of the University of Pennsylvania thought he had cracked the code; and the great scholar of Old Persian, Prof. R. Kent, approved the solution and supported its posthumous publication. The internet has spawned numerous sites and networks dedicated to the Voynich, but we are still no closer to a solution than ever. Collin Wilson's wonderful story "The Return of the Lloigor" links the Voynich to the Cthulhu cult of the writer H.P. Lovecraft, on whose fictional *Necronomicon* see *infra*.

land sent me out of the blue several photographs of a painting handed down as an heirloom in his family. It is a still life in oils of a glass vase of flowers; and it looked to its owner, and to me, as though it might be the work of an artist living in the Ottoman Empire in the middle or late 19th-century. Armenian artists of that place and period in particular combined Western European expertise in technique with Near Eastern subjects and sensibilities; so it would not be unreasonable to surmise that the painter might have been an Armenian.³ But what interested the owner of the picture was not so much the possibly Armenian provenance of the picture as this: someone had incised short inscriptions into the lower part of the painting and across the back, and nobody he had consulted could tell him what language it was. Several of his interlocutors⁴ knew I taught Armenian and

³ A number of Armenian artists working in the Ottoman Empire in the late 19th century painted such still life oils, though with greater technical expertise: Ōzeni K'awuk'čean, Anton Mkrean, Eruand Ōskan, and Batist Limončean come to mind. See Garo Kōrkman, *Armenian Painters in the Ottoman Empire, 1600-1923*, 2 vols. (Istanbul: Metusalem, 2004). For the painting and cipher inscription see Plates 4-7 in this essay. A few characters and the first two lines and bottom of the longer inscription on the back of the panel are blurred; and the individual symbols to the left may be numeration of some kind. But the bulk reads: "I met al.../ Just opened to the morning .../ And so I stopped to gaze/ And thou art beautifull [sic] I said/ That lily did not hide its head/ But freely forth its odors shed/ To pay me for my praise." The shorter inscription on the painting itself reads, "... face to look upon and pray.../ ... spirit keep thee..."

⁴ I never learnt the identity of these mysterious friends; but in connection with one's interest in arcana a curious incident is worth retelling here. Not long after I first came to Harvard, in 1993, a stranger working at the Widener Library forwarded to me for reply a letter of inquiry from the north of England about the *Necronomicon*. The American writer of fantastic fiction H.P. Lovecraft (d. 1937, Providence, RI) invented and wrote about this (unfortunately) fictional tome of dread occult lore in his story "The Dunwich Horror," which blends the invented with the real. Dunwich itself is a sunken city off the east coast of England; and Lovecraft's Massachusetts town of that name is inspired by a real village submerged by a reservoir near Amherst. As for the book, the story claims copies carefully kept from the public eye belong to the collections of Miskatonic University (fictional) and Harvard's Widener Library. The story also mentions a cipher passed down by a secretive cult—just the phenomenon that is the topic of this essay! It was my sad duty to inform our British correspondent that although, as the *mantra* in Aklo proclaims with ominous majesty, *Ph'nglui mglw'nafh Cthulhu R'lyeh wgah'nagl fhtagn*, "In his house at R'lyeh dead Cthulhu

were perhaps aware as well of the pleasure I took in puzzling over arcane writing; and suggested he contact me. Upon receipt of his photographs, the first thing I noticed was that some letters

waits dreaming" there is to the best of my knowledge no *Necronomicon* at Widener. As to the mantra, one notes that *ph-* seems to be a preposition, like Arabic *fi* or Hebrew *be-*. The past participle *mgilw'naft* appears to be formed on the verbal base *mgil-* "die," cf. Armenian *mgil-el*, "to decay"; and the present participle *wgahnagl* would contain *wgah-*, "dream," cf. perhaps Arm. *wkay* "witness" (<OPth. **wikas-*, Phl. *gugay*). The cognomen Akdo, if it was taken by a translator from 'Abd al-Hazrat, would perhaps be from Arabic *'aql*, "intelligence." Here is a section of the book: "Nor is it to be thought, that man is either the oldest or the last of earth's masters, or that the common bulk of life and substance walks alone. The Old Ones were, the Old Ones are, and the Old Ones shall be. Not in the spaces we know, but between them, They walk serene and primal, undimensioned and to us unseen. Yog-Sothoth knows the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the gate. Yog-Sothoth is the key and guardian of the gate. Past, present, future, all are one in Yog-Sothoth. He knows where the Old Ones broke through of old, and where They shall break through again. He knows where They have trod earth's fields, and where They still tread them, and why no one can behold Them as They tread. By Their smell can men sometimes know Them near, but of Their semblance can no man know, saving only in the features of those They have begotten on mankind; and of those are there many sorts, differing in likeness from man's truest eidolon to that shape without sight or substance which is Them. They walk unseen and foul in lonely places where the Words have spoken and the Rites howled through at their Seasons. The wind gibbers with Their voices, and the earth mutters with Their consciousness. They bend the forest and crush the city, yet may not forest or city behold the hand that smites. Kadath in the cold waste hath known Them, and what man knows Kadath? The ice desert of the South and the sunken isles of Ocean hold stones whereon Their seal is engraven, but who hath seen the deep frozen city or the sealed tower long garlanded with seaweed and barnacles? Great Cthulhu is Their cousin, yet can he spy Them only dimly. Iä! Shub-Niggurath! As a foulness shall ye know Them. Their hand is at your throats, yet ye see Them not; and Their habitation is even one with your guarded threshold. Yog-Sothoth is the key to the gate, whereby the spheres meet. Man rules now where They ruled once; They shall soon rule where man rules now. After summer is winter, and after winter summer. They wait patient and potent, for here shall They rule again." The proper names and toponyms, heavy on -ath and -oth endings, are delightfully pseudo-Semitic, while the rhetorical repetitions, litanies, and jeremiad explosions are all Biblical—bending the forest and crushing the city might please the Psalmist himself. And then there is the lapse down through the sea and into the elegiac speech of Lovecraft's inspiration, Poe.

obviously derived from the Runic alphabet of northern Europe. I therefore hypothesized that the inventor of the code was not a Middle Easterner and was therefore most likely encoding a Western European language. The words of the inscriptions are helpfully separated by dots, and from a cursory survey of the two-to-four-letter words I hazarded the guess that these were the definite articles, prepositions, and conjunctions of French. That didn't work; so I tried English. I then poured myself a peg of Scotch (Sherlock Holmes would have lit a pipe) and deciphered the message in a few minutes.⁵ It is a rather banal, sententious poem of the sort a provincial American (and a rather vulgar one—he was after all defacing a painting that is not without a simple and affecting charm) of the Victorian age might have liked. Thus the painting might have been purchased as a souvenir in an Ottoman city frequented by Western travelers, most likely Constantinople or Smyrna. I have not seen the code elsewhere; so it is at least possible that the writer of the text invented it himself and maybe even used it just this once. But where would he have found the symbols for it? One surmises they could easily have been culled from another cipher, maybe that⁶ of one of the semi-secret fraternal societies that were very popular in the United States in the period.⁷

⁵ This part of decipherment, the cultivated hunch, is the *Fingerspitzengefühl* that comes with formal training if one is lucky. It goes back a long way: al-Khalil of Basra, eighth century, solved an encrypted Greek message sent as a condescending tease by the Byzantine emperor. The Arab scholar thought it must begin with a formula "In the name of God" or words to that effect. It did, and he got the first letters of the code that way: see Kahn, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

⁶ American Freemasons, then as now, work the Craft rituals "to an approved ritual issued to them in cipher": Bernard E. Jones, *Freemasons' Guide and Compendium* (London: Harrap, 1956), p. 226.

⁷ Mark C. Carnes, *Secret Ritual and Manhood in Victorian America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), suggests the Masonic order and other groups affirmed their members' masculinity while the churches and other institutions of the fast-growing industrial Republic undermined and threatened it. At the same time, the revelation of the "Royal Secret" of our hermaphroditic nature provided release for sexual emotions that could not be expressed otherwise or elsewhere in Victorian society. Although some of Carnes' insights have undoubted validity, they seem informed less by a standard of impartial scholarship than by the agenda of gender studies. The author's work is marred by an almost cartoonish contempt for the organizations he is studying, and throughout the book he seems to assume *a priori* that sane, mature men cannot have serious spiritual or mystical strivings. On page two,

Those societies, with their secret rituals and signs of recognition, satisfied a need to belong and to feel special, apart from the ignorant herd; and one aspect of their operations was the use of ciphers to endow their communications with a sense of privacy, prestige, and mystery. Those are precisely the conditions under which one proposes the kind of Armenian cipher to be discussed, which I will term a "hetaerogram" (i.e., the writing of a sodality—a pun on heterography!), would have developed and flourished. Indeed in America the exposure of the secrets of one such secret society, the Ku Klux Klan, was more a factor in its downfall than any diminution of its violent activity.⁸ Secrecy has an incomparable allure.

Some ciphers invented by one person for his own use and never employed by anyone else derive their symbols from historical sources, as in the case of the painting. A substitution cipher attested uniquely in the Folger Manuscript, devised by a medical doctor in New York in 1827, to write about Masonic philosophy uses different simple symbols representing the individual letters. But the inventor put them together in such a way as to have each word form a squared design resembling somewhat Egyptian hieroglyphics: the inventor even uses the Egyptian convention of the cartouche to enclose words of special significance. The cipher thus reflects both the fashion of aegyptomania in early 19th-century America and the inherent secretiveness of the Masonic order, as well as of course the Masonic interest in primordial culture.⁹ Masonic secrecy, which has its own social and religious value independently of any public or political stimuli, became a practical and urgent matter in Folger's day. For this

for instance, he summarily dismisses the rituals and teachings of the secret orders as "hokum." One need but reflect that the latter word is itself a Victorian product of British colonial usage in India: Arabic *ḥukm*, "an order" (see Henry Yule and A.C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: a Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases*, 1886, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, repr. 1986, p. 424) became for the Westerner good slang for nonsense! Such an attitude in any other context toward a culture or religion under study would be regarded as a disqualification of the researcher from further serious scientific work: one shudders to think what such a scholar might do to Sufism in Islam, or Kabbala.

⁸ See Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* (New York: Harper Collins, 2006), p. 58.

⁹ As one author has put it, combining Proust with the Masonic quest, *à la recherche du verbe perdu*.

was the period of the anti-Masonic movement following the Morgan Affair of 1826—a year before Folger composed his MS.¹⁰ A man named Morgan in upstate New York was abducted and apparently murdered by Lodge brethren, for having divulged Masonic secrets. So the arcane and the mysterious are a lure to prospective members of secret societies; but sometimes those societies, whether embroiled in scandal or condemned by some powerful establishment of religion, also have good and practical reasons to try to protect their members by keeping their communications secret.

Sometimes the mere difficulty of a known script can be counted on as a sufficient deterrent to undesired intrusion into writings of a personal nature. In the mid-17th century, the English politician Samuel Pepys used a system of shorthand to write the several volumes of his famously candid diaries: the system was published but might as well have been a secret code to the untutored.¹¹ Invented scripts are sometimes associated with invented languages with their purpose not so much discretion as literary invention or plain fun: the British fantasy writer and mediaevalist J.R.R. Tolkien used an angular Runic alphabet and a delicately curvaceous cursive script called Tengwar or Quenya to write his various made-up languages in *The Lord of the Rings* and other books. The palaver of his Elves, indebted to Old English, also owes much of its euphony to Finnish; whilst the sinister inscription on the Ring of Power in the dark tongue of Mordor, jabbered by cruel and ugly Orcs, is endowed with the agglutinative character and phonetic signature, I think, of Turkish.¹²

¹⁰ S. Brent Morris, *The Folger Manuscript: The Cryptanalysis and Interpretation of an American Masonic Manuscript* (Bloomington, IN: The Masonic Book Club, 1992), published the entire text in facsimile, with facing plain text: see Plates 1-3 accompanying this study. On the aegyptomanic craze and American literature, cf. John T. Irwin, *American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980): Poe's Antarctic traveler Arthur Gordon Pym encounters mysterious Ethiopic, Coptic, and Arabic inscriptions on his journey portending doom and various reflecting Hebrew *tsalmaweth*, the shadow of death in Ps. 23, see pp. 195-205.

¹¹ The system is published in Thomas Shelton, *A Tutor to Tachygraphy, or Short-Writing* (London, 1642).

¹² On invented languages and their scripts generally, including Tolkien's, see Paolo Albani and Berlinghiero Buonarroti, *Aga Magèra Difira: Dizionario delle Lingue Immaginarie* (Bologna: Zanichelli, 1994). The idea that the northern races are noble; the southern, base—is a pernicious sort of racism that suffuses also the Narnia books of Tol-

Another interesting example of a cryptogram invented by a writer for his own use, employing some esoteric symbols or characters from foreign writing systems, is the cipher of the Russian writer Daniil Kharms (the *nom de plume* of Daniil Ivanovich Yuvachev, 1905-1942), a member of the OBERIU literary circle in Leningrad. Like many other Soviet citizens, he fell afoul of the Stalinist authorities: Kharms died of starvation, imprisoned in a mental hospital, during the Nazi blockade. Though he is best known as the author of absurdist poems, plays, children's literature, sketches, and short stories, Kharms was also an inspired artist with an avid interest in ancient Egypt, Kabbalah, the mystical properties of the Hebrew alphabet, and kindred occult subjects—the same range of interests, that is, that animated the Masons of Folger's day and that one will observe presently in the case of the Order of the Golden Dawn. Several characters of the private cipher he invented are the same as those of the cipher employed by members of that order; others come from Japanese; and one seems to derive from the Samaritan Hebrew script. Some of the encoded entries in his diaries are of sexual content—a good reason for secrecy—and eavesdropping by others was the first stage of the pervasive culture of surveillance in the Soviet Union, though one rather thinks a secret code would have sparked, not deterred, the malign attention of police informers.¹³

kien's Oxford friend, C.S. Lewis. The villains in the latter's children's epic come from Calormen (i.e., they are hot-blooded, cf. Latin *calor*). Their currency is the Crescent (symbol of Islam) and their capital is the seat of the Tashban (Turco-Persian, "protector of the stone," their idol, cf. the Ka'aba—medieval Europeans considered Muslims idolaters, the one thing they assuredly never were). These lascivious folk keep pretty blond boy slaves from northerly, pseudo-Germanic Archenland. A bad business all around. See J. R. Russell, "News from Zembla," a review article on John Garth, *Tolkien and the Great War*, Elena Obatnina, *Tsar' Asyka i ego poddannyye*, etc., *The New Leader*, New York, Summer 2004.

¹³ See Plates 10-14 here; cf. Aleksandr Nikitaev, "Tainopis' Daniila Kharmsa: opyt deshifrovki" ["The cipher of Daniil Kharms: an attempt at decipherment"], in Yu. S. Aleksandrov, ed., *Risunki Kharmsa* ["Kharms' Drawings"] (St. Petersburg: Ivan Limbakh, 2006), pp. 237-247; and Zh.-F. Zhakkar, ed., Daniil Kharms, *Zapisnye knizhki, Dnevnik* ["Notebooks, Diary"], 2 vols. (St. Petersburg: Akademicheskii Proekt, 2002). In a discussion of Orlando Figes, *The Whisperers: Private Life in Stalin's Russia*, the great Dostoyevsky scholar Joseph Frank notes how during the Great Terror of 1937 many people took to diary writing, "using a script they tried to make undecipherable" ("In Stalin's Trap," *New York Review of Books*, 26 February 2009, p. 31. That puts Kharms in the dark context of his age.

Russia brings us a little closer to Armenia; and indeed the creation of new languages, some with their own scripts, has never been limited to the West. Zoroastrian sectarians in India, followers of Dastur Azar Kaivan, who flourished in the reign of the emperor Akbar, several centuries ago invented an artificial language for the book of their traditions and teachings, the *Desdâtir*.¹⁴ In a Perso-Turkish milieu of around the 15th or 16th century there was created a language for the use of mystics called *Bâl-a î-Balan*: it displays characteristics of the languages of its inventors, and was probably invented to conceal esoteric teachings from censorious orthodox divines.¹⁵ There is, in the Armenian sphere, the interesting case of a reclusive gentleman of Smyrna, Petros Tnker(ean) (or Tenger, d. 1881), who had studied with the Vienna Mekhitarists, an Armenian Catholic monastic order dedicated to scholarship, and had mastered the principal languages of Western Europe and the Ottoman Empire, as well as Sanskrit. Tenger settled in a stone house on a hill in the Aspra Khomata district of his native city and dwelt there in seclusion: he devised a new language, called *Sahleray* [pronounced *Sahlerâ*], with its own alphabet and grammar. He had the custom of presenting copies of a textbook of his new language, presumably privately published in an edition of a modest print run, to the (presumably few) guests who penetrated his fortress. A sign inscribed in the *Sahleray* language and script with the word *Ayzeratand*, meaning "Temple of Wisdom," hung over the entrance to the visionary linguist's mystic lair.¹⁶ It is

¹⁴ See J.R. Russell, "On Mysticism and Esotericism among the Zoroastrians," *Iranian Studies* 26.1-2, 1993, pp. 73-94, esp. p. 87, repr. in J.R. Russell, *Armenian and Iranian Studies* [=AIS], Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9 (Cambridge, MA, 2004).

¹⁵ Alessandro Bausani, "About a curious mystical language *Bâl-a î-Balan*," *East and West*, Year IV, No. 3 (Rome: IsMEO, 1954), pp. 234-238.

¹⁶ Abraham Ayzazean, *Šar hay kensagrut'eanc'* (Constantinople, 1893), part II, pp. 91-95; and Fr. Ep'rem Pôlosean, *Guyumčean ew T'enkerean gerdastannere* [German title, *Die Familien Kouyoumdjian und Tinger*; Tenger is another known spelling of the latter surname], Vienna: Mxit'arean tparan, 1951, pp. 34-39. I have been unable to locate a copy of Tenger's textbook, and Kevork Bardakjian has not seen one; but a copy may exist in the Mekhitharist library at Vienna. Mustafa Kemal's troops set fire to Smyrna (Tk. Izmir) in 1922 and massacred or drove into the sea the Greek and Armenian Christian inhabitants. Warships of the Western powers sat at anchor in the harbor and their crews were ordered to ignore the drowning people. A young American missionary assembled a fleet of Greek fishing boats to res-

not clear whether Tenger intended his new idiom to be an international tongue to promote human unity, as Dr. Zamenhof of Warsaw did with Esperanto. At least, the former never made any real attempt, as far as is known, to popularize *Sahleray*.

But it may be surmised at least that these imaginative representatives of two harassed and disfranchised minority nations—the Jew from Russian Poland and the Armenian in Western Anatolia—were in part attempting by inventing languages they could control to compensate for the feelings occasioned by the impotence and unofficial status of their own native tongues, each with its distinctive script (Armenian, for Armenian and Armeno-Turkish; and Hebrew, for Hebrew and Judaeo-German or Yiddish).¹⁷ Tolkien, an Oxford don, felt no such insecurity; but for him, too, as he admitted in a lecture of ca. 1930, the invention of languages was an eccentricity and a matter of pleasure, and of a sort of guilty, boyish pleasure at that.¹⁸ So invented scripts, as we have seen so far, tend to fulfill certain, similar needs: a member of a secret society seeks a sense of belonging and of validation. A religious sect endows its new writings with the patina of ancient prestige through the invention of esoteric scripts and words. A member of a belabored small people whose own language and script are without honor in the macrocosm

cue the survivors. One of the people plucked out of the water was Bishop Leon Tourian, who later became Archbishop of the Armenian Church in North America and was murdered during Mass at the Holy Cross Church of Armenia in Manhattan in 1933. The crime so shocked the public that William Burroughs was to use his name a decade later in the novel *And the hippos were boiled in their tanks*, which deals with another scandalous murder in New York.

¹⁷ The life of Ludovic Lazarus Zamenhof, 1859-1916, in many respects parallels that of Eliezer Ben Yehuda, to be discussed presently. Both were Russian Jews, and both associated their imaginative linguistic projects with an ideology. In 1901, Zamenhof published in Russia a book, *Hillemism*, in which he outlined an idealistic philosophy of universalist, humanist liberalism taking its name from the gentle Jewish sage Hillel: see Marjorie Boulton, *Zamenhof: Creator of Esperanto* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1960), p. 98f. Esperanto was to be the language of this utopian (and unrealizable) cosmopolis, even as Hebrew was to be the speech of the reborn commonwealth of Israel. One recalls that Thomas More created for the perfect society of his *Utopia* an alphabet of ideally simple geometric shapes, in its way like Zamenhof's pleasantly simple language.

¹⁸ J.R.R. Tolkien, "A Secret Vice," in Christopher Tolkien, ed., *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984), pp. 198-223.

creates a language or script of his own that he can magnify and control in his own microcosm. An academic reluctant to part entirely with adolescence retains its need for self-aggrandizing, romantic secrets such as codes others cannot read, and magical-sounding incantations outsiders cannot understand: through these he hopes to gain others' awed attention, their respect, maybe even their love.

As we have seen, the sheer force of the imagination, employed to serve a profound psychological need—the thirst for inner self-fulfillment, for validation of one's status and integrity—has brought forth cryptograms used by individuals and sodalities, as well as languages and scripts created for fiction and artificial languages intended for use worldwide. The act of creative imagination is as crucial to a related phenomenon of much greater historical importance: the revival of ancient or degraded languages, such as Hebrew or Armenian alluded to above, with their native scripts, for modern, secular use in the setting of a newly-created nation-state. Language is an inestimable component of the project of nationalism: an imagined, shaped identity needs not only the practical appurtenances of territory and state power to administer and defend it, but an idea and a voice to animate the society defined within international frontiers. That is, nationalism needs ideology and language. In the case of the Armenians, it is fairly evident from the hagiography of Maštoc' by Koriwn that the visionary activity of the saint in creating a script for Armenian in the fifth century served a palaeo-nationalistic end, giving a standard literary language to a polity on the threshold of the loss of political sovereignty.¹⁹ And in the modern period, two great modernizers of Armenian, Mesrop T'aliadeanc' and Xaç'atur Abovean (the latter the author of the first "modern" Armenian novel, *Vêrk' Hayastani*, "The Wounds of Armenia," 1848) were isolated and traumatized men moved by a powerful inner vision verging on passion. Before them, the Mxit'arist reforms of the language had been grounded in classic-

¹⁹ On this subject, see J.R. Russell, "On the Origins and Invention of the Armenian Script," *Le Muséon* 107.3-4, 1994, pp. 317-333 (repr. in AIS, pp. 565-581); and on early Armenian nationalism see J.R. Russell, review of Razmik Panossian, *The Armenians: From Kings and Priests to Merchants and Commissars* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006) in *The American Historical Review* 112, Bloomington, IN, 2007. For comparative studies of the phenomena of language and nationalism among Armenian and Jewish communities in the modern age see the collection of essays edited by R.G. Hovannisian and D.N. Myers, *Enlightenment and Diaspora: The Armenian and Jewish Cases* (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1999).

ism and were not connected to any movement of national liberation: the good Catholic fathers, living in distant Venice and Vienna, were largely content with Diaspora circumstances and saw no prospect of an end to Ottoman rule. They were mainly unconcerned with the political fate of the Armenian highland, a country most of them had never seen. But these two men set out to transform Armenian, a cluster of mutually unintelligible dialects burdened by thousands of loan-words from the languages of Muslim overlords and neighbors, into a standardized, modern literary idiom capable self-sufficiently to construct neologisms much as the literary language of Maštoc' had become—and to become the vehicle of national liberation and the forging of a free Armenian state.

Jewish history seems so often to run parallel to that of the Armenians that the crucial, intriguing differences sometimes seem to jump out at one unexpectedly. Most Armenians inhabited their ancient homeland but were oppressed by Muslims and looked to the Christian powers for help; the Jews lived in exile from their country in Christian lands that were hostile *ipso facto*, while Palestine was governed by the relatively benign Ottomans. Yet here are the similarities: rather like the promoters of the Mxit'arist project, the European Jews of the Enlightenment, the *maskilim*, sought to standardize and modernize the Hebrew language. But their main goal in this was to enable their fellow Jews to imbibe secular culture and thereby to become assimilated into the nations of the Diaspora as a minority stripped of the lineaments of its ancient separateness. They did not foresee that their efforts were often one-sided: the ambitious, assimilated, secular Jew was to appear to hostile eyes more insidious and threatening than the ghettoized one of a generation before. However the linguistic reformer Eliezer Ben Yehuda saw the question differently, and attempted in the final quarter of the 19th century to shape a revived Hebrew that Jews might employ for their own everyday purposes, without sacrificing their identity, in their own country. Ben Yehuda himself emigrated to Jerusalem from Russia, and was excommunicated by the local rabbinate, much as Abovean had been anathematized by the Armenian Church. But Ben Yehuda persisted: he raised his children to hear only Hebrew, he wrote a dictionary, and the living speech of Israel today owes its existence to him. But he came to his vision—and to his traumatic fate—not only from a study of history, or an interest in linguistics, but from reading, in the Russian journal *Vestnik*, about a work of fiction.

The Englishwoman who published under the male *nom de plume* George Eliot wrote her last, great novel, *Daniel Deronda*,

about a young man gently raised in an English home who discovers his Sephardic Jewish lineage from some documents hidden in a chest. The psychological metaphor, of uncovering something suppressed from one's past and at the core of one's being, and of coming out of a closet, is too obvious to require comment. Daniel determines not only to embrace his heritage and people, but also to move to the land of Israel and to restore the Hebrew language there to its original status as a living idiom. The novel was translated into Russian in its ponderous Victorian entirety by Perets, Gordon, Smolenskii, and Lilienblum in the 1880's: these men, Hebraists who had at first advocated assimilation, abandoned the idea in the wake of Tsar Alexander III's pogroms and themselves made *aliya*, "ascent," to Israel.²⁰ The novel is not merely a leap of imagination, an invention of Zionism *avant la lettre*; it turns out to have been also the spark that fired Eliezer Ben Yehuda to move—literally—in the direction he did. In retrospect, the Jewish state without Hebrew seems inconceivable.²¹ Having a collective speech and script in a country of your own is as important as having that room of one's own Virginia

²⁰ On the translation, see Solomon Hurwitz, "George Eliot's Jewish Characters," *Jewish Forum* 5, 1922, p. 369. Susan Meyer, "Safely to Their Own Borders: Proto-Zionism, Feminism, and Nationalism in *Daniel Deronda*," *ELH* 60.3, Autumn 1993, pp. 733-758, argues that here, as in other novels, Eliot has deflected the problems of being a woman, which she fails to challenge and resolve when she creates female characters, onto problems of "race" instead of gender; and males are produced to master these issues. She also observes that Daniel Deronda and other Jewish men in the novel actually assume feminine traits and roles. The belief that Jewish men menstruate is a staple of anti-Semitic racist fantasy. In the fourth century St. John Chrysostom stigmatized the synagogue, which John the Evangelist had already called satanic, as a gathering place of actors and homosexuals; and it came to be believed that Jewish men had a menstrual cycle. So the undermining of Jewish masculinity is as old as systematic Christian theology itself.

²¹ There is a counterfactual historical novel by Michael Chabon, *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, 2007, that imagines instead of Israel a temporary refuge for Holocaust survivors at Sitka that is about to be repossessed by the state of Alaska; its inhabitants, dispersed. The tongue of these hapless, homeless Jews is that of the Diaspora—Yiddish. And the imagined Sitka has a Hotel Zamenhof! Though I can imagine no stronger argument in favor of the State of Israel than this *noir* fantasy, its author seems to have intended it as a kind of anti-Zionist romance.

Woolf was to demand for women.²² The continuing demonization of the Jews and Israel in the world suggests that Zionism is the most radical of national liberation movements; so it is perhaps not surprising that it should have an affinity, though sublimated, to feminism—and, one can argue, to gay liberation as well.²³

There are other ciphers of the substitution kind, employed not for invented but for natural languages, which have been used, not by a single writer, but by many different people over the course of centuries—in the cases we are to examine, as long as nearly half a millennium. Though they are essentially cryptograms, in that they are intended to have a veneer of secrecy, and though they employ symbols considered to be of esoteric sym-

²² For minority peoples like Armenians and Jews, whose very right to that room of one's own is contested, and whose languages have often seemed to be endangered species, the issue is a burning one. But even the young American republic, in a far less parlous condition, was exercised by what was regarded as the urgent necessity of defining a national language and the orthography of its alphabet: see Jill Lepore, *A is for American: Letters and Other Characters in the Newly United States* (New York: Knopf, 2002).

²³ In 2007 the American gay novelist and literary scholar Edmund White published a novel, *Hotel de Dream*, which imaginatively expands an incident known only anecdotally from the last weeks of the life of the American writer Stephen Crane (1871-1900). According to James Gibbons Huneker, a New York art critic and friend of Crane's, the two men once saw on the street a beautiful young male prostitute whose appearance first repelled, then fascinated Crane, who took the boy home to dinner and plied him with questions about his life. He began a novel about the youth but then destroyed it under pressure from horrified friends. Though the story may be largely apocryphal, the fact is that Crane did write about a female prostitute: *Maggie: A Girl of the Streets* (see Stephen Crane, *Prose and Poetry* [New York: The Library of America, 1984]). In White's novel, Crane's lost MS is called *The Painted Boy*, and the youth, Elliott, is unashamedly gay and unassimilated to the breeder world. When at a reading and discussion of *Hotel de Dream* at the Brattle Theatre in Cambridge, MA, a year after the publication of the book one asked White whether his imagined novel might be viewed as a sort of *Daniel Deronda* of gay liberation, he warmly agreed and reminded me that he had written the introduction to the Modern Library Classics edition of George Eliot's novel (New York: Random House, 2002, pp. i-xxv). Here in Cambridge, where a thoughtless, one-sided hostility towards the Jewish state is often a part of the general left-Puritanism, White's enthusiastic endorsement of Zionism drew a visible shudder from an audience that had come to hear its comfortable myths affirmed, not challenged.

bollic importance or else have esoteric designations, they cannot truly be said to be secret, given their long and wide employment. They are certainly not the gully, pleasurable effluence of a solitary vice; so some other term must be devised better to characterize and understand them. I propose here a neologism, *hetaerogram*—by which term I mean an invented script employed to represent a natural language whose users draw, or claim to draw, upon a tradition of antiquity, that also belongs, not to one user, but to a *hetaira*, that is, in Greek, some association or sodality of people, or to several groups; and that is employed also not for a single occasion but over a significant period of time. Moreover, despite its wide and long application, the script never emerges into the arena of entirely public employment. It retains its reputation, however undeserved, of deep secrecy. To lessen somewhat the grating effect of a novel word in the language, one intends a punning reliance upon an existing term, *heterogram*, by which is meant the representation of a word in one language by the same word in another.²⁴ The users of *hetaerograms* would seem to see the script they share as ennobling the message of a text and setting it apart from other texts in the same language, as though they were writing the same and another language at once; and correspondingly they regard themselves as communicating in a special and privileged way.

Perhaps the most important *hetaerogram* in the West is the cipher that was most famously employed by the Order of the Golden Dawn of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, of which the Irish poet William Butler Yeats was a member.²⁵ This substitution cipher goes back to the *Polygraphia* of the 16th-century abbot Johann Trithemius and is composed mainly of alchemical symbols. Some symbols present in the cipher had been employed earlier by Chaucer in a secret code of his own.²⁶ John

²⁴ In Zoroastrian Book Pahlavi, or Middle Persian, for instance, cursive, connected Aramaic letters forming the Aramaic word *MLKA* represent, and are read as, Persian *šāh*, "king." In English, the ampersand symbol (&) meaning "and" is actually a shorthand heterogram of Latin *et*.

²⁵ See Darcy Küntz, *The Complete Golden Dawn Cipher Manuscript* (Edmonds, WA: Holmes Publishing Group, 1990). A key to the cipher is provided also by Nigel Pennick, *Magical Alphabets* (York Beach, ME: Samuel Weiser, 1992), p. 181, as a "Renaissance magical alphabet."

²⁶ These symbols were of course known very widely among practitioners of alchemy and the occult arts: see Fred Gettings, *Dictionary of Occult, Hermetic, and Alchemical Sigils* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), esp. the entry "Alchemist Script," pp. 44-45, with ref. to B. de

Dee, the Elizabethan occultist and magician, owned a copy of Trithemius' *Steganographia* and knew the *Polygraphia* as well.²⁷ So before its employment by the Order of the Golden Dawn, this alchemists' cipher was already well known and several centuries old, with its roots older still. Its modern users could scarcely have thought it particularly secret, then; and by the modern era the decryption of a substitution cipher would have been a fairly simple matter for any interested and literate Englishman. One thinks therefore that the cipher of the Golden Dawn was not so much a cryptogram as a hetaerogram—a writing system for which an old and noble pedigree might be claimed, limited to the use of a *soi disant* elite. It derives its prestige, not only from its long itinerary across the ages, but also from its content—the symbols of the alchemical craft. As we shall see presently, there is in Armenian usage an analogous hetaerogram.

The Armenian hetaerogram now to be discussed was used mainly by physicians and herbalists, though craft guilds of other kinds employed it as well. It seems to have endured, thus, for nearly half a millennium. It is referred to in some MSS as *ahuanic' gir*, "Aluan script," i.e., the alphabet devised by St. Mesrop Maštoc' for the *Ahuanik'* or Caucasian Albanians (no relation to the Albania of the Balkans or to the Iranian Alans of the North Caucasus); it also bears the designation *bžškakan*, "belonging to physicians," and has been the object of intermittent study since the late 19th century.²⁸ It is in fact a cipher based

Vignere, *Traicté des Chiffres, ou Secrètes Manières d'Ecrire*, 1586. On Chaucer's code, see Kahn, *op. cit.*, pp. 90-91.

²⁷ Adam McLean, ed., *The Steganographia of Johannes Trithemius* [tr. of Books I and III only] (Edinburgh: Magnum Opus Hermetic Source-works, 1982), p. 7. The members of the Order may not have known of Dee's familiarity with the work of Trithemius; but they saw themselves within the tradition, at any rate, of Dee: a composite cipher-symbol Dee invented for hermetic meditation and called the *monas hieroglyphica* (see John Dee, *The Hieroglyphic Monad*, New York: Samuel Weiser, 1977) is reproduced on the page of the Golden Dawn cipher MS illustrated here. One might observe also that Dee's designation reflects an early interest, in turn, in Egyptian hieroglyphics as symbols of esoteric wisdom.

²⁸ See Plates 15-18. N. Karamianz (K'arameanc'), "Einundzwanzig Buchstaben eines verlorenen Alphabets," *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 50, 1886, pp. 315-319, studied an encoded inscription from Sivas, AD 1535, in a MS including the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance*. It reads, simply, *Yiſec'ēk' zmelapart Yovasap' sarkawak'n* [skt for *sargawag*] "Remember ye the deacon Ioasaph, the sinner." Karamianz believed the script to be ge-

wholly on the shapes and values of the Armenian alphabet, in contrast to a table of letters in a fifteenth-century Armenian MS. Erevan Matenadaran 7117, also—and more correctly—entitled *aluanic' gir*, that reproduces with fidelity some of the letters of the authentic Aluan or Aghvan script as it is now known from a recently-discovered palimpsest.²⁹ The Aluans were converted to Christianity, and lived in such close proximity to Armenians in all respects of life and culture as sometimes to seem indistinguishable from them; yet their written language seems to have vanished utterly by the mediaeval period. So naming a cipher Aluan was to endow it with a readily recognizable aura of antiquity and mystery: the Aluans were for the Armenians the "near Other". But it would seem that Aluan was an alternative name, or perhaps a misreading of another, original name, for the cipher: **alunic' gir*, "script of the dove"; for a superscription in Armenian letters above one enciphered text reads, *Ays ē Hayoc' hin alawnagim*, "This is the ancient dove-script of the Armenians." And the latter is claimed to have been *Hayoc' Senek'erim t'agaworin hin mateannerēn ḡrinakuac*, "copied from one of the old books of Senek'erim, king of the Armenians." Senek'erim, i.e., Sennacherib, was a regnal name of the Arccunids of Vaspurakan and the attribution would therefore belong to the period in which they flourished, the tenth century; or the eleventh, during which the last Senek'erim ceded his lands to the rashly imperialistic Byzantines and withdrew to an exilic appanage in Sebastia, to the Cappadocian west. Or else the writer perhaps had in mind the name of the fictionalized Armenian king of Van in the Epic of Sasun whose daughter, Covinar, was the mother of the twins Sanasar and Baldasar, the first generation of the warrior heroes. This attribution to fabulous and possibly heroic antiquity of the cipher is to be seen in much the same light as its identification as the (lost) alphabet of the ancient Aluans—as a conscious effort to endow it with a prestige linked to the supernatural or to the glories and mysteries of the distant past.

The MS so described was kept at Eudocia (Tokat), central Anatolia. The owner, one Dawit' Širinean, copied the cipher text

nuine Aluan. Frédéric Murat returned to the inscription in his article "*Nšanagirk' imastnoc'*," *Handēs Amsōreay* 17, 1903, pp. 333-335, and concluded correctly that it was not Aluan but a simple substitution cipher based directly on Armenian.

²⁹ Zaza Aleksidzé and Jean-Pierre Mahé, "Découverte d'un texte albanien: une langue ancienne du Caucase retrouvée," *Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres, Comptes Rendus*, Paris, Apr.-Jun. 1997, pp. 517-532.

on paper and sent it to his brother Tigran in Sebastia (Sivas). The latter sent it to the scholar Karapet Gabikean³⁰ in 1908. The latter had difficulty in deciphering it and applied for assistance to the great linguist Hraçēay Ačārean, a pupil of Antoine Meillet. In his monograph on the Armenian alphabet, Ačārean writes that when at first Gabikean found he could not read it, "he turned to persons versed in the Book of the Six Thousand (*ke dimē Vec'hazareaki hmut anjeru*), as well as to a number of master goldsmiths, particularly to the gunsmiths Oskehan and Gēorg Ēkeahēan. They informed him that the letters in question were called the Script of the Dove (*Aławnagir*) and provided the shapes of a few more, that indeed corresponded to the physicians' alphabet (*bžškarān*). The latter also stated that his father and grandfather used to employ those characters as a cryptogram and they still possessed some of those writings. But since, they said, they had taken an oath to their masters (*varpetnerun erdum tuac en eler*), they would not reveal the secret of the cryptogram (*cackagrīn galtnik'e erewan ē'en haner*)." Gabikean saw also a MS with another cipher in which the Armenian letter *inni*, "I", was represented by the umlauted Latin letter I, *Ī*.³¹ Another cipher Ačārean studied he termed Dawt'ean, "Davidic," because of its attribution in MSS to the fifth-century Armenian Dawit' Anyalt', "David the Invincible [Philosopher]".³² Armenian MSS sometimes attribute to the latter authorship of the magical text *Eawt'nagreak'k'*, "[The Book of the] Seven Letters" (i.e., the vowels); this text is often found in proximity to the similar *Vec' ha-*

³⁰ Karapet Gabikean received in 1913 the İzmirenc' literary prize for his botanical lexicon, *Hay busašxarh*, "The Armenian Plant-World," which was published at the St. James' Press of the Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem in 1968. It was there that I met his son, Bp. Kiwrel Gabikean (Guregh Kapikian) of blessed memory. Bishop Guregh, who served for decades as the much-beloved principal of the school in the Armenian Quarter, used to offer his guests chocolates and glasses of sweet liqueur while showing them the models he had painstakingly constructed of the churches of Armenia. He inscribed to me a copy of his father's book. The Kapikian clan are well represented in the United States: Bishop Guregh's three nieces, Melanie, Manyā, and Haygan, were friends of mine in Arlington, MA.

³¹ Hraçēay Ačārean, *Hayoc' grere* (Vienna: Mxit'arean tparan, 1928), pp. 472-473. For a table of this and other Armenian substitution ciphers, as well as published examples of enciphered text, see Plates 15-18.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 474.

zareak.³³ Thus, the Armenian hetaerogram shares a number of features cognate to those we have observed in other cases: it is a simple substitution cipher; it has some letters in common with other ciphers of the same language; its users claim antiquity and prestige for it; it is associated with magico-mystical practice; it has been in use for centuries (from at least the 16th till the 19th); and it was used till recently by privileged sub-societies—doctors, goldsmiths, gunsmiths, and magicians. Presumably the use of it as a para-linguistic mode of identity enhanced their own sense of cohesion and self-worth—useful survival tactics for Armenians existing as a minority people in a Muslim state. And though the characters themselves are laden with symbolic significance, the messages of the texts themselves are mundane. It is their script that ennobles them.

Ačarean noted with respect to the designation *alawnagir*, “script of the dove,” that it must belong to such expressions as *cti lezun*, “language of the sparrow” (Arm *cił*), for a secret language.³⁴ But the dove, *alawni* (and as a common name for a woman, Aghavni) is no common fowl for Armenian Christians—it is the bird of the Holy Spirit. So one recalls that a legendary cosmological text that fell to earth from heaven, the subject of an old Russian spiritual poem, is called *Golubinaia kniga*, “The Book of the Dove,” probably with reference to the Christian image, the original title and *lectio difficilior* having probably been **Glubinnaia kniga*, “The Book of Profound [Secrets?].” In a study of the Russian poem, I suggested that some of its identifiably Zoroastrian features might have come into the Slavic world via the teachings of Armenian followers of the Paulician heresy settled in the Balkans.³⁵ Perhaps the Armenian designation of the

³³ On these magical texts, see J.R. Russell, “The Book of the Six Thousand: An Armenian Magical Text,” *Bazmaev* 147.1-4, Venice, 1989, pp. 221-243, repr. *AIS*, pp. 319-341; and J.R. Russell, “Maštoc’ the Magician,” in Sergio La Porta and Theo Van Lint, eds., *Festschrift Michael Stone* (in publication).

³⁴ Cited in A.G. Abrahamyan, *Hay gri ev grčut’yan patmut’yun* (Erevan: Haypethrat, 1959), p. 218.

³⁵ See J.R. Russell, “The Rime of the Book of the Dove (*Stikh o Golubnoi knige*): From Zoroastrian cosmology and Armenian heresiography to the Russian novel,” in Christine Allison, Anke Joisten-Pruschke, and Antje Wendtland, eds., *From Daena to Din: Religion, Kultur und Sprache in der iranischen Welt* (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2009), pp. 141-208 (*Festschrift Prof. Dr. Philip Kreyenbroek*). A shorter version of this study was delivered as the Roman Jakobson Memorial Lecture, NAASR, Belmont, MA, 11 Sept. 2008; and I had the honor to offer an expanded version of it in my own country as the Jack and Lewis Ru-

"Script of the Dove" has a parallel meaning to the Russian "Book of the Dove": the latter is the written revelation of the Holy Spirit; the former, the latter, the script used for such writing. For if one examines the characters of the *alawnagir*, their origin in the shapes of the letters of Armenian minuscule script (*bolorgir*) is plain; whilst their most striking common feature is the addition of loops or the transformation of the basic shapes so as to incorporate loops. This is, thus, a local development of the *Brillenbuchstaben*, "Eyeglass [shaped]-letters," often found in Jewish and Islamic magical alphabets; examples of the former go back two millennia.³⁶ Since the little circles on the ends of the lines of the letters resemble the stars of heaven, such magical alphabets have often been called Angelic scripts: given the association of doves with the Holy Spirit, that might explain in part the designation *alawnagir*. Though *Brillenbuchstaben* made directly from the Armenian alphabet of Maštoc' are reserved for ciphers, Pseudo-Arabic *Brillenbuchstaben*, eyeglass-letter-like asemic symbols, and individual circles probably intended to represent stars are common in Armenian magical MSS.³⁷

One finally contributes here a hitherto unpublished and curious example of the Script of the Dove. The text comes from the photostat—perhaps fifty years old—of an unidentified MS that was found by chance in November 2008 in a box of old papers at the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research in Belmont, MA, and was kindly placed at my disposal by NAASR's Director of Academic Affairs and my good friend, Marc Mamigonian.

The MS is a text of mixed medical and magical content written in a late Classical Armenian suffused with Arabic, Persian, and Turkish botanical and other terms: p. 337 (Plate 21) shows wheels of Life and Death to be interpreted by astrological and numerological operations, and there is a magic square with Arabic numbers; on p. 491 (Plate 22) the capital letter *p'ur*, Arm. aspirate *p'*, is shown as a naked woman; and on p. 129 (Plate 23) the names of various plants and other materials used in medicine are shown in a cross-hatched pattern reminiscent of the manner in which the sign of the Holy Cross is regularly mul-

din and Jack Driscoll Lecture, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, 25 May 2009.

³⁶ See Plate 19.

³⁷ See Plate 20: it is noteworthy that towards the bottom the abbreviations of *T(ē) A(stua)c* in standard Armenian letters are adorned with multiple curls and zigzagging endings, a semi-cipher, as it were.

tiplied (and various sacred Crosses, named) in the texts of Armenian talismanic scrolls (*hmayi*). On p. 398 (Plate 24), the Armenian date *RČLA* = 1191 is inscribed in the upper right hand corner, i.e., AD 1742, along with a long list of the writer's debts: e.g., *młsi abrahamin partim lřš*, that is, "I owe Abraham the pilgrim to Jerusalem (*maltesi=muqaddas*) [one] *kuruš* (*huruš*)."¹ On p. 160 (Plate 25) is an inscription in *alawmagir*: *ew mat'usalay grič's yišec'ek' i k'ristos/ mat'usalay č'nč'in car ay p'erke'in* "and remember me, the scribe Methuselah:/ Methuselah, the least slave of the Savior [Christ]." The idiosyncratic features of the form of the cipher here are the letter *ca*, Arm. *c*, represented as a T above a small circle (as in Erevan Matenadaran MS 8360, fol. 570 b); *k'č*, Arm. aspirate *k'*, as one triangle inverted over another; and *se*, Arm. *s*, as an inverted triangle. But overall the cipher is instantly recognizable. The author of the cipher text seems to have taken advantage of empty space on the page for his colophon, and he has also inscribed the Latin alphabet in a cursive hand of the 18th century, followed by a heterogram, the ampersand. And he transcribes his cipher text into a kind of Latin plain text: *& maduocagay grigc yišecr ikricdoc/ maduocaga gngin zarae prggin*. It is obvious from the transcription of the word for "scribe," *grič*, as */krič'/* and of Christ's name, *K'ristos*, as */k'risdos/* that our author spoke Western Armenian; and this would make our MS an important early primary attestation in a foreign script of the pronunciation of that dialect. The transcription of *t'o*, Arm. aspirate *t'*, as Latin *d* in the author's name probably reflects not an actual pronunciation, but hypercorrection, it would seem.

There is no secret content to the encoded text. So unless Methuselah thought the Latin alphabet a cipher itself—which hardly seems likely, since he has taken the trouble to provide it all, including letters he does not use in his transcription—the use of the Script of the Dove here is more a demonstrative sign that the writer was qualified to be a member of the medical fraternity, than an attempt to conceal sensitive information in code. (But of course it did not hurt that the ignorant would be unable to identify his colophon, erase it, and insert their own in its stead!) That is, although he has employed a **heterogram** (&), his Latin allography is proof enough, were extra proof required, that his cipher is a **hetaerogram**, not a cryptogram. As we have seen, in the general scheme of invented alphabets these writing systems of a sub-society occupy a peculiar place: though not strictly secret, they lend the charisma of the occult and the arcane to mundane writing, as here, in a natural tongue. They also offer dignity and cohesion to people subject perhaps to social indigni-

ty, their sense of cohesion threatened by their lack of political power. Although his name was most likely bestowed upon him in wishful thinking by parents anxious that their son live long, the script, at least, that our 18th-century Methuselah has used has a pedigree, both actual and invented, to rival the age of his Scriptural namesake. And the hetaerogram of doctors, goldsmiths, and gunsmiths, the Script of the Dove, endured for at least a century and a half beyond, down to the eve of the First World War, in Sebastia and in other ancient cities of that hoary land where first the gentle dove returned with an olive branch of peace in her beak, for the travelers in the Ark: Armenia.

LIST OF PLATES

- 1-3: The Folger MS: key and samples of text.
- 4-7: Still life painting with incised encrypted texts.
- 8-12: Cipher page from the notebooks of Daniil Kharmis; Kharmis' monogram of Osiris (cf. Dee's Monad) with cipher characters; Kharmis' drawing of the Tree of Life of the Kabbala and table of the Hebrew alphabet with cipher text and symbolic meanings of the letters in Russian; key to Kharmis' cipher.
- 13-14: Golden Dawn cipher MS key and fol. 33 with Dee's Hieroglyphic Monad.
- 15: Table of Armenian ciphers, from Hrač'ya Ačaryan, *Hayoc' grere*, Erevan: Erevan University Press, 1984, following p. 676.
- 16: MS facsimile of enciphered text, from A.G. Abrahamyan, *Hay gri ev grč'ut'yan patmut'yun*, Erevan: Haypethrat, 1959, pp. 222-223.
- 17: Abrahamyan, *ibid.*, pp. 220-221: key to the *bžškakan cackagrut'yun* "physicians' cipher."
- 18: Inscription in *bžškakan cackagrut'yun* "physicians' cipher" added in AD 1722 to Armenian Patriarchate of Jerusalem MS 1000, Commentary on the Breviary (*Meknut'wn žamakargut'ean*) of Movsēs Erznkac'i, copied in AD 1706: Abp. Norayr Pölarean (Bogharian), *Mayr C'uc'ak Jeragrac' Srboc' Yakobean'*, Vol. 3, Jerusalem: St. James' Press, 1968, p. 619.
- 19: Hebrew *Brillenbuchstaben*, from Abraham de Balmis, *Grammatica hebraea*, Venice, 1523, in H.A. Winkler, *Siegel und Charaktere in der muhammedanischen Zauberei*, Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients, Heft VII, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1930, p. 166.
- 20: Armenian MS with "eyeglass" symbols: Armenian Mxit'arist monastery of S. Lazzaro, Venice, MS 3042, AD 1779, a paper talismanic scroll (*hmayi*): from Frédéric Feydit, *Amulettes de l'Arménie Chrétienne*, Venice: S. Lazzaro, 1986, fig. 80.
- 21: NAASR MS, p. 337.
- 22: NAASR MS, p. 491.
- 23: NAASR MS, p. 129.
- 24: NAASR MS, p. 398.
- 25: NAASR MS, p. 160.

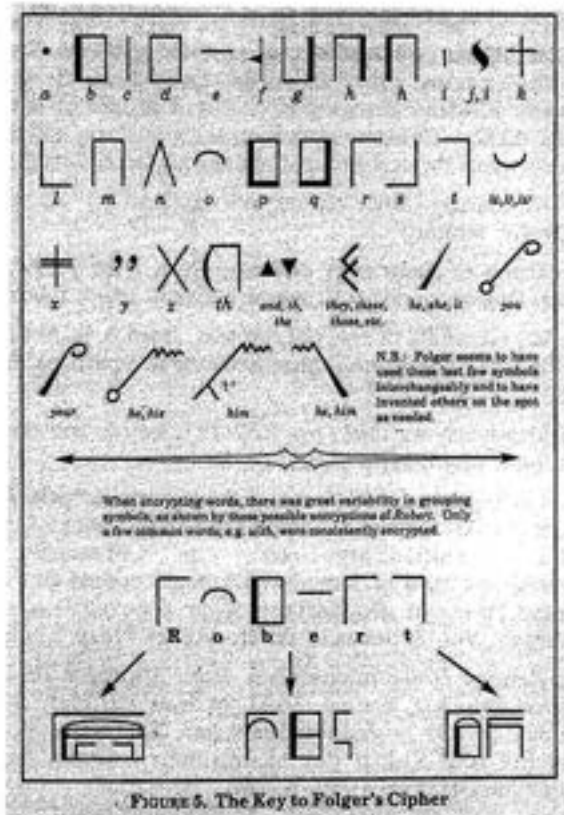


Plate 1

Page 21 of the Folger Manuscript

1 for inconsistent because I our habits such men and such rules or doctrines as there affected by are to be
2 found and it is believed that everyone who
3 believes in it [this] task as a job and if will seek and find [them]
4 is our open in a proper [stage] to them and that we should be reminded of the
5 duty that of them
6 ing and practicing the excellent precepts it contains and if we as far as we can
7 unapologetically
8 combine both the character of [those] who gave the precepts and the influences
9 [they] have had upon society
10 and will have upon it if we examine the great ends and views of the doctrines here written and thus become
11 acquainted with [this] volume and that
12 experience that [this] volume is an inestimable treasure and should be viewed as such by all good men it is in
13 fact the book that
14 contains the rules of the founding fathers and [this] whole duty
15 [this] volume is of great antiquity and splendid monuments of the ancient laws [discovered] and nations who
16 prospered the countries where [these] things were written
17 have vanished or are scattered over the face of the earth [their] former
18 yet the book survives and the principles of order
19 and wisdom and unexcelled going with just
20 with justice
21 efforts of [these] genius to bring [this]
22 volume into connection
23 taken in view it stands deservedly
24 considering the character of the
25 written for [this] vol
26 ing [the] doctrines contained in [this] volume and observing [their] union with truth and [their] beneficial
27 influence upon society and upon individuals thinking upon the great antiquity of [these]
28 writings and the many revolutions which [they] have survived and [their] complete victory over the efforts of
29 enemies [they] are with continually increasing in the estimation of the world at large
30 of the friends of good order and of truth [there] it can be said even if [there] were no other reasons for so
31 saying that [this] volume is not to be neglected but
32 as the country that it ought to be examined and should be made the subject of our attention and study and see
33 how earnest it is in philosophy how interesting the history how
34 sublime and beautiful the poetry how acceptable the doctrines of religion and morality contained in [this]
35 volume if it is cultivated in every point of view to engage our attention and if attended to the truths it con-
36 tains make men better wiser and happier and the benefits arising from [these] sacred truths are not limited to
37 the period of human life [they] point out forward to the grave as the boundary of our
38 existence in the place where man shall come to be up the thick gloom of death is dispelled by a divine truth a ray
39 of sacred light makes visible to the eye of faith a state
40 of existence beyond the grave a state of eternal life as the approach of which almost has for it faith is all eternity
41 for it is dependent upon divine mercy for no man can claim a place [there] but by indeed is [there] man with his
42 strong for [these] [this] positions and to lay aside
43 [this] precepts and that is fitted for the task of the [the] and studying and reciting
44 the designs and rules
45 of the [the] by contemplating upon the image of the pillar of beauty [the] may have
46 obtained [this] own weakness
47 and [the] best inability to make [this] work according to the pattern given [them] by
48 the [the] if [the] is sensible of his own incapacity and imperfections

pieces of sheets are declare the languages the book
was written in are dead
of the good precepts [this] volume contains have
taught with solemnity
they fully as called with unaltered learning
with every
but [they] have been engaged in a foolish
work all [their] pains have been
more in higher estimation than ever [the]
value and finding [them] to be gold
even in reality to know

Plate 2



Plate 3



Plate 4



Plate 5



Plate 6

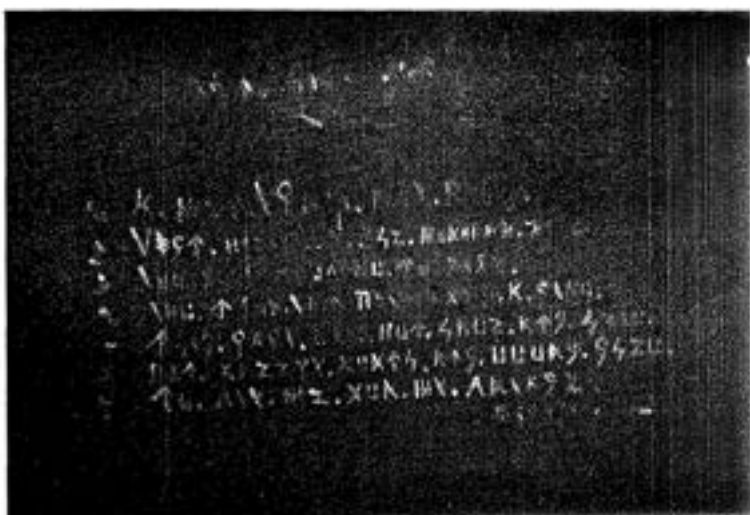
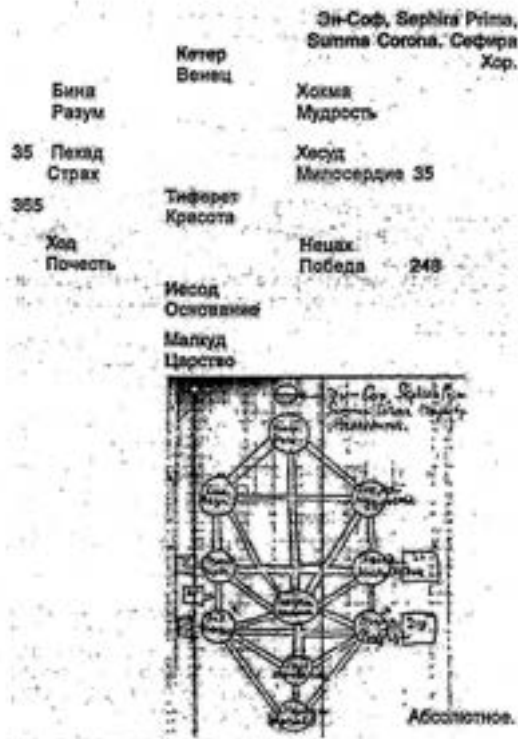


Plate 7



Монограмма. Осирия,
египетский крест и другие знаки
Бумага, тушь.

Plate 9



Читал прошлую пятницу, т.е. 18 марта, в Доме Печати на собрании Лиги. Прочел много. Там же встретил Ваньку Приблудного. Он уже давно не пишет стихов. Занимался спортом. Читает он теперь значительно хуже: утерял свою неунычность.

Plate 10

а	Л	к	т	х	и
б	о, g	я	v, —, з	ц	у
в	з, з	м	≡, т, а	ч	л
г	г, г, г	н	≡, з, у, з	ш	я
д	б, о, а	о	~, р	щ	я
е	с, *	п	о	ъ	т(?)
ё	е	р	л, з	ы	Е, т, б, т, в
ж	ж, у	с	з, +, в	б	л, д
з	з	т	х, з, а	э	л, л, —
и	г, —, х, в	у	о	ю	о
й	у, у	ф	з, д	я	т, у, б

а также знаков препинания: точка (., над строкой), запятая (Л или V, над строкой), знак восклицания (!), знак вопроса (?), тире (—), кавычки (").

Plate 12

The Golden Dawn Cipher Manuscript was written in a cipher alphabet or code which was used by Alchemists to conceal their secrets. The key to decoding the Cipher Manuscript was printed in Abbot Johann Trithemius' book, *Polygraphiae et Universellae Escriurae Cabalistique*. Paris, 1561.

a	⊙	g	⊕	n	⊖	t	⊗
b	⊕	h	⊙	o	⊕	u	⊗
c	⊙	i	⊕	p	⊙	x	⊗
d	⊕	k	⊙	q	⊕	y	⊗
e	⊙	l	⊕	r	⊙	z	⊗
f	⊕	m	⊙	s	⊕	&	⊗

The Key to the Golden Dawn Cipher Alphabet

In the cipher alphabet, letter 'I' can also be 'J' and letter 'U' can be 'V' or 'W.' In the Cipher Manuscript Kenneth Mackenzie created a new cipher letter for 'W' and modified the cipher letter for 'Y.' The new cipher letters are:

w y

Additional Cipher Letters Used in the Cipher Manuscript

Plate 13

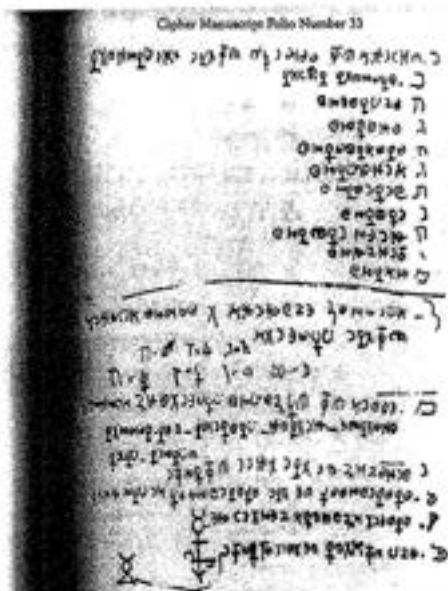


Plate 14

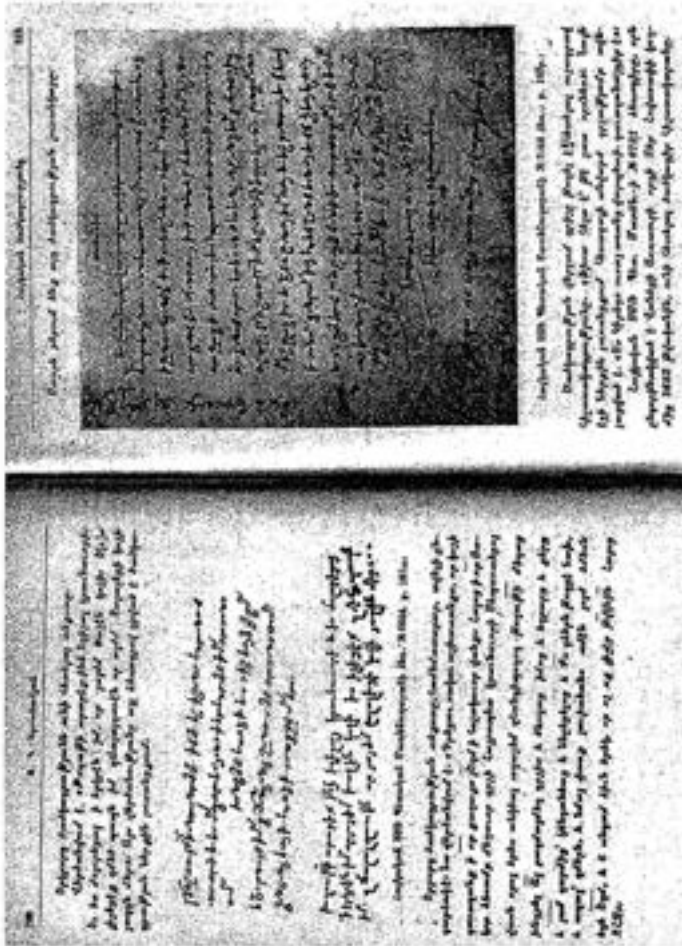


Plate 16

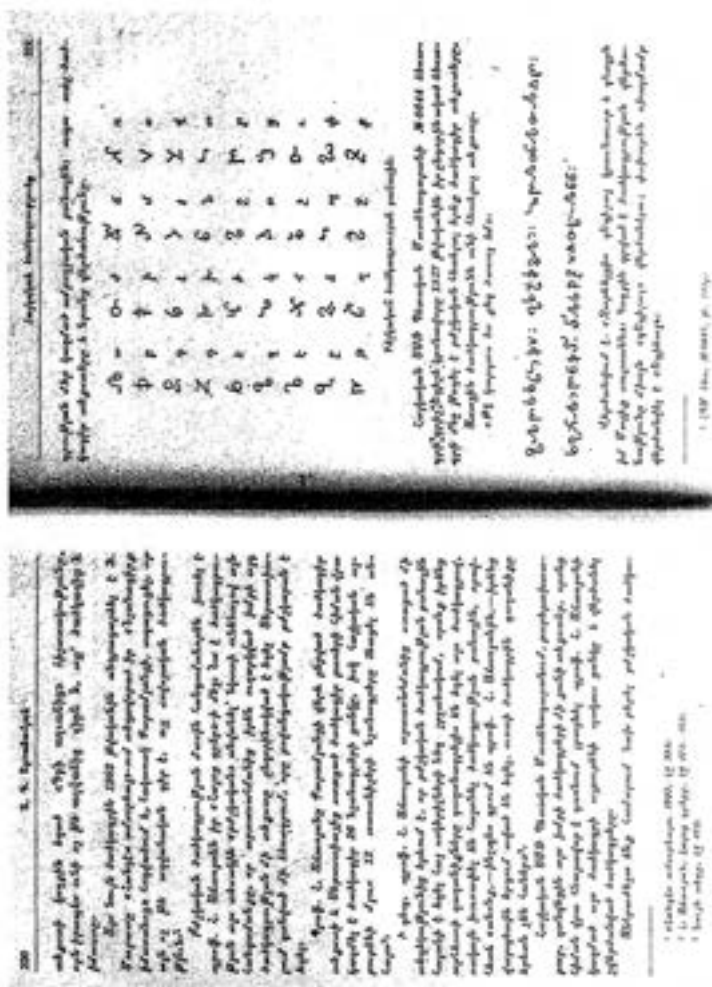
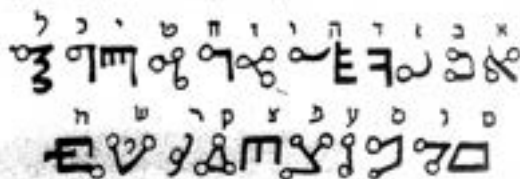


Plate 17



Plate 18

Schon auf einem jüdischen Amulett des zweiten oder dritten nachchristlichen Jahrhunderts aus Palästina finden wir Brillenbuchstaben²⁾. Sicher haben auch die Juden die Brillenbuchstaben im Laufe des folgenden Jahrtausends weiter in Zaubersachen verwendet. In dem mittelalterlichen Zauberbuche *Raziel* erscheinen sie zahlreich, auch im „Schwert des Moses“ begegnen sie³⁾. Sogar eine Erinnerung an die babylonische Herkunft der Brillenbuchstaben ist möglicherweise durch das ganze Mittelalter hindurch bewahrt worden. ABRAHAM DE BALMIS gibt in seiner *Grammatica hebraea*, Venedig 1523, folgendes Alphabet⁴⁾:



und bezeichnet es als *כַּתְּבֵי מֶסוֹפּוֹטָמְיָה* „mesopotamische (!) Schrift“. Sein Alphabet ist um so bemerkenswerter, als einige der Zeichen (כ, ה, ו, ז, פ) an althebräische Charaktere erinnern. Eben dieses Alphabet hat seit dem 17. Jahrhundert in Amuletten der Anhänger Sabbatai Sewis Verwendung gefunden⁵⁾.

Wahrscheinlich haben die Araber auch bei den Juden Brillenbuchstaben kennen gelernt, ihre Hauptquelle waren indes die Kopten. Seit dem Beginn des Studiums hebräischer Schriften in der Renaissancezeit tauchen auch in den Werken abendländischer Magier — etwa CORNELIUS AGRIPPA'S VON NETTESHEIM — neben anderen Elementen jüdischer Geheimwissenschaft die Brillenbuchstaben, *characteres*,

Plate 19

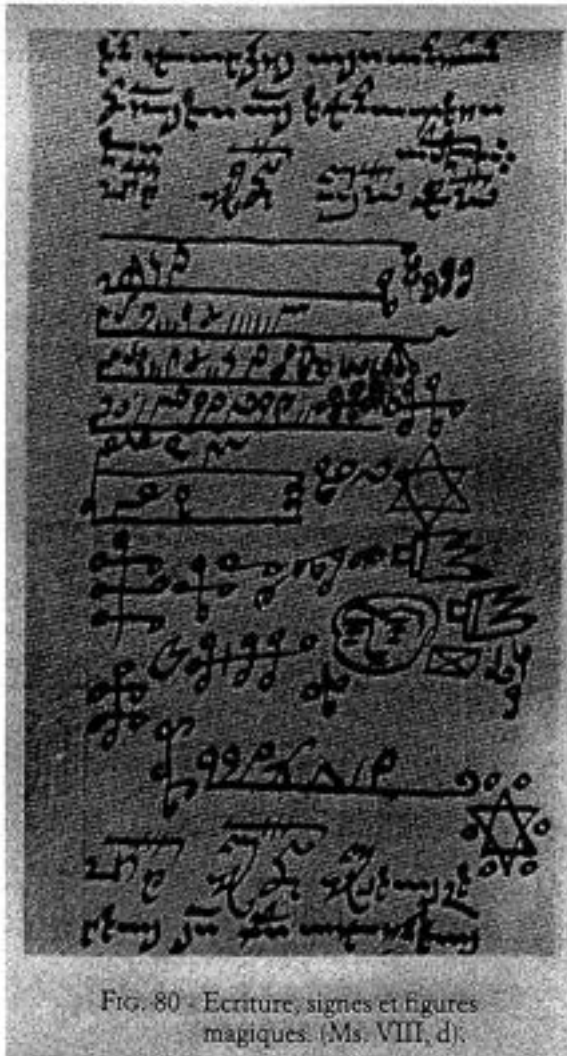


Plate 20

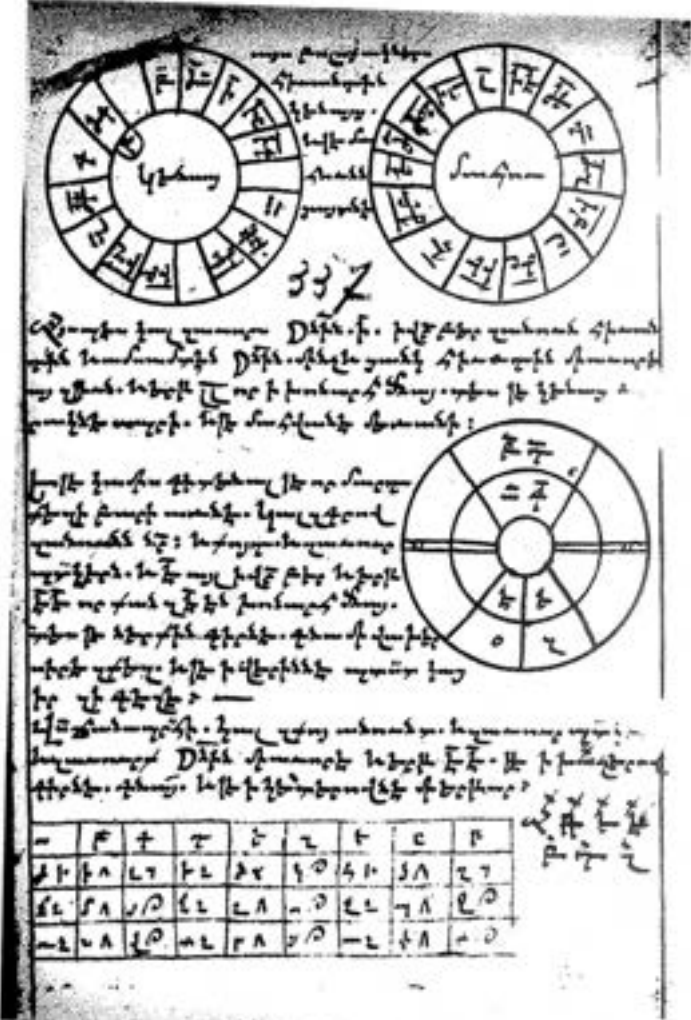


Plate 21



Plate 22

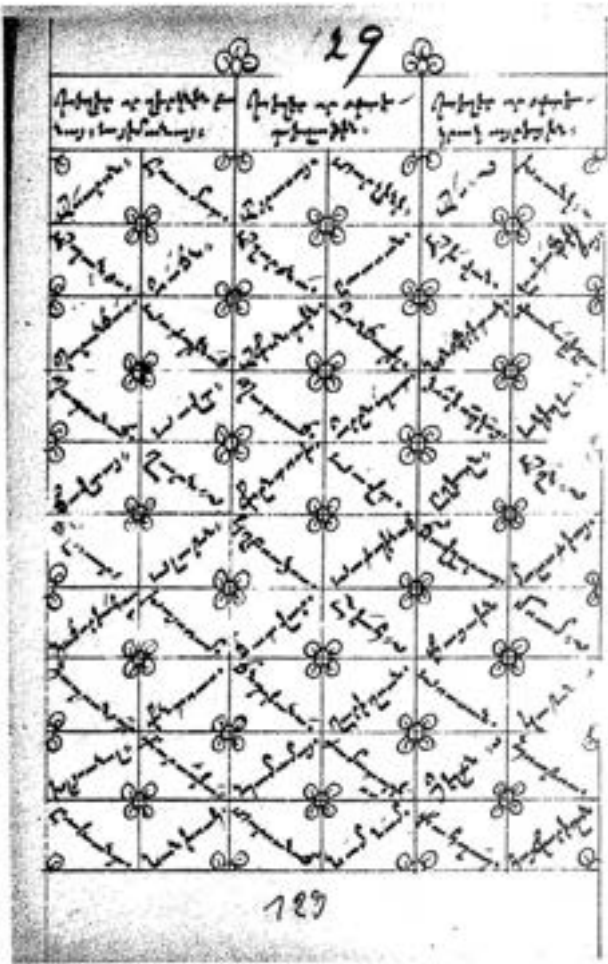


Plate 23

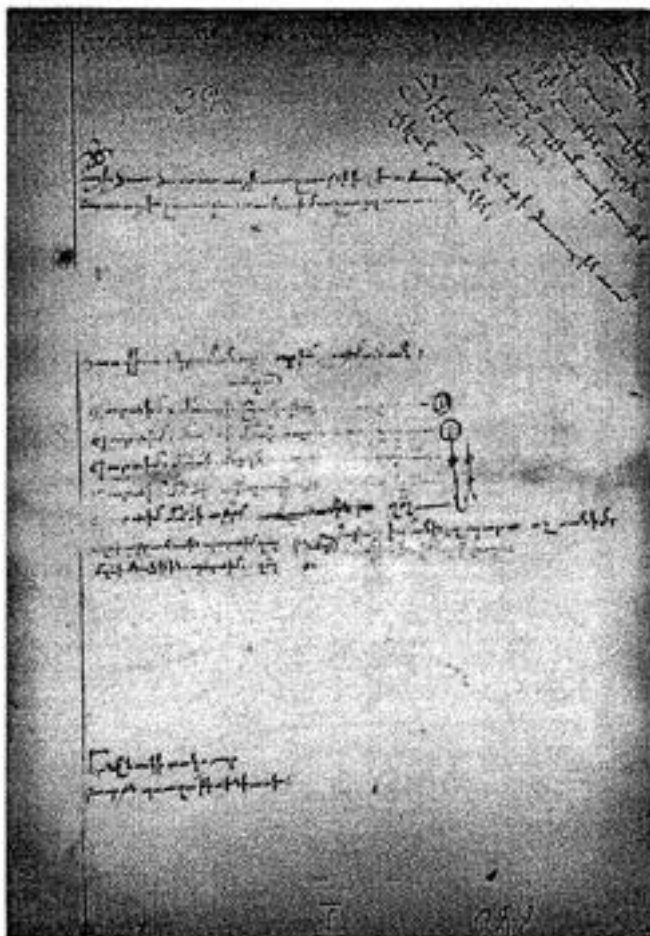


Plate 24

AN ARMENIAN MAGICO-MEDICAL MANUSCRIPT (BZHSHKARAN) IN THE NAASR COLLECTION

JAMES R. RUSSELL

“Un document est un témoin; comme la plupart des témoins, il ne parle guère que lorsqu’on l’interroge.” (“A document is a witness; like most witnesses it barely says a word until it is questioned.”)

— Marc Bloch, “Pour un histoire comparée des sociétés européennes,” *Mélanges historiques* I, Paris, 1969, 16-40, 20.

1.

In the summer of 2009, Dr. Levon Boyajian of New Jersey, born in 1929 in Washington Heights, a neighborhood in upper Manhattan, New York City, donated several old and rare Armenian books, including a manuscript, to the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research (NAASR), in Belmont, MA.¹ They were brought to the U.S. shortly after his birth by his maternal grandfather, Levon Nazarian, who was the youngest of three brothers and a native of Chemishgezek. The family had moved in Nazarian’s childhood from western Armenia to Aleppo, Syria, where he grew up: he emigrated to New York in 1930, worked as a confectioner to help support the family during the hard times of the Great Depression, and died three years later. The books were part of a larger collection, most of which Mr. Nazarian donated to libraries in the new republic of Soviet Armenia when he left Syria. He had run an inn—described as a *khan* or *caravansarai*—where he sheltered relatives left destitute in the wake of the Armenian Genocide. His best friend had been a rebel fighter from Zeitun, where Armenians had defended themselves against the depredations and extortions of the Ottoman rulers and their Kurdish enforcers; and he always maintained an interest in progressive politics.

Grandfather Nazarian’s wide-ranging interests embraced also the occult. This is not surprising, considering that esotericism challenges the bounds of conventional belief about the order of the universe much as political radicalism questions the smug assumptions of the prevailing social order. And Dr. Boyajian said he had compiled a notebook containing esoteric symbols.

¹ A version of the first part of this study was published as “Collection of Books Donated to NAASR by Dr. Levon Boyajian” in the *NAASR Newsletter*, Belmont, MA, Fall-Winter 2009-2010, pp. 1-3.

Dr. Boyajian when we last corresponded was unaware of its whereabouts, even whether it was still extant. He passed away in 2010; and the notebook has turned up in a collection of the family's Armenian books donated to the library of NAASR by his son. Mr. Nazarian was a well educated and civilized man: he raised his daughter Verkin, the woman who was to be Dr. Boyajian's mother, in an environment of comfort, enlightenment, and respect. She came to America in 1923. Dr. Boyajian's father Apkar was born in Chemishgezdek in 1890 and came to the US before the outbreak of World War I. His was the itinerary of many Armenian immigrants: he worked in a New England textile mill, then as a photoengraver in New York City.

The ancient town of Chemishgezdek (Armenian *Ch'mshkatsag*), home of the Byzantine emperor John Tzimiskes, is NNE of Malatya, SE of Akn, and NNW of Kharpert; Aleppo is SSW, twice the distance of Malatya. The city is in the Dersim (now renamed Tunceli by the Turkish state) region of Western Armenia, a stronghold of the Zaza people. These are speakers of the dialect of Dailam in northern Iran and call their speech *dilmi*; but they are now identified culturally and politically with the Kurds. Legend has it that Dersim got its name from Der Simon, an Armenian priest who accepted the Alevi Shi'a sect of Islam to save his flock, during the Jalali uprisings of the 17th century that convulsed all of Anatolia. There were close ties between the Armenians and Zazas of the region, which is still in sporadic rebellion against Turkish control. The history of the town² mentions both the Boyajian and Nazarian families, whose children united in wedlock. Others there were bibliophiles: Harut'iun Ajemian, a priest from the nearby village of Sisna, "died a very old man and left many manuscripts".³

Dr. Boyajian's family memoir, *Hayots Badeevuh* [i.e., *Hayots' pative*, (Armenian honor)]: *Reminiscences of Armenian Life in New York City* (Reading, UK: Taderon, 2004), provides a vivid picture of Armenian life in uptown Manhattan in the years of the Great Depression. Times were hard, but the photoengravers' union to which his father belonged helped struggling members of its brotherhood and gave workers a sense of dignity. In their spare time, men sat around debating politics on the sidewalk of Wadsworth Ave., or at coffee houses and clubs, and played *tavlu* (backgammon). Friends visited each other's homes back and forth, and there was always a *jezve*—a pot of Turkish coffee—on the stove. Toasts were offered in homemade *oghi* (the anisette liqueur also called *arak* or *raki*). The center of social life was, thus, the family; and the center of communal life was the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Holy Cross Church of Armenia on West 187th St., between St. Nicholas and Wadsworth Avenues, sponsored an annual picnic in June and a bazaar in November; so church events and family life, shared meals, picnics, and the cultural-social-national luncheon-dinner-reception called the *hantes*

² Haykazn G. Ghazarean, *Patmagirk' Ch'mshkatsagi* (Beirut: Hamazgayin, 1971), p. 575.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 502.

(Arm. *handes*, “gathering, occasion, encounter”) held the community together and determined the rhythm and pattern of life outside the workplace. Other outings might include breakfast at the Horn & Hardart automat on 181st St. on Saturday after the cashing of Dad’s paycheck. The neighborhood had a half dozen Armenian groceries;⁴ and “Doc” Cohen, the local pharmacist, had the young Levon write out for him in English transliteration the Armenian of the six hundred words that, according to *The New York Times*, were basic to any language. There were many single men in the community who had either never married, or who had lost their families in the Genocide; and their fellow Armenians took care of them.

The life that Levon Boyajian recalled is not very different from that of other ethnic enclaves in New York then. This writer’s mother grew up in Bensonhurst, an Italian and Jewish neighborhood of Brooklyn. In the years of the Great Depression, a nickel or dime was a treat went a long way on a weekend trip to the automat, or the movies, or even Manhattan. Home and family were the anchor of existence, and, as with the Armenians, the familiar foods of the old country gave people a sense of stability and warmth in a frightening world. My grandmother Marguerite cooked the Moroccan Sabbath stew called *adafina*, baked *kadayif*, and served guests little cups of Turkish coffee with homemade candied orange peel. By shopping for groceries wholesale and finding chicken wings and necks cheap, and God knows what other strategies, Grandma managed to put food on the table every night for parents, grandparents, four daughters, several sisters, their families, and friends. The hard *roskas* and *fijuelas* I remember from my childhood were made with recipes brought to Salonica from the Spain of Ferdinand, Isabella, and the Inquisition five centuries earlier. During Prohibition my grandfather made wine and *raki* at home; and when I was a boy Grandma entertained me and my cousins with tales of Djuha, the crafty dervish Hoca Nasrettin know so well to Armenians, too. And though I was too young to have heard him, Uncle Jack played the *oud*. As for the occult, my great grandmother Rachel, whose nickname was Manache, used to offer the blood of a black cock to the dead at midnight when somebody was ill. I don’t know the other aspects of her witchcraft; but she was an austere and bony woman of immense power who got around on a great staff till she passed at ninety six, having foretold her own death to the day. She loved me and used to say to me when I was little *Camina, pasha!* “Walk, O king!” in Ladino. I inherited her ring of twined snakes with diamond and ruby eyes. The family had escaped from the famine and great fire of 1917 in Greece, and from the filth and ignorance of Morocco: America, despite the Depression, still meant freedom, goodness, and opportunity in those days. President Franklin Delano Roosevelt and New York Mayor Fiorello La Guardia enjoyed the status of living saints.

⁴ In my teenage years, around 1970-71, only one was left, the *Hay Nparavachar*, on St. Nicholas Ave. The neighborhood is now largely Dominican.

I first met Dr. Boyajian when we worked together on the organizing committee of a two-day conference on the *sequelae* of trauma—the experiences of children of Genocide survivors—that was held at the Armenian Diocese in New York in April 1980. He was then a vigorous man of middle years, a respected physician and psychiatrist, a pillar of the Church, and very friendly and forthright. I was twenty-six, and coordinating cultural affairs for the Diocese was my first job. It was a good job—His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian and our Director, Syraun Palvetzian, treated me with boundless kindness and courtesy, and the Diocesan staff was a supportive, hard-working, fun family. The conference, which touched upon the Holocaust and Cambodia as well as the Armenian Genocide, was attended by hundreds; and the proceedings, with Levon's study of the sequelae of genocidal trauma, was prepared for publication. It remains still in manuscript, though, and is now in the NAASR archives. Levon and I had a lot in common, for I grew up in Washington Heights, too; and when I interviewed him a few months before his passing we discovered that there were more than a few memories of the old neighborhood we shared and treasured: listening to the Texaco broadcast of the Metropolitan Opera on Saturday afternoons on WQXR through every radio in every window uninterruptedly as we walked down the street, not missing a note. I remember the wonderful *hantes* in the hall below Holy Cross, where my Armenian teacher, Vart Tarpinian, taught Sunday school. There was a feast of salad, pilaf and roast beef, ice cream and coffee, then impressively intoned prayers and flowery speeches and songs with a lady of a certain age on the piano playing awfully well and dances by kids in lovely costumes and poems, and a lot of loud socializing and good cheer. In mid-afternoon you would stagger out of Haik Kavookjian hall with the strong conviction, Armenia lives! When I was young, Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan, a great scholar, lived in the parish house attached to the church; and Levon remembered Fr. Yeghishe Simonian, who served from 1935 to 1965: he was a survivor of the burning and massacre of Smyrna, as was Abp. Leon Tourian, whose assassination in the church by leaders of the New York chapter of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (the Tashnag or Dashnak party) in December 1933 created a rift in the community that lasted for generations and whose echo is still felt.⁵ Indeed the echoes of the grisly crime reached far

⁵ Marjorie Housepian Dobkin, author of the groundbreaking historical masterpiece *Smyrna 1922: The Destruction of a City* (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1988), about the Turkish massacre and destruction of a great and ancient city, published a memoir of her own Armenian-American childhood in New York, *A Houseful of Love* (New York: Random House, 1957), that became a bestseller and was serialized in *Reader's Digest*. Although overly sentimental and sanitized, in my view, the book presents a faithful picture similar to Boyajian's. Marge is the mother of my old friend and Columbia classmate Stephen Andrew Johnson of New York, who told me she answered the phone the day of Abp. Tourian's murder: her family lived a few minutes away from Holy Cross, and her father, a physician

beyond the confines of the Armenian community: in his first novel *And The Hippos Were Boiled In Their Tanks*, a *roman à clef* about a murder within the social circle of the nascent Beat movement in the mid-1940's, William S. Burroughs named one of his fictionalized characters Tourian. The very name, after a decade, still evoked the horror of murder.

Washington Heights was not just a big Armenian neighborhood—my teacher, Fr. Krikor Maksoudian, remembered the pun Washington *Hayots'*, “of the Armenians”—but a center of arts and learning. The scholar and translator of Persian poetry, Mihrdat Tiryakian, whose translation of *dastans* from the *Shah-name* of Ferdosi was published in 1951, lived in the neighborhood—he followed in the path of his father Harut'iun, whose Armenian translation of sections of the same epic was printed in New York in 1909. The graphic designer Minas Minasian, who died in 1981, born in the village of Chengiler near Nicomedia, lived on Pinehurst Avenue. His Armenian typefaces and designs defined the poster, periodical, and book arts of the American Armenian community for decades. Harout'iun Hazarian, who lived on Ft. Washington Avenue and 170th Street, died at the same time. He had devoted his considerable wealth to buying Armenian manuscripts and donating them to the Matenadaran in Erevan, and to leading the Gesaria (Caesarea of Cappadocia, Kayseri) Compatriotic Union. By the 1970's, the neighborhood had become dangerous, the children went away to college, and most families moved to the suburbs—to Fort Lee in New Jersey, or Westchester in New York.⁶

The 1930's saw not only the great schism in the Armenian community, which began at the little parish church in Washington Heights, but also the rise of fascism overseas and the eclipse of the Soviet Union by Stalinist tyranny. The convulsions beyond the sea affected Armenian-Americans. Levon averred that widespread anti-Semitism in the Armenian community sometimes precluded sympathy for the Jews in Nazi Germany, but this was by no means a majority sentiment and one member of the community reacted quite differently indeed. Avedis Derounian, a Genocide survivor growing up in Washington Heights, witnessed Abp. Tourian's horrible murder in the church and perceived a connection between the Armenian Genocide, that crime, and the fascist movements gaining strength in Europe and here. Using the *nom de plume* John Roy Carlson, he wrote a bestseller, *Under Cover*, about fascist organizations in America. His articles in *Fortune* on the subject spurred Congress to form the House Un-American Activities Committee. After the war, Derounian traveled to the Middle East to cover the Israel War of Independence and published with Knopf in New York a few years later

who had served as a medical relief volunteer in Armenia in World War I, attended the Primate, who died in the parish house of his wounds shortly after the attack.

⁶ See James R. Russell, “The Calligrapher of Washington Hayotz,” *Ararat Quarterly* (New York, Autumn 1981), pp. 24-26.

From Cairo to Damascus, in which he detailed the transplantation of Nazism into the Islamic world and presciently argued that Islamic political fanaticism would prove to be a far deadlier and longer-lasting threat to freedom than Communism. And meanwhile, as the world surged and darkened and ignorant armies clashed by night and the Armenians of New York worked and ate and prayed and cooked and raised their children, the books waited...

Mr. Nazarian's books were kept with respect in a cabinet, and the family had a Bible and a *Narek* (that is, the *Book of Lamentations* of the tenth-century St. Grigor Narekats'i, a cycle of 95 mystical prayers), as most Christian Armenian homes did. It would appear from the notations that Mr. Nazarian read his books carefully. The seven vowels of Armenian were the subject of a magical text, the *Eot'nagreank'*, or "(Book of) the seven letters"; and perhaps Mr. Nazarian's interests in esoterica led him to the only manuscript in the initial collection donated by Dr. Boyajian, a seventeenth-century miscellany that contains two grammatical treatises. One notes that the probable origin of the term "grimoire", the standard word for a manual of magic, is French *grammaire*, "grammar"! The manuscript contains also Aristotle's letter to Alexander; and this, too, has magical overtones; for their fictional correspondence, which includes advice on the preparation of talismans, is the matter of the magical book known in the West as *Secretum secretorum*, "The Secret of Secrets." The occult notebook of Mr. Nazarian was donated posthumously to NAASR, as noted above, by his son. But the principal books donated by Dr. Boyajian shortly before his death are these:

a. A manuscript on paper of roughly octavo size, containing texts in several hands. The first, with title in purple and red and text in black, is, "Definition of Grammar: Grammar is an art comprised of speech and writing and its parts are four: letter, syllable, word, saying..." in an attenuated notary, Arm. *notrgir*, of the early 17th century, concluding with an undated colophon, "Remember this sinner in Christ." The next text is in a considerably cruder semi-cursive *sheghagir* hand of the 17th century: "Grammar is a skill, those matters of the poets and of oft repeated utterances, and its parts are six: first, writing..." There follows in a neater, mixed *notrgir* and *sheghagir* of the same period, "The letter of Aristotle the Philosopher to king Alexander. History concerning the world [*ashkharhi* for *ashkharhi*]. Alexander often seemed to me to be something truly divine..."

The book is completed in this same hand but with less space between the words, and concludes with a colophon: "And now God, as the saying of the ancients goes, is the beginning and the end. And, having within Him all beings, He completes their paths in a straight way, causing them to follow the various kinds of their natures. Falling short of justice they are punished by God; and likewise whoever is favored will be blessed with His grace. Eternal glory, Amen. This was written in the Armenian year 1096 in the month of

May, at a time when one Sultan Epram [Ibrahim] reigned, who fought a war against the Cretans and all the land of the Ottomans endured great suffering. And all the more so this city of Halap [Aleppo], for the Pasha was particularly lawless. They called him by the name Tali Husen [i.e., *dali*, Mod. Tk. *delli*, Huseyn, "Crazy Hussein", a typical Jalali sobriquet]. If only God might free all faithful Christians from the hands of these people by the intercession of the Holy Mother of God, Amen." There follows in Arabic language and script: *Al-faqir qasis [keshish?] Markar*. "The poor man, the *priest Markar."

The surface leaves of the cartonnage from which the hard cover was made were manufactured using an older MS in very fine *bolorgir* script of a type found in Cilician MSS of the early 14th century; but as the thin, polished paper feels to me more recent, I am inclined to date it to the 17th century or not much earlier. The text has a superscription in modern cursive Armenian, perhaps belonging to Mr. Nazarian: "Menologium, martyrology of our holy father Gregory the Armenian of the family of the Illuminator and a most select martyr. History." The book bears two stamp seals, one of which seems to have the Armenian name Kirakos; and on the flyleaf in purple ink is this note in the same flowery hand as the superscription on the cartonnage: "I took (this) from Brutean (the potter?) Kir[a]kos in the monastery of St. Sargis, abbot of the Armenians, 1882 February 20 *yitisisia* (in Edessa?) *Arewin* [?]." The text of the *Menologium*, which is evidently the martyrdom of the Apostle Bartholomew, is as follows: "... who went after him. Take those deceivers there outside. And the executioners went... apostles... took Philip and Bartholomew, and Mary, and dragged them outside. And when the tyrant beheld them he began to gnash his teeth, and said, Pull away those witches, who are leading astray many women and virgins. And they said, We are worshippers of God. And he commanded.../ ... your deeds. And let go your life full of pain. And abandon your fleeting joys. For it passes like a shadow. See that which endures, and forget these transient things. And give up your savage ways, that is, the deeds of foulness, that..." And at the other end, "She went outside and saw them. She made bold [*hamardzets'aw* for *hamardzakets'aw*] before them all and said, I am a Hebrew and the daughter of a Hebrew [*ebraets'o* for *ebrajets'woy*]. Speak to me in the speech of my fathers. For I have listened before to your preaching and was healed of my disease. And now I glorify and bow down to the beneficence of your God even in this distant land, for the precious stone of one's own that the great dragon swallowed. But Lord, make alive the true stone..." Next page, "... they led astray the multitudes. For after that they went in to him. This city was full of useless people. The slew also the serpents, the sons of the viper, who were our gods [i.e., false gods, Arm. *atsk'* with a *patiw* below the abbreviation, as is done with the name of Satan]. They destroyed our temple and our worship perished. Our table, too, was ruined, and no longer do we find wine to place before us. For having drunk of the..."

b. A printed *Sharaknots'* (Hymnal) illustrated with woodcuts, as of Adam and Eve deceived by the serpent (p. 130). Following the table of contents on p. 240, the endpaper contains a fragmentary inscription, "May there arrive.../ Khumkhabu [Kum kapu in Constantinople, site of the Armenian Patriarchate]/ Khan and/ Lord Grigor/ *T(i)r(a)ts'(o)w* [a cleric without ordination]..." Following p. 716, *Es em ch'imish/ kezakts'i/ terats'u/ arut'[iw?]n/ girets'i/ t'vin* "I, the *tirats'u* Harut'iun of Chimishkezek wrote this in the year..." In pencil there follow the numbers, in Arabic:

1928
1096
 832

1096 is the Armenian date of the MS described above, to which one adds 551 to obtain the date *Anno Domini*; but it would seem Mr. Nazarian subtracted it from AD 1928—two years before his departure for the US from Aleppo—in what appears to have been a misguided attempt to ascertain when the colophon was written.

c. *P'elik's ew Pawlinē kam Zhuray leṛan taki gerezmanē* (Felix and Pauline or, the tomb below Mt. Jura(, translated from Italian (into Western Armenian) by Grigor T'orosean (Paris, 1859). It is inscribed, *Ar nazeli or. Zmrukht Nazarean, i nshan buṛn zgats'mants' nuirē sirakarot khosets'ealn iwr V. M. K'iwrk'chean*, "V.M. Kurkjian, her intended, pining for love, offers this in token of his ardent feelings to the charming Miss Zmrukht Nazarian" with the date 1887 March 2, Constantinople. Dr. Boyajian does not know who the swain and his lady were; though perhaps Ms. Nazarian was a relative. The novel was written by Pierre Blanchard (1772-1856). Ms. Shushan Teager of Belmont, MA, a native of Beirut whose family were from Aintab, has identified the ardent swain as none other than Vahan M. Kurkjian, the author of *A History of Armenia*, *Aspet Liparit*, and other books. The young lady, whose family settled on the form Nazaretian of their surname, was first cousin to Ms. Teager's grandmother, Zarman Nazaretian. The Nazaretians settled in New York City.

d. A collection of miscellaneous political tracts bound together:

1. *Sots'ializmē ew sots'ialakan sharzhumē 19-rd darum* (Socialism and the socialist movement in the 19th century), translated from (Werner Sombart's study in) German and published by the Armenian students of Geneva, press of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, 1898, with the epigraph *Och'inch' ch'em arajarkum, Och'inch' ch'em ent'adrum, patmum em* (I propose nothing, and I suppose nothing: I merely relate).

2. John Stuart Mill, *Azatur'ean masin* (On Liberty), translated from the Russian translation, with a brief account of Mill's life (Moscow: Herbek Press, 1898).

3. S.S. Zak, *Hogh hew kapitalizm* (Land and Capitalism), translated from Russian (Tiflis, 1907).

4. Yovhannes Kh. Nazarean, *Krt'akan veratsnut'iwn* (The Renaissance in Education) (Constantinople, 1909).

5. H. T'. Bokl (Buckle), *Angliayi k'aghak'akrt'ut'ean patmut'iwnē* (The History of the Civilization of England) (Tiflis, 1909).

The latter miscellany suggests that Mr. Nazarian was interested in economic history and in progressive politics in particular. This was not at all uncommon: Karl Marx, in a preface to a late edition of his *Communist Manifesto*, mentioned two Armenian translations of his work that he had not seen since they had been confiscated by the Ottoman police. Both Western and Eastern Armenian printed versions of the Manifesto are known; and Armenian socialist and revolutionary activity is coextensive with that of the Russians themselves. In the US, especially during the 1930's when so many people were out of work, the *Hnch'ak* party ("Bell", named after Alexander Herzen's *Kolokol*) and the Communist *Harajdimakan* (Progressive) league were active in calling for reform or even overthrow of the capitalist system. There were even Armenian translations of Trotsky's tracts of the Fourth International published in New York. And when the American Lincoln Battalion fought with the International Brigades against fascism in the Spanish Civil War, one of several Armenian Americans who died in battle was Ashod Antreassian on New York. His brother named the Ashod Press, which served the Armenian Diocese for decades, after the fallen hero.

So as the fledgling Armenian-American community weathered the storms of political assassination and economic depression while building its thriving, vital culture in New York City, a cabinet in an apartment held a manuscript whose scribe evokes the cataclysmic events of the Jalali uprisings of the 1600's, decades before New York received its present name. A printed hymnal records its acquisition by a man of Chemishkezek from a lay priest. A romantic novel gives a brief insight into a romantic engagement in late 19th-century Constantinople. The latest text in a collection of political studies and tracts is bound in 1909—the terminus date for the miscellany, i.e., in the turbulent period of revolution in Russia, Iran, and Ottoman Turkey and the portentous year of the Adana massacres, scarcely half a decade away from the holocaust that was to destroy the millennial life of the Armenians in most of

their homeland and scatter the survivors across the globe, as far as upper Manhattan and New England.

For decades, the books brought to the shores of the New World from Aleppo were kept carefully as life roiled around them. Men worked, women cooked and brewed coffee, there was laughter and conversation, and sorrow and longing. Children played, grew up, studied and became professionals, Americans. The neighborhood changed and most of the Armenians moved away. The Holy Cross Church of Armenia still stands, but most of its parishioners come to Sunday services by car from suburban homes. And as for the grocery stores, the large Sunday crowds, the inviting smells—all that belongs to the past. Though the bloodstained vestments of Abp. Tourian are still stored near his tomb in the church, and the dark tale of his grisly murder still can shock one, it is swiftly fading away to ancient history now, and as the Soviet era itself recedes into memory and an independent Armenia confronts new challenges, the wounds of old political feuds within the community are healing. But the old Armenian books, like folded flowers waiting through the night for dawn, waited patiently on their shelves. And now the books open, and speak to us again.

2.

One of these is Dr. Nazarian's newly discovered notebook containing those esoteric symbols that his grandson thought was lost. Its title-page calls it *bzshshkaran*, a book of medicine or healing; but it is perhaps better described as a magico-medical miscellany. The manuscript is inscribed in a small, sturdy hardbound brown notebook, probably of late 19th or early 20th century manufacture. The pages, about 100, of which 89 are inscribed, are ruled in squares like graph paper and measure 3.8 inches (19 cm) by 4.8 inches (24 cm). There are four sections: a collection of remedies (pp. 1-49), a series of spells (pp. 50-64), a list of Psalms to be recited as magical texts for various purposes (pp. 66-73 and 81-88), a long disquisition on the medicinal and magical uses of parts of the stork (*aragil*) (pp. 74-78), and two loose inserts. The latter section, following instructions on using the liver mixed with oil to cure the possessed and keeping the wing to chase depression from one's heart, concludes with the laconic instruction to keep the "inner beak" (*znergin ktuts'n*) with one: *bavē imastnots'* (to the wise it is sufficient). *Verbum sapienti* indeed.

The phrase reminds one at once of the title *Angitats' anpet* (Useless to the ignorant), that the great fifteenth-century Armenian physician Amirdovlat' of Amasia assigned to one of his tracts. Medicine requires skill and knowledge, many of its methods and ingredients are not indeed to be disclosed to those who might foolishly or maliciously misuse them, and some of its operations seem magical still. But Amirdovlat' did not intend his craft to be esoteric; as

other compositions, *Usumn bzhshkut'ean* (The study of healing) and *Ogut bzhshkut'ean* "The usefulness of healing", demonstrate. He believed the physician's art was useful to the body as prayer was, to the soul; and closed a tract with a brief poem: *Yorzham sharzhmunk' lini ts'avots' / Ev estatsem est pitoyits' / Ev Astuats tay zaroghjut'iun est hachoyits'* "When the symptoms of pains appear / Then I provide the needed care; / And God bestows health, if it pleases Him." In his manuals for treatment, Amirdovlat' lists each disease, then its cause, its signs, its treatment (*statsum*), and the opinions of various previous Greek, Arab, Persian, and Armenian experts. The famous Mkhitar' Herats'i figures among the latter. The title *bzhshkaran* or an Arabic equivalent in Armenian, *Akhrapatin*, is fairly common in Armenian medical books, such as that of Grigoris, late fifteenth century, each chapter of whose book is called a "door" (*duṛn*), suggesting a Muslim source: Arabic *bab* or Persian *dar*. Armenian doctors were prominent in the Ottoman Empire and elsewhere, and the tradition is long: in the late 18th century, for instance, Petros K'alant'arian, born at New Julfa in Isfahan, traveled to Moscow to study medicine. His "concise" (*hamarot*) *bzhshkaran* contains sections on emetics and laxatives, fever, stomach ache, liver ailments, problems of urination and ejaculation (*sermnakat'ut'iun*), headache, cuts and wounds, skin diseases, and problems of the eyes, ears, teeth, and musculature. He frequently transcribes Latin terminology in Armenian script, and uses some Russian, too (*petrushka*, *romashka*) for herbal matters.⁷ It is easy to imagine him taking a walk in the forests outside Moscow with a Russian friend on a beautiful bygone day, learning about plants and probably picking berries and mushrooms.

So Armenian medicine and medical books as such have a long pedigree;⁸ and it is likely that the copyist of our text worked from one or more of these, adding French words where a modern source indicated them or as he himself knew them. But the manuscript has two other sections, on spells and the magical employment of Psalms. These suggest still deeper, more ancient, springs. And such a mixture of relatively modern medicine, medieval magic, and magical use of Biblical texts is actually not at all strange or surprising, any more than was the interest of the compiler of our *bzhshkaran* in these subjects. For in fact little in human culture is older than the association of magic and medicine. One of the spells in our manuscript invokes Solomon, the ancient king of Israel whom Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike regard as the greatest magician in history. Jewish tradition attributes to Solomon's authorship a book (*sefer*) or table (*tabla*) of remedies (*refu'ot*) for every

⁷ See Arak'el G. Arak'elyan, *Hay zhoghovrdi mtavor mshakuyt'i zargats'man patmut'yun*, Vol. 2 (Erevan: Haypethrat, 1964), p. 374 ff.

⁸ Hakob S. Anasyan, *Haykakan matenagitut'yun* (Armenian Bibliology), Vol. 3 (Erevan: Haykakan SSR GA Hratarakch'ut'yun, 2004), includes detailed discussions of 89 MSS and printed books on medicine, together with an extensive bibliography (to p. 75) of secondary sources on Armenian medical literature and practice.

disease. Towards the end of his life Solomon is said to have repented of his errant ways and consigned many of his writings to a great bonfire; but Hezekiah is supposed to have “concealed” the *Sefer Refu’ot*: the verb used is *ganaz*, an Iranian loan meaning “treasure” (Pers. *ganj*, Arm. *gandz*, etc.); and one recalls the derivative *geniza*, a storeroom for worn-out sacred texts. The Church Father Hippolytus cites an old tradition, repeated later and independently by Maimonides, to the effect that Hezekiah consigned the book to occultation (but did not destroy it!) because people had come to rely on it, rather than on God, for healing.⁹ Just as for centuries magicians have produced magical books purporting to be the Seal of Solomon, which probably never existed; so the original of the book with which we deal now might have purported to be a revealed text of the *Sefer refu’ot*, whose actuality is likewise doubtful. Myths are inherently impossible, though meaningful; but legends can have a plausible basis in reality. It is at least possible that the sick sought the aid of king Solomon; for since time immemorial in diverse countries people have believed that the touch of a monarch can cure such tellingly-named ailments as the skin disease called in English “the king’s evil”. From there, the claim to be able to cure all diseases is but a hubristic expansion, to which would then be attached Solomon’s reputation as the author of thousands of books.

Solomon is often identified in Iranian and Islamic lore with the primordial king Jamshid (Avestan Yima *khshaeta* “the shining”, the equivalent of the Vedic lord of the dead, Yama), to whose hubris and fall from grace Zarathustra referred enigmatically in his hymns, the *Gathas*, probably in the late second millennium B.C. In later tradition, though, it is made quite clear that Jamshid demanded men worship him as God since he could cure every disease. Though one may dispute who inspired whom in the development of the legend, the Hebrew God is often death-dealing while the Persian Ahura Mazda, an entirely benevolent being, never is. So although both divinities are healers, the source of this particular detail of the Solomonic cycle may just be Iranian. Solomon’s legendary medicine had a magical aspect, too— yet another reason for remedies and spells to rub shoulders in the Armenian *Bzhshkaran*. Josephus reports that in the presence of the Roman emperor Vespasian a Jew named Eleazar employed an incantation (Gk. *epode*), Solomon’s name, and a root (probably the famous *baaras*) prescribed by the latter, to draw demons out of possessed men. And as for the third portion of our manuscript, the list of Psalms and their magical uses, one need only recall Josephus again: David was able to heal and exorcize Saul because he could charm away (Gk. *psallein*, cf. the word Psalm) spirits with his harp (*Ant.*

⁹ See David J. Halperin, “The *Book of Remedies*, the canonization of the Solomonic writings, and the riddle of Ps.-Eusebius,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 76.4 (Apr. 1982), pp. 269-292.

6.166-169).¹⁰ One can scarcely criticize a pious Armenian for employing the Psalms to magical ends when their author did the same himself.

The title page, with the single word *Bzhshkaran* (Compendium of remedies), is followed by 46 pages listing diseases, their symptoms, and treatment, written in purple ink with a *sheghagir* cursive hand. Three additional pages of the same in pencil and black ink by the same hand follow. The language is Modern Western Armenian; and the names of diseases and medications are given also in French in parentheses. This would suggest that the manuscript was compiled at Aleppo: Syria after the first World War was French mandate territory according to the terms of the Sykes-Picot agreement that divided the Arab spoils of the Ottoman Empire between Britain and France. Since Dr. Boyajian claimed that the notebook was compiled by his grandfather, one can assert beyond reasonable doubt that the hand was Mr. Nazarian's own; and he wrote the notebook most likely in the 1920's, in Aleppo. The remedies in the first section are generally of the sort available at home (strong coffee and the like) or easily obtained at an apothecary shop in the days before sulfa drugs and antibiotics were discovered; and one supposes that the laboriously copied text was put to practical use. The first sickness addressed is migraine (*glukhin kes ts'av*), for which sitting in the dark is recommended as the cure (*darman*), with a cachet of antipyrine or quinine sulfate. Treatments follow for various complaints including hemorrhoids (with the Turkish term for the complaint, *mayasil*, helpfully appended), constipation (*pndut'iun*), drowsiness, drug-overdose (cocaine, morphine, belladonna, and laudanum), arsenic-poisoning, fish-poisoning, mushroom-poisoning, tuberculosis (with progressive symptoms carefully listed), epilepsy, colic, seasickness, cholera, hair loss, skin disease, rheumatism, shortness of breath, brain fever, brain hemorrhage, abscesses, neuralgia, stomach ailments, bronchitis, chills, cystitis, angina pectoris, athlete's foot, and a fever called "snake disease" (*odzakht*, Tk. *ilanjik*) whose symptoms include trembling, vomiting, and redness of the nose. For the latter ailment *bzhshkin ts'oyts'tal*—a visit to the doctor—is recommended. The added pages in pencil and black ink address eye problems, toothache, and cuts. An example from p. 4: *Belladone* [French, i.e., Belladonna]: *nshan—beranē ch'or ev ach'k'in biberē metsts'ats k'elan, ev hivandē kē zārants'ē. Darman—p'skhoghakan, arants'shak'ari zoravor surch talē v hivandē tak'ts'nel*. "Belladonna: symptom—mouth dry and pupils of the eye dilated. The patient is raving. Treatment—emetic, keep the patient warm and give him strong coffee without sugar." On p. 9, one is advised to administer "Bromhydrate de quinine, antipyrine" to treat a fever; and if the patient is spitting up blood, *safoys'i pok'ri(k) ktorner kllal tal* (have him swallow little bits of ice). As a cynical Scottish convert to

¹⁰ See Dennis Duling, "The Eleazar Miracle and Solomon's Magical Wisdom in Flavius Josephus' *Antiquitates Judaicae* 8.42-49," *Harvard Theological Review* 78.1/2 (1985), pp. 1-25, esp. pp. 2, 4, 22.

Orthodoxy swinging a censer in a Moscow church was once heard to mutter in between verses of the Old Slavonic liturgy, “If it does ye nie goud, it’ll do ye nie harm!”

Pages 50-64, in pencil and black ink, contain a series of magical spells in semi-Classical and Modern Armenian interspersed with lines of magical symbols or grids of the same that resemble magic squares but have only a few actual numbers (in Arabo-Muslim numerals, with occasional Western ones) in each example. These numbers don’t add up; so the magical squares were either copied wrong or were gibberish from the start. The medical portion of the book is written in somewhat smaller letters, but the hand seems to be the same. “(50) By the command of God Elijah the prophet lived in heaven 7 years and 6 months.¹¹ Solomon the wise bound the (fiery red?) giant¹² and all the (legions?)¹³ of the demons he submerged and bound in the depths of the sea. Joshua bound the feet of the (son’s king?) the sun;¹⁴ Daniel the prophet bound the mouths of the lions; (51) and as Moses the prophet parted the Red Sea and bound the same with fetters, I bind you, evil *t’pghas*,¹⁵ with the three nails and the milk of Mary the virgin, and as (52) the Lord Jesus Christ bound the evil Satan, so bound with the same fetters stand you before the keeper of this holy writing, NN,¹⁶ in immovable fetters, in seven chains, and by the name of the holy tree of life of the Cross of Christ and of the Father and of the Holy Spirit, Amen. The holy Mother of God came and brought 300 (legions?) of iron. (53) Keep this writing with you: your fortune will open and you will be beloved before every man. The name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, Amen. God the Father, creation of Adam. The beauty of Joseph was sweetened before Pharaoh. The Sole-Begotten Son was sweetened, salvation of the world was sweetened as at the love of Solomon for wisdom the bee was sweetened at its labor. So sweet before all men be (this person’s name). God had mercy on us and blessed us as his heaven in us, and have mercy on us. (54) End. [Magical symbols] (55) For stomach ache write, God, strengthen a pure heart within me and renew the soul in my breast straightly.

¹¹ I have not found another version of this spell; but in general it resembles other binding spells that list Biblical precedents; cf. Frédéric Feydit, *Amulettes de l’Arménie Chrétienne* (Venice: St. Lazarus, 1986), no. XCI (p. 256 f.).

¹² The text is unclear but seems to read **hrashek k’ajñ*. There are Armenian spells against the *shek mard* “red man” or *shek ach’k’avor* “red-eyed man”: see Sargis Harut’yunyan, *Hay hmayakan ev zhoghovrdakan aghot’k’ner* (Erevan: Erevan University Press, 2006), p. 84. According to the superstitions of many peoples red-haired people are dangerous or unlucky; and mediaeval Germans believed that demonic *rote Juden*, “red Jews” living outside the wall Alexander built to confine Gog and Magog were to burst forth as the army of the invading Antichrist.

¹³ Arm. **gunds*, indistinct and crossed out before gen. pl. *divats*’.

¹⁴ This refers to the miracle at Gibeon, *Joshua* 10.12-13.

¹⁵ The *t’pgha* and *al* are mythical beings, the “child stealing witches” of Armenian and general Ancient Near Eastern mythology who make women sick in childbirth.

¹⁶ Arm. *filan*, i.e., the Turkish form of a loan from Arabic, *fulan* “somebody, so-and-so”.

Write it all, then this [magic square]. Save me from sickness, God, God of my salvation and so on. (56) This writing is for a journey and a robber and the sea and harm done by witches. [Magical symbols] (57) [Blank] (58) [Blank] (59) Write for falling in love: Take red copper, write this talisman on it and write the name of the person desired, then cast it into fire, and say, May the heart of N of N burn for my love like this talisman. It will burn. By God¹⁷ he will get up and come. [Magical symbols] Write this on a stone also and cast it into fire. [Magical symbols] And say, May the heart of N of N burn for my love. By God he will get up and come. (60) Write this and put it on your forehead. [Magical symbols] In order to kill your enemy, write these 6 letters on an egg and bury them in a field. The hour of your ill-wisher's death will be the hour he looks upon it. [Six magical symbols] And with (?)¹⁸ incense burn for its *star¹⁹. (61) If they want somebody's daughter and they do not give her away, write this talisman, write the names of the people in that house along with it in a green bowl.²⁰ Then pour water over it till it is full. Let the boy who wants the girl wash in it, then take the water he has washed with, and pour it at the girl's door. By God, the desired girl [magical symbols]. (62) [Crossed out: If you want somebody to...] Releasing the binding of a bridegroom...²¹ Clap your hands: Heavenly God, the 'Render power' and write the name next to it on two pieces of paper. Let the groom and his bride wash with the first piece. Let the groom bind the second to his right arm and by God he will be released. Here they are: *Hasavigh, mat'um, marum, mat'eumn, mariun, mahk'on, avasi, azavmi, marut'*.²² By God he is released. (63) [Magical symbol] Write this on

¹⁷ Arm. inst. sg. *A(stutso)v*, that is, "with God's help." This abbreviated, pious formula is repeated throughout.

¹⁸ Arm. *u tsats*.

¹⁹ A symbol meaning "star"—an X with a dot in each angle (see Ashot Abrahamyan, *Hay gri ev grch'ut'yan patmut'yun* (Erevan: Haypethrat, 1959), table on p. 169)—is the only one used in the body of the text, as opposed to the separate talismans that follow each spell (one of which, on p. 54, includes it); and this is the only instruction to burn incense, presumably at a time indicated by an astrological calculation.

²⁰ Arm. *ch'anakhi*; variant *ch'ank'i* partially erased. The first form is a Central or Eastern Anatolian pronunciation of standard Turkish *çanak*, "bowl." The second form might have been erased as it could be confused with Tk. *çünki*, "because." Aside from a particular color, the type of bowl is never specified in these spells; nor am I aware of the existence of Armenian inscribed magic bowls of the sort found in ancient and late antique Mesopotamia and, for instance, in modern Iran.

²¹ Followed by unclear words: *zay erig tun ev aghmun* (?)

²² This rhyming concatenation of vaguely Arabic magical words is mostly nonsense save perhaps for the final one, which may be the name Marut. Harut and Marut are the Armenian (or Sogdian, though distance makes this less likely) forms of the Middle Iranian names of the Zoroastrian Amesha Spentas ("Holy Immortal" archangels) that preside over the plants and waters, Haurvatat and Ameretat. They replace in the *Qur'an* the twin angels Shemhazai and Azael of Jewish demonology, who dwell in a cave and teach magic to all comers. What is interesting is the appropriateness of the name to the magical rite, for on Ascension Eve, Armenian girls take petals of the flower *horot-morot* and place them, with various personal

your beloved's [crossed out: she will come] threshold on the first Wednesday of the moon [=month?] and bury it there. By God, she will come. Keep it on you and you will be beloved of all men. [Magical symbols] (64) [Magical symbols] End."

Page 65 is blank and the text resumes with the third section on p. 66, a list of Psalms and their uses written hastily in large letters in pencil: "(Vol.?) 1 ch.²³ For going to court; Vol.(?) 6 ch. For not being harmed. (67) Psalm 58, 3, 8, to be rescued from an enemy. 'The heavens relate...' To cross the sea or a river ch. 68, read on the sea." The main text begins with a heading on p. 68 and is in clear black ink, with dividing lines between each Psalm, which I identify according to the numeration of the Armenian Bible in curved brackets {}. The verses cited are sometimes corrupt, sometimes different from the Classical text, so the translations are direct and my own, rather than from the KJV or other standard translation:

"Chapter of the Psalm(s) of David. 'Blessed is the man who did not go' {1}. It is for planting trees and plants that they are not harmed, by God. 'Why are the heathens disturbed.' {2} For when you go into court your cause will succeed. 'Lord, for many are they who have oppressed me.' {3} For counteracting ill will: read it and by God you will be free of all evil. 'When I called you heard me, God.' {4} When you fall into straitened circumstances, read it and by God you will be freed. (69) 'Give ear to my words, O Lord.' {4} For pain in the eyes. Read it over hot water and wash your face. You will be freed by God. 'Lord, do not oppose me with your anger.' {6} Concerning a witch. Read it 5 times over water for 3 days. Then wash yourself, and you will be freed by God. 'Lord my God, I have hoped in you, save.' For being afraid of a man. You will be freed by God. 'Lord, our Lord, for wondrous is the name.' {8} For evil will against a man. You will be saved from him and he will not bother you anymore, by God. 'I will thank²⁴ you Lord in all.' {9} For other evil read this and you will be freed by God. (70) 'I hoped in you as you will say to my soul.' {10} For an insane person. Read it over him or write it on a piece of raw canvas and keep it on his head: he will be freed by God. 'Save my life O Lord for I grow faint.' {11} For a man deprived. When the deprive you, read it over rose oil and anoint your face and

possessions, in a bowl of water that is then guarded beneath the stars. Heaven opens that night, it is believed; and on the morn a girl takes each possession and reads out to its owner a quatrain predicting her fortunes in love and wedlock. This *vichakakhagh*, or "game of lots," is here distilled into a magical rite. See J.R. Russell, "Hārūt and Mārūt: The Armenian Zoroastrian Demonic Twins in the *Qur'ān* Who Invented Fiction," forthcoming in *Proceedings of the Irano-Judaica conference*, Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Oct. 2010, ed. J. Rubanovich and S. Shaked.

²³ Arm *h.* may abbreviate *hator* (volume); *gl.* abbreviates *glux* (chapter).

²⁴ *Gohats'uts'* for Clas. Arm. *gohats'ayts'*, would be a Modern Arm. 3rd pers. sg. factitive "he satisfied" in place of a forgotten Clas. Arm. "I will thank"!

hands and you will be freed by God. ‘Till when, O Lord, do you forget me?’ {12} For robbers; and read it aloud that you be freed by God. ‘The insensate one has said in his heart’ {13} is for matters of witchcraft of a man. Read it over water and give it to him to drink; he will be freed by God.²⁵ (71) ‘Lord, who will stand in your canopy?’ {14} This is for a crazed demon-possessed person.²⁶ Set down a vessel of water, read this over it, warm it and wash that man: he will be freed by God. ‘Listen, Lord of righteousness, and look’ {16} is for all snares and evil mischances. Read it and you will be freed by God. ‘I will love you my Lord of power’ {17} is for all snares and harm. Read it and you will be freed by God. ‘The Lord will hear you on the day of sorrow.’ {19} For success by God’s command. ‘Lord may he be glad in your power.’ {20} For enemies, that you may be freed by God. Renew.²⁷ (72) ‘God, my God, look upon me.’ {21} Against weapon and poisonous snake. Read it every morning that your affairs may prosper by God. ‘God the earth with its fullness.’ {23}²⁸ For snakes and scorpions, that they do not go and harm any man, by God. ‘I called to you, Lord God’ {27} is for success and the day of evils. Read it 4 times: you will be freed by God from every evil. ‘Judge for me, Lord, for I am accursed.’ {25}²⁹ For a court case. It will succeed. Lord God. (73) ‘The Lord is my light and my life.’ {26} For a thief. Read it five times a day to turn the thief away, by God’s will. ‘I called to you, Lord God.’ {27} For evil-wishers: write it on a goatskin. Hang it over the house and the evil-wisher will flee or go crazy by God. ‘Approach the Lord God’ {28} is for wasting disease. Recite it over olive oil and smear it: he will be healed by God.³⁰ ‘I exalt you Lord for receive.’ {29} For the sea: read it 3 times every day and travel fearlessly, by God.”

The list resumes on p. 81 in scrawled pencil:

²⁵ Arm. *vasn kaxardut'ean irats' mardoy* (for matters of witchcraft of a man) is an awkward construction, perhaps meaning that the Psalm has power over any manner of things caused by deviltry. The full verse of the Psalm protests that the fool in his heart says there is no God; so perhaps Armenians associated the black arts with atheist disbelief or belief only in powers other than the Almighty.

²⁶ Arm. *vasn khevi ev divahari: khev* is an epithet employed sometimes by *ashughs*, minstrels, with the specific sense of love-crazed; see James R. Russell, *Yovhannes T'lkuranc'i and the Mediaeval Armenian Lyric Tradition*, Armenian Texts & Studies Series 7 (Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987).

²⁷ Arm. *Norogo* stands alone on the last line of the page. My instinct was that the copyist had begun to write the hymn *Norogogh tiezerats'* (Renewer of the universe). But one cannot know.

²⁸ Arm. *Tern*, nom., instead of the gen. *Teain*, “The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof...”

²⁹ Arm. *yanetss*, “in curses,” is a startling misreading of *yanbtsut'ean* (in unblemishedness)!

³⁰ The citation of the verse omits *ordik'* (sons [of God]), whose literal meaning outside its idiomatic Hebrew context would surely have scandalized a believer in the *Miatsin*, Sole-Begotten, Christ. *Barak ts'av* is literally “thin pain”; and I read *zeyt' eagh(in)* as Tk. *zeytinyaḡi*, “olive oil”.

“Ch. 137, ‘I will confess.’ For trade and profit, read 7 times a day for 7 days. (82) Ch. 122, ‘To you, Lord, I raised,’ 2 times till ‘Have mercy on us, O Lord, and have mercy’ is for headaches that happen on one side.³¹ And write the talisman and keep it on your head. [Magical symbols] (83) Ch. 41, ‘As he longs for the bride’ till ‘I said to God, I am acceptable.’ Read 50 times and keep the talisman. [Magical symbols] (84) Ch. 59, ‘God, you have rejected.’ Recite till ‘By your right hand and hear us.’ Write the talisman. [Magical symbols] (85) Ch. 19, ‘May God hear you.’ Read 3 times and count your demands. They will be fulfilled immediately; and for headache read till ‘We will greatly...’ and keep this talis(man) on you. [Magical symbols] (86) Ch. 39, ‘Rejoice.’ [Magical symbols] Amen, amen. (87) Ch. 22, ‘The Lord is my shepherd.’ Read 7 times: sadness will turn to gladness and if you have business with a great man³² read it 7 times and go and ask and immediately he will fulfill or give. (88) Ch. 24, ‘To you, Lord.’ Read 3 times for a prisoner. He will be freed of all oppression. Take soil from beneath your foot and read over it 40 times, drop and scatter it. He will be freed.”

Two loose, small pieces of paper were found inserted into the notebook. One, evidently in Mr. Nazarian’s hand, is a slightly ungrammatical Classical Armenian Biblical imprecation, perhaps employed for magical purposes to ward off an enemy: *Khavarests’ē ach’k’ nots’ay zi mi tesanits’en* (He will darken their eyes that they not see). This is in black pencil; on the reverse, in the purple ink of the section on remedies, is a more mundane text: a cure for hemorrhoids, with the ingredients of the medicine to be compounded listed in grams.

On another scrap of paper, in a careful but crude hand, is a short love poem that reminds one strongly of the hayrens attributed to the late mediaeval bard Nahapet K’uch’ak. It was probably originally a quatrain of ancient Armenian octosyllabic lines with a caesura at each hemistich; but the text is corrupt and full of misspellings: *Du vard unis/ havet garun/ k’ukieank’n i tel menayun/ es i ayrunim im hok’u/ mej var menaun* (You have a rose that is/ Eternal spring; your life/ Forever in your heart./ But I have fire in my soul/ That can never be put out). On the reverse of the slip is a recipe for a popular dessert called *hat hat p’al luzayz* (piece by piece) followed by unfamiliar words) calling for two cups each of cornstarch (*nishe*) and sugar, and three of water. This mixture is stirred in such a way that the resulting sweet crumbles like grains of rice.

To conclude, we may observe that the medical portion of the manuscript deals mostly with everyday complaints: constipation and hemorrhoids, migraine and stomach ache, and different kinds of poisoning; and the

³¹ That is, hemispheric: migraine.

³² The Arm. here mixes the pseudo-Classical with the thoroughly idiomatic: *Ev mets mardoy het khndirk’ mē unisnē*. The last word would be in “standard” Modern Western, *et’e unenas* (if you have).

remedies prescribed are of the sort that would have been easily and inexpensively available. Consultation of a physician is recommended only once; and every cure can be done at home. There is no reference to surgery, no recourse to specialized medical instruments. So this part of the manuscript probably was used. The two magical sections of spells and Psalms focus on love and marriage, court cases and one's reputation and image, counteracting the ill will and machinations of enemies, head and chest pain again, and the thieves and perilous conditions at sea or on the road that beset the traveler. From the urbane, sophisticated image of Mr. Nazarian that we have, it is most unlikely that having copied the talismans, he employed them to concoct potions, mutter dire spells to destroy foes, or perform lecanomantic rites to woo women. Use of a magic bowl for such a purpose, one imagines, might have earned him a smart bat on the head from an irate wife wielding a wholly unmagical frying pan. His curiosity about the occult is of a diffident sort many of an intellectual bent share—I am writing this study, am I not—so it was sufficient to engage his writing hand; but one thinks he kept the darker forces of the supernatural at arm's length.

Recitation of the Psalms was probably another matter. It is common for printed editions of the *Narek*, the *Book of Lamentations* of St. Grigor Narekats'i, the tenth-century mystical poet-theologian, to contain a list of chapters to be prayed for this or that purpose; and owners of these books frequently added lists of their own. I have several such, large and small, from the 18th to the 20th century, in my own collection. Christian and Jewish believers resort to the help of the Psalms for comfort in grief, help in healing, relief from fear, and reassurance in the face of enmity. I have done so myself, in sickness and in health. So Mr. Nazarian might have used this list, too. Again, one would imagine that he did not employ everything he copied; and he mentions only a quarter or so of the hundred-and-fifty Psalms; so perhaps he had only a partial manuscript, or his notebook was coming to an end, or he was just tired.

It is not clear what the magical symbols he copied, sometimes assiduously, sometimes it would seem a bit more playfully or carelessly, meant to him. He uses only one symbol or abbreviation, an X with four dots, one in each angle, in the text itself. He surely understood the Arabic numbers and individual letters of the Arabic alphabet that appear; but the rest of the symbols, whether rising from a base line or inscribed freely in space, do not seem to have any translatable meaning and never did, although many of them have been systematically employed in Armenian cryptograms. The bulk of them, with the obvious exception of permuted letters of the Armenian alphabet, seem to derive from Muslim magical texts, where they have no linguistic sense either.

None of the spells touches upon any achievement of technology of the last two centuries; though the medical portion does mention cocaine, a recent import to the Near East. Although recent editions of the Armenian *Erazahan*,

or book of interpretation of dreams, incorporate the images of recent inventions: telephones, trains, air travel, electric lights, and so on—we do not find them here. Travel is only by sea. The setting seems to be that of a rural village: one buries magic bowls in fields, not on the crossroads of 187th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue.³³ Still, not much has changed in the human condition, perhaps. Travel is more common, and faster; but it still has its dangers. A number of Psalms are addressed to the insane, the lovesick, the possessed, the depressed. Sigmund Freud died in 1939, less than a decade after our manuscript traveled by sea to the New World; but most people beset by the sorrows of life still confided their troubles, not to a psychiatrist, but to God or loving friends and family. Society was kinder, and more respectful, to the elderly; but the young still clamored for excitement and passion. I close the book, return to these latter days, and wonder whether we have really come so far. Genocide did not end with the Armenians and the Jews, but became an increasingly common instrument of state policy; and people were as indifferent to the recent Rwandan slaughter as it was happening as they were to Auschwitz. Have texting, Prozac, and Ritalin really ameliorated human loneliness and sorrow? The warm kitchen, the cup of coffee, the actual and not virtual face of a trusted friend or loved relative, seem to me more authentic and less alienating. Mr. Nazarian's cures, like the other treasures of his little library, are quaint but perhaps not wholly obsolete.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

³³ Ironically, perhaps, a different kind of witchcraft, as a part of the Afro-Caribbean Santería religion, does thrive in the neighborhood; and implements of the craft can be purchased at numerous shops called *botánicas*.

The Seh-lerai Language

James R. Russell

Day after day,
Alone on a hill,
The man with the foolish grin is keeping perfectly still
But nobody wants to know him,
They can see that he's just a fool,
And he never gives an answer,
But the fool on the hill,
Sees the sun going down,
And the eyes in his head,
See the world spinning 'round.

Well on the way,
Head in a cloud,
The man of a thousand voices talking perfectly loud
But nobody ever hears him,
or the sound he appears to make,
and he never seems to notice...

—John Lennon and Paul McCartney, 1967.

A MYSTERIOUS LANGUAGE AND ITS MAKER.

We scholars of Armenian studies have tended to focus generally inward—researching the history, culture, and language and literature of the nation itself—rather than outward, considering the participation of Armenians in the wider culture of the world outside their (our) own ethnic sphere. This is reasonable, particularly as the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were the period when the serious groundwork of the discipline had to be done. But now, in the early years of the twenty-first century, most of the Classical texts essential to historiography and many literary texts of diverse periods have been edited to a high scholarly standard and translated satisfactorily into the accessible

JOURNAL OF ARMENIAN STUDIES X, 1 & 2 (2012-2013)

languages of international learning. The ancient, medieval, and modern forms of the language, including its dialects, have received their fair share of attention from Indo-Europeanists. The record of the Genocide of 1915 in the heartland and the Ottoman periphery is firmly established, wanting only proper international and judicial recognition. And the chronicle of Soviet rule in the northeastern surviving sliver of the country has by now been meticulously declassified and documented. So the demons and secrets of modern trauma are now exposed, as it were, to the sun.

The field occupies a small niche, but a secure and respectable one. Now we can allow ourselves, perhaps, to widen the horizon. For Armenians have also been, and are, participants in *world* civilization, particularly in the intermediary zone between Europe and Asia, the bridge between West and East. Interacting with different cultures and living in other countries, writing in foreign languages and thinking about wider and other ideas than those of parochial concern, naturally contributing their particular experiences and points of view to what we might call nowadays the global conversation: this is as much a part of Armenian experience, particularly in the modern era, as is the indigenous culture. The study of "cosmopolitan Armenia" is not yet central to the field, but it is rich and can potentially contribute new insights as it develops. This study falls into that relatively new genre. It considers the life and times, and the work, of an eccentric Armenian savant of nineteenth-century Smyrna who invented what he hoped would become a universal, international language. Though his project was in the end doomed to obscurity, it is of value to the study, for instance, of how progressive thought—of which internationalism is an essential part—developed in the Near East. Karl Marx in 1888 wrote of a (Western) Armenian translation due to be published at Constantinople of his *Communist Manifesto*—though suppressed by a printer wary of police persecution, it would have been the first in the Near East, in an indigenous language of the region.¹ (There were to be many other translations, mainly into the Eastern literary mode.) Here is another example, then, of Armenian cosmopolitanism.²

I studied recently an invented *a priori* language and cipher in an Armenian manuscript of the late eighteenth century that is housed in the collection of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences at St. Petersburg (MS A 29). It would appear from such features as the frequency of sounds

¹ Marx 1968, p. 5.

² For an example of the early modern Armenian contribution to global commerce—the network of traders and travelers from New Julfa—and its effect on the development of Armenian society and letters, see Aslanian 2011.

such as *ō* and *f* that the author, a man of eclectic interests living most likely in Georgia, invented his fanciful language, which he named *R(u)štuni*³ (after the ancient Armenian district on the southern shore of lake Van and its legendary argot), in such a way as to make it sound as exotically un-Armenian as possible. Despite his intentions, its morphology and even features of its lexicon such as the similarity of words for heaven and earth (Arm. *erkin(k')*, *erki*) betray its birth in an Armenophone mind. Though the language has some philosophical and theological vocabulary, its maker evidently created *R(u)štuni* for his own amusement, rather than out of some noble impulse to bring the races of man back together with a single speech, and thereby to begin to repair the damage done by the fall of the tower of Babel. His cipher uses older Armenian cryptograms, such as one used so widely by guilds that I have called it a "hetaerogram," that is, the vehicle of an alphabetic subculture, and combines these with elegantly calligraphic forms based upon the late-Classical *nusxuri* script of Georgian. It was meant for the invented language (so he writes) but is actually employed in the manuscript mainly to enshroud sinister or salacious magical formulae in Armenian, including one spell for zombification and another employing the wild rue, a plant important in ancient and modern Iranian religion.⁴ My research led me to examine other invented tongues, including international, universal languages and their creators, and to return to a brief, intriguing reference in an article some decades old to one of the latter—one invented, with a strange script to go with it, by an Armenian.

The old article, then: in 1984 Vahé Oshagan, a writer, editor, and literary scholar, son of the famous writer, literary scholar, and educator Hagop Oshagan (Yakob Ošakan), published in a volume of the *Review of National Literatures* dedicated to Armenia an essay on cosmopolitanism among Western Armenian intellectuals of the late eighteenth-early twentieth centuries. He noted that a millennium of experience as international travelers—and of life as a people in diaspora as well as in the historical homeland—had conditioned Armenians to multi-lingual agility, familiarity with diversity in culture, and the ability to cope with crises of divided loyalty. In the nineteenth century much of Armenian literature remained decidedly parochial in scope and consciousness, preoccupied with schemes of national liberation and communal politics. But the upper classes of Armenian society, particularly in Constantinople and Smyrna—the great western coastal cities of the Ottoman Empire—looked outward as well. They hailed very often from families who had converted

³ For the purposes of this article, Hübschmann-Meillet transliteration will be employed.

⁴ See Russell 2012.

from Armenian Orthodoxy to Catholicism, were fluent in French and Italian, and were well-versed in modern European literature. As examples of men who pursued cosmopolitan careers he cites several examples, including Murad Tosunian, who under the grand adopted name Ignace Mouradja d'Ohsen served as Swedish consul at Constantinople in 1795 and authored a history of the Ottoman Empire; and Goghmas Keumurjian (restyled Cosmas de Carbohnano), interpreter to the Spanish consulate and translator into Italian of a history of Constantinople in 1798. These elite Armenians resided mainly in the heavily European district of Pera (Beğöğlü, now Beyoğlu) of the capital. Ottoman Turkey's great Aegean port in ancient Ionia also contributed to this burgeoning cosmopolitan culture among Armenians: the press of the Dedeyan Brothers at Smyrna brought out Armenian translations of Dumas, Chateaubriand, Swift, Samuel Johnson, Jules Verne, Sir Walter Scott, etc. The Smyrna intellectual Matt'eos Mamurian, who had translated Voltaire into Armenian, criticized contemporary Armenian society and morals in his satirical *Angliakan namakani* ("English Letters"). We will have much more to say about this extraordinary man presently.

Oshagan also sketches brief portraits of two intellectual eccentrics. Charles Akdjalian founded in 1867 the French-language journal *Politique Morale, revue de poésie, de santé et de morale*, which went out of print after only a year by reason of its editor's insanity. "Then there is the strange case," Oshagan continues, "of the lonely, misogynous and vegetarian eccentric Bedros Tingir,⁵ who had taught himself nine languages (Armenian, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, Italian, English, French, and Sanskrit), who lived secluded in a hilltop castle near Smyrna and who had devised, around 1865, a new alphabet and an international language which he called 'Sahlara'. The purpose of this enormous effort was to 'promote peace and love among the nations'. He had also prepared a special text-book for the teaching of his universal language, a grammar, and a dictionary which he gave to rare visitors and correspondents to enable them to communicate with him. He had also devised a new system of musical notation based on his alphabet."⁶ I wanted to learn more about Sahlara; but all I could find was a biographical sketch on its creator, Bedros Tingir, in a brief historical monograph by Fr. Ep'rem P'olosean (Boghosian) of the Catholic Mekhitarist order at Vienna of the wealthy, influential Tingirian clan of Constantinople to which he belonged.

⁵ The name will be found in various forms, with or without the Armenian family suffix *-ean/c*?; the pronunciation would be Tenger, in modern Turkish orthography Tingir, with the stress on the final syllable.

⁶ See Oshagan 1984.

The family seems to have originated in central Anatolia—in the region called in ancient times Galatia, near Angora (modern Ankara). The first notable figure of the clan, Grigor *Hoca*⁷ T'nkṛeanc', born in 1701, served as interpreter to the French consulate at the Ottoman capital, and in 1768 and after was honored with the titles Chevalier de Guignard and Comte de St. Priest. He married a woman named Hrip'simē (we do not hear all that much about the women of this clan history) and fathered several sons who worked in the prestigious and privileged profession of the mint and banking (Ar.-in-Tk. *sarraḡ*). Grigor died August 13, 1781, and was buried at Pera. Karapet, Grigor *Hoca*'s middle son, fathered three boys, Petros (in Western Armenian, Bedros), Anton, and Astuacatur (Astvadzadur), and a daughter whose name has not reached us. Bedros (let's call him that: that was the name he heard) was born at Constantinople on 3 September 1799. On either October 21, 1811 or July 8, 1814 (accounts differ), Fr. Andrēas Šiwk'iwrean (Shūkūrian) took Bedros and a number of other boys to Vienna to begin study for the priesthood at the Mekhitarist (Armenian Catholic) seminary. Bedros was given the religious name Karapet on September 7, 1813, entered the order on April 15, 1816, and was ordained a priest on November 1, 1818—at the age of nineteen. Now Fr. Karapet, he returned to Constantinople but was sent away from the city during a notorious persecution of Armenian Catholics instigated by the Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate of the capital in 1827-1830.⁸ He went first to Bucharest, but on January 8, 1828, returned to his monastery in Vienna, leaving both the Mekhitarists and the name received at ordination on May 11—for we next encounter him with his old, secular name, Petros T'(ə)nkṛ (Tk. Tigr). He then traveled to Rome, seems not to have found peace there, and went on to Pesaro, a town on the Adriatic coast of Italy south of Ravenna. We do not know what made him abandon holy orders, nor is it clear what inner demon pursued him, though presently some suppositions of researchers will be advanced.

Fr. Pōlosean's narrative continues:

It would appear that somewhat later Petros T'ngṛeanc' returned to secular life, moved to Izmir [the author uses the Turkish form of the city's name interchangeably with Gk. Smyrna and

⁷ The Turkish honorific, from Persian *xwājdān*.

⁸ The English traveler William John Hamilton, in a narrative of 1842, states, "it is impossible to feel respect for men who had recourse to the vilest intrigues, in order to procure the banishment of their Catholic countrymen from Constantinople in 1829 and 1830" (Ghazarian 1997, p. 320). Perhaps the trauma of this event of internecine viciousness contributed to T'nkṛ's dislike in later life of sectarianism and nationalism.

Arm. Zmiwǵnia), and took up residence in Buca,⁹ where also he died. (Abraham Y.) Ayvazean in his *Series* (*Šar hay kensa-grut'eanē* ["Series of Armenian Biographies"], II, Constantinople, 1893, pp. 91-93; cf. also *Areuek'* 1899, no. 3946) writes on all this in detail under the entry 'Petros-T'nkār', which we here abbreviate: 'Petros-T'nkār, who was once a clergyman of the Vienna Mekhitarist order, was a scion of one of the most notable and honored Armenian Catholic families of the capital, the T'nkareans. He began his schooling at Constantinople and completed his education at the Vienna Mekhitarist seminary and another school of higher learning. Petros-T'nkār was deeply learned in various branches of knowledge, and one might also say he was a considerable linguist; for in addition to a good knowledge of Armenian, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, Italian, English, and French, he was familiar with Sanskrit ... Petros-T'nkār lived nearly forty years in the village of Buca, at Smyrna. With financial help from his family he purchased, a few years before his death, a lovely hill in the locale near Buca called [Gk.] *Aspra Khōmata*, that is, White Lands, on the summit of which he caused to be erected a square stone house, which might more suitably be called a small castle... It was in that house where, secluded from humankind... Petros-T'nkār pondered the betterment of humanity anew [the contrastive irony seems intentional in the style of the Armenian text—JRR] and labored every day... For his newly-invented speech [*noragūt barbaroyñ*] he constructed an alphabet primer [*aybbenaran*], a grammar, and a pocket [*arjērn*] dictionary, which he caused to be printed, and which he presented as gifts to visitors to his home. He named the language [*lezu*] Sahleray, which means worldwide language [*hamasxarhayin lezu*]. In this language he wrote poems and composed verses that his visitors [*yačaxord-nēn*] read in French translation... but nobody except their author could read, grasp, and understand their original text. Again, in the special letters of his language Petros-T'nkār placed a plaque over the door to his house, upon which he caused to be engraved the word *Ayzeratand* [probably intended to be pronounced *Ayzeradant* in accordance with the orthography of Western Armenian—JRR], which meant Temple of Wisdom [*tačar imastut'ean*]. Inside the *Ayzeratand* was a library which was greatly adorned by books on linguistics... Petros-T'nkār never ate any food such as meat, fish, or the like... although he held these strange convictions, Petros-T'nkār won the affections of all his acquaintances by reason of his modest and noble demeanor and entrancing conversation [*iur parkešt ew azniw varmunk'oun ew hrapurē' xōsake'ut'eamb*]. For Petros-T'nkār was endowed with the ability to speak fluently all the languages he knew. By the final days of his life, that is to say, after having lived his life, one evening Petros-T'nkār, who had become weakened to an extreme degree, went to a grave he had long ago dug

⁹ Thus the modern Turkish spelling; in the Ottoman period it was rendered into European tongues as Boudja or the like.

and made ready in the middle of his temple, there to go to repose in a conscious death [*gitakic' mahuamb gnac' hang'e'elu*]. The following day when his customary visitors arrived they discovered him dead in that grave.' He died in 1881.¹⁰

Petros' brother Astuacatur (or Asatur, for short) studied at the Mekhitarist academy in Trieste; his brother Anton, a pillar of the Armenian Catholic community, in 1831 read out the *ferman*, or imperial decree, to the assembled *amiras* (Armenian aristocrats) and lay community concerning the construction of the Church of the Holy Savior (*Surb P'rkic'*). Anton had two children, who in turn reared children of their own—one, Karapet, was a writer who took the *nom de plume* Tigran *Erkat'* ['Tigran the (man of) Iron']. Scores of other sons and daughters of this famed *amira* clan are recorded through the nineteenth century and into the 20th: Dr. Raffi Tingir, a graduate of Robert College (now Boğazıcı), Istanbul, is a prominent physician on Long Island, New York, with a daughter studying in college here in Boston as I write. The American-Armenian writer William Saroyan was a friend of the Tingirs, and appended to this study is a group portrait of the great master and the family in their Istanbul home, half a century ago. (Plate 7.)

And what of the ellipses in Fr. Pölosean's citation of Ayzavean's book? Heeding the stern Victorian admonition to verify one's references, I sought and found a photocopy of the rare volume in the Widener stacks. Opening it to the chapter quoted, I now restore the portions omitted in the Vienna book. We find there a fuller, more interesting, and perhaps more troubling narrative in which delicate subjects are alluded to and a richer emotional portrait of the brilliant and eccentric linguist is attempted. I translate Ayzavean's biographical entry now in full. I have not altered its style.

In 1881 the Smyrna newspaper *Aršaloys* ['The Dawn']¹¹ reported the grievous tidings of the decease of a philosopher of all our nation; then the local national papers echoed the same sad news. I had already in my 'Letter' to the people in the *Ülegrud'iumk'* ['Itineraries'] of 1878 offered a little taste, a brief notice; but the life and the circumstances of the passing of the deceased—which a friend from Smyrna had relayed to me—provoke such interest that I consider it indispensable today to expand upon his ideas and the manner of his life, so that it may be possible for readers to make their own judgments about what manner of eccentric exceptions human life encompasses.

¹⁰ Pölosean 1951, pp. 36–38.

¹¹ That is, *Aršaloys Araratean*, 'The Ararat Dawn,' founded 1840. *Arewelean Mamul*, 'The Eastern Press', was the other major Armenian newspaper of the city. There were numerous other Smyrniote Armenian periodicals.

Petros-T'nkār, who was once a member of the Vienna Mekhitarist clergy, was a scion of one of the most notable and honored Armenian Catholic families of the capital—the T'nkerean clan.

He began his schooling in Constantinople and then completed his education at the Vienna Mekhitarist seminary and at another school of higher learning.

Petros-T'nkār was deeply learned in various branches of knowledge, and one might also say he was a considerable linguist; for in addition to a good knowledge of Armenian, Greek, Latin, Arabic, Persian, Italian, English, and French, he was familiar with the Sanskrit language, which according to the new scientific dogma is singled out as the root of languages.

Petros-T'nkār, by reason of some unfortunate circumstances at the time of his adolescence, shunned human society. With unshakable conviction he was ever unable to believe that the calling of being a member of the human race could ever forgive him for diverging from the path of benevolence and turning to evil.

These noble sentiments became so elementary to his heart that he shunned all manner of evil. The hatred of evil things guided him to misanthropy, and it is just because of this that civil life became unbearable to him.

Belonging to a wealthy clan facilitated his disposition to lead a solitary life; and his bachelorhood further strengthened that inclination in him.

For over forty years Petros-T'nkār resided in the village of Buca near Smyrna. Thanks to financial assistance sent by his family he purchased, a few years before his death, a beautiful hill in the place near Buca called [in Greek] *Aspra Khómata*, that is 'White Lands', on whose summit he caused to be built a square stone house, that one might more appropriately call a small castle.

This building was so firm and solid that even the most ferocious brigands despaired of (pillaging) it.

It was in this house that Petros-T'nkār, the recluse from the human race and hater of human society, pondered the betterment of humanity and worked from dawn to dusk.

He supposed thus: the diversity of religions and languages subjected mankind, which is of a single origin [*hamaser*], to division. And he believed that together with a composite [*miajoyl*] religion a universal single language [*tiezerakan miórinak lezu*] would integrate the nations with each other and would even put a stop to all individual strife, all fighting and disputation. And thereby general peace and concord would follow.

For a long time he worked at contriving this sort of worldwide [*hamasxarhayin*] language. He imagined that this language would be accepted with love and without resistance by all nations.

The language's structure being of no lesser interest, our abovementioned friend, who had the honor to meet the de-

ceased, related to us that this newly-invented tongue, being comprised of the various sounds of several languages but especially of Sanskrit, had letters that were an amalgam shaped of the parts of various characters. Since it was not yet accepted and used by any nation it could not yet, generally speaking, be termed a language.

He named the language Sahleray, which means 'world-wide language'. In this language he wrote poems and composed verses that his visitors read in French translation and found sufficiently interesting. For his newly invented speech he constructed an alphabet primer, a grammar, and a pocket [*arjeyn*, "handy"] dictionary, which he caused to be printed, and which he presented as gifts to visitors to his home.

But nobody except their author could read, grasp, and understand their original text.

Again, in the special letters of his language Petros-T'nkār placed a plaque over the door to his house, upon which he caused to be engraved the word *Ayzeratand*, which meant Temple of Wisdom. Inside the *Ayzeratand* was a library that was greatly adorned by books on linguistics. And on the tables one found to one side sponges, mineral samples, and various other objects, all covered in dust.

The haphazard state of these objects made it plain to the visitor that the *Ayzeratand* had never benefited from the care of a woman.

It is a point worthy of attention that when we say woman here we understand not only a spouse—for Petros-T'nkār, aside from never marrying, so detested the fairer sex that he never suffered a member of it to cross the threshold of the *Ayzeratand*.¹² And if without his knowledge a matron or maiden slipped in by stealth, he would instantly show them the door, no matter who the lady in question might be.

Petros-T'nkār never ate any food such as meat, fish, or the like, but sustained himself solely on vegetables, milk, and eggs. He considered carnivorousness the province of beasts, and consequently considered men who ate meat little better than scavenging animals.

In this respect his opinions were very like those of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, with the difference that Petros-T'nkār put the latter's thoughts into practice upon himself. But the re-

¹² Ayvazean inserts here the following footnote (p. 95 n. 1): "It is said that Petros-T'nkār had a powerful reason for that hatred of his. That feeling can perhaps be considered pardonable for him when one considers that others in the same circumstance have even resorted to suicide, as a young Armenian of genius did in early 1881 at Yenī-Kapu." This seems to be most likely a delicate reference—astonishing still for its candor, given the time and place—to the forbidden topic of homosexuality. But gay people often have women friends; so it is just as likely that Bedros was a person of no realized predilection at all, a recluse with a horror of the flesh, somewhat like the visionary American writer of fantastic and horror fiction H.P. Lovecraft (d. 1937), also a lover of arcane scripts and tongues, who detested bodily contact and animal food in equal measure.

markable thing is that Petros-T'nkər carried his hatred of meat to fanatical extremes—he never wore leather shoes, only elastic rubber ones. For he maintained that wearing footwear of leather comes in the wake of the murder of animals and is therefore contrary to natural law [*bnakan ḡrinac*].

He saw to his own work, cleaning, and shopping, and felt no need of a staff of servants.

"Although he held these strange convictions, Petros-T'nkər won the affections of all his acquaintances by reason of his modest and noble demeanor and entrancing conversation. For Petros-T'nkər was endowed with the ability to speak fluently all the languages he knew. By the final days of his life, that is to say, after having lived his life, one evening Petros-T'nkər, who had become weakened to an extreme degree, went to a grave he had long ago dug and made ready in the middle of his temple and lay down to rest in conscious death after enjoying over sixty winters, much as once St. John the Evangelist went to his rest in a grave he himself had made.

On the following day, when his customary visitors arrived, they found him dead in that grave.

So that is how Petros-T'nkər met his end, he whose breadth of knowledge was comprehensive; his vision, broad; and whose life, albeit outside the normal round, can be an occasion for the pondering of contemplative souls...

Go, then, o weary and desolate soul, who wast born of poesy, rocked by the lullaby of linguistics, who lived by philosophy and who died in spiritual converse [*hogexdsut'eamb*].

Go to that place where all is poetry, all is soul, where there is no Babel of the tongue, where there is no international frontier, where there is no issue of the pulpit, where there is no political party, where there is no Hereafter and no Here...

There the issue of language has been resolved, and the inhabitants are of the same speech...

There, there is no party, no faction, there is a single flock and but one shepherd...¹³

And with that prolix, elegiac evocation of a Heaven in which the Greek, Armenian, and Turk speak the same language, the Christian, Jew, and Muslim worship at the same altar, and social democrats and revolutionaries are in accord, the window onto the past (and into the Otherworld) closes. There, there, there... The repetition of that word in the elegy reminded me of the lament over the death of a friend penned by another Bedros, a poet and contemporary from Constantinople who died at the tender age of twenty, ten years before the recluse of Smyrna lay down to his eternal rest in the Temple of Wisdom. This is Bedros Tourian (Petros Durean), the creator of the modern Western Armenian poetic language. In the final stanzas of "Laments"

¹³ Ayvazean 1893, II, pp. 91-97.

(*Hececunk'*, 1871), addressed to a dead classmate, Tourian wonders:¹⁴

Are you happy there or sad?
Send me tidings on an angel's wing.
Ah! This world is ever weary...
This world is a mother of great pain.

O, if the shade of a tree there
May be found, and a rill besides,
If imperishable love is there,
If there are freedoms there, free airs...

O, I toss in the filthy raiment
Of my soul, my whole life until today:
I clothe myself in earth, the mourning soil...
Ah, Vartan, are the things we longed for there?...

The poet's work was very widely known: the despairing, brilliant, lyrical boy cut down by consumption in his twentieth year became an instant Romantic hero. And in the same year, 1893, that Ayvazean published his three volumes of biographical sketches, including that of Petros T'nkər, Barsel E. Ek'sərčean (Parsegh Ekserjian) published at Constantinople the volume Petros Durean, *Talk' ew t'atregut'ũnk'* ["Poems and plays"], with both the memorial poem quoted (pp. 44-46) and the graveside eulogy (*dambanakan*) to the poet's friend, Vardan Lut'fean (pp. 254-256). So one thinks it very likely that the words of the young Armenian poet, whose friend predeceased him by but a few months, echo in Ayvazean's closing lines.

But the lyrical author of the necrology of the Smyrnaic linguist (and poet, too, though the verses have not come down to us) Bedros still divulges only one word of Sahleray. And we do not even know yet how the name was to be pronounced, for Oshagan evidently believed its final -y to be silent, as in the modern pronunciation of all Armenian polysyllabic words, since he transliterates it as Sahlera, but the name, as we shall see, was to be pronounced Sehlerai. Only one word is breathed out loud: *Ayzeratand*. Temple of Wisdom. But what associations the name of the house of the man standing alone on the hill summons to mind!

THE TEMPLE OF WISDOM AND THE FREEMASONS

Ayzeratand, "Temple of Wisdom." Although many erudite men at one time or another might in an excess of self-esteem

¹⁴ See Russell 2005, p. 294 [Armenian text, p. 292].

give their homes some such grand name, the best-known edifice with the title, *Weisheitstempel* in German, belongs to a famous work of fiction. That is, to a literary invention in music. That is, to an opera—to the very greatest opera, the very last work, the most luminous and mysterious, of the greatest composer who ever lived in all history: *Die Zauberflöte*, “The Magic Flute,” which Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart completed shortly before his death in 1791. The delightful libretto is the work of a fellow Freemason named Johann Emanuel Schikaneder. Mozart himself belonged to the Masonic lodge *Zur gekrönten Hoffnung*, “Crowned Hope”;¹⁵ and the opera, an allegorical attack in the spirit of the Enlightenment on oppression by tyranny and on the obscurantism of dogmatic religion, is steeped in Masonic allegory and symbolism. The opera and its Temple of Wisdom are so proudly Masonic that the inevitable conspiracy theorists have suggested, wrongly, that the composer betrayed secrets and hastened his own death thereby. Echoes, perhaps, of the later Morgan Affair in the young American republic...

Mozart's lodge met at Vienna, where the very young Petros T'nr̄ was to come as an acolyte a scant two decades later—and, as we have seen, to return as a harassed and disillusioned adult, abandoning the established Church and dedicating himself to a private vision of service to humanity involving a utopian, cosmopolitan linguistic (and musical!) project and the erection of an edifice of learning with a tomb at its center. Petros T'nr̄'s biographer suggests this remarkable eccentric was driven by a particular predilection too dreadful overtly to name; but he chose to deal with his inner demon, to turn it to a good purpose, in a manner strikingly consonant with the arts, philosophy, and imagination of the city of Mozart, the city of his youth, the Vienna that was still a crown of hope for the brotherhood of man, the city whose orchestral music and opera were attuned to the divine harmonies of the *Erklärung*, the Enlightenment.

Freemasonry is an international fraternity (it does not, indeed, admit the fairer sex, and in this regard the Ayzeratand followed suit) dedicated to the spiritual rebirth, transformation, and growth of the individual human being. This process of personal alchemy begins with a series of dramatic initiatory rites in Lodge combining vivid experiences enacted through a drama with the intensive and complex study of an all-embracing cosmological, moral, and mythopoetic system. The latter is expressed in the symbols of the craft of the builder and geometer, and in a passion play based upon the story, dimensions, and features of the Temple at Jerusalem ordained by the archetypal sage, King Solomon and built by his Phoenician architect, the

¹⁵ See Landon 1982, where a painting of Mozart in his mother Lodge at work is reproduced, and a recently discovered list of its Brethren is provided.

widow's son Hiram Abiff of Tyre. Masonry is inherently cosmopolitan, secular, and democratic (if not feminist) in its world outlook (and thereby sympathetic to the concept and ideal of a universal language)—for it recognizes within its temples no distinction of religion, nationality, or social class. Brethren (as the members of the Craft are known) meet, work, and part on the level of equality, and strive to develop their moral character through fraternal effort and charity. The leveler of men is death: the symbolism of the tomb and of the initiate's conscious death is figuratively and literally at the center of every Masonic temple—much as was the grave of Petros T'nkər in the stone Ayz-eratan on its hill outside Smyrna. Through the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Masons such as George Washington, the Marquis de Lafayette, Simon Bolivar, Jose Rizal, and many others played leading roles in the revolutions in America, France, and other countries. Freemasonry was often regarded by the old order and the Catholic Church in particular as a threat and was obliged to operate in conditions of secrecy. In order to protect the Craft from its enemies and to preserve its mysteries pristine, Masons still employ coded language and written ciphers.

The hero of *The Magic Flute* is a brave youth, Tamino, who through various ordeals must win his beloved soul-mate, Pamina: their names are fanciful variants of the Persian Tahmina, known from epic literature; and the libretto, itself a pastiche of previous orientalizing operas, reminds one strongly of the Hellenistic romances set in the East, some of which allegorize the rites of the mystery religions. One of these is Mithraism, with its roots in Armenia, from which elements of Freemasonry probably descend.¹⁶ *Die Zauberflöte* combines Egyptian motifs with Persian ones, since both those ancient civilizations were believed to have contributed the universal *prisca theologia* that Pythagoras and Plato propounded to the world, fusing the wisdom of the East with the philosophy of the West.

The priest of the *Weisheitstempel*, Sarastro, is the Iranian Zarathustra; but in an aria he invokes the Egyptian divine pair, Isis and Osiris. The *Weisheitstempel* in the original stage set for the opera at Vienna was flanked by pyramids;¹⁷ and the Masonic symbol of the pyramid surmounted by the all-seeing eye of God on the great seal of the United States is obviously at once a Pythagorean tetractys, an Egyptian edifice, and an archetypally ancient Temple of Wisdom. Egypt and its strange written characters, which were regarded as a primordial philosophical language, had been a source of fascination since the Renaissance and the somewhat fanciful writings of Athanasius Kircher; and the new discoveries of Egyptian antiquities in the Napoleonic era

¹⁶ See Russell 1989 and 1995.

¹⁷ See Nettl 1957, pp. 89-91.

provoked a kind of aegyptomania in European and American art and fashion. So it is not surprising that when the New York Mason Robert Folger, born 1803, set out to invent a ritual cipher in 1826—a few months after his raising in the Third Degree as a Master Mason and just a year before Jean-François Champollion published his sensational decipherment of the ancient Egyptian script—it was made to resemble Egyptian. The Folger Manuscript abounds in symbols; and at the center of page 21 stands the *Weisheitstempel*, the stone Pyramid. (Plates 1-3.)¹⁸ Many secret societies sprang up in imitation or emulation of the Masons, and they, too, created codes to protect their teachings and their members from eavesdroppers and persecutors: the mid-18th-century German fraternity of Oculists, for instance, were a guild of ophthalmologists who framed their esoteric teachings in the symbolic system of their own craft—instead of swords, cataract needles; and instead of heraldic lions, cats (who see well in the dark). Their code, in the Copiale manuscript, was deciphered in 2011 by a team using new computer techniques.¹⁹

Freemasonry has existed in Smyrna since the eighteenth century, and endures in modern Izmir. It is not known whether Petros T'ngar was a Mason, whether Mozart's opera inspired him at Vienna or in a Lodge, or whether he simply came up with the Ayzeratand, its odd restrictions, its cabinet of natural curiosities, and its central tomb, all on his own. But the most prominent Armenian intellectuals of Constantinople and Smyrna in his day were Masons; and Armenians had been pioneers in the spread of Freemasonry to the East. The first Grand Lodge of England sealed its charter in 1717; yet already by 1762, we find an Armenian named Dr. Manass appointed one of four Masters of Lodges in the Near East, Aleppo, and Persia by the Grand Lodge at London. Armenians saw the power and influence of colonial Britain as a kind of protection, and this attracted many at first to join Lodges under London's jurisdiction. But in the nineteenth century Armenians in the Ottoman Empire with revolutionary, liberationist sentiments tended to prefer affiliation with the rival Masonic authority, the Grand Orient of France, both because of its more overt association with liberal and radical ideas and individuals, and in view of Britain's increasingly troublesome reputation of siding with Turkish Muslims against Levantine Christians. Some seemed to maintain affiliations with both jurisdictions, however. At Smyrna in the 1860s, the prominent writer and public figure Matt'eos Mamurian, mentioned above, belonged to the Anglo-Armenian Tigran lodge, which had

¹⁸ See Morris 1992; on aegyptomania, Erwin 1980; on Champollion, Robinson 2012. On the use of cryptograms in Armenia, including a "hetacogram" used by large sodalities within Armenian society, see Russell 2010.

¹⁹ See Schachtman 2012.

also Greeks, Turks, and Jews among its Brethren. (One recalls here the tantalizing name Petros T'nkār took for himself in Sehlerai, *Tg(h)ransar*, though it supposedly has nothing to do with Tigran, the Armenian king. But more on that anon.)

On 7 May 1866 the first Lodge working exclusively in Armenian was inaugurated at 21 Yazıcı Street, Kule Kapu district, Constantinople: *Sēr* ("Love") was chartered by the Grand Orient of France, and Mamurian became one of its most active members. The Lodge met at seven PM on the first and third Sunday of each month at its *tačar* (i.e., temple!). Work opened with a hymn heavily flavored by the *grabar* (Classical Armenian) forms generally encountered in the Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church: *I mēj mt'ut'ean darer xarxap'ac, / Aysōr zart'ec'ank' ew zloyš gtank'; / Erkiṽlacut'eamb Ōt'eakə mtac. / Zīrar p'ntrec'ink', zīrar mek' gtank'; / Zays šēm̄k'ə koxac— t'ol oč' ok' mezmē / Berē kanxakal mtk'er u xoher. / Hamerašxut'ean t'ol zšunč' c'anē... / Azat hogu tēr, zloyšə p'ntre, / Zi mek' Tiezerk'i bari elbark' emk' "Having groped for centuries in darkness, / Today we awoke and found the light; / Entering the Lodge in awe / We sought and found each other. / Crossing this threshold let no one of us / Bring thoughts and opinions previously held. / Let him sow spirit of concord... / Master of a free spirit, seek the light, / For we are the good brothers of the Universe."*

Following the Ritual governed by the *gerapatiw varpet* (Worshipful Master), the Brethren of *Sēr* Lodge repaired to a standard *hamkeroyt'* (Collation, the meal after the meeting, or Communication), with toasts and convivial fellowship. The printed notice of a Communication of Mar. 1867, which included the conferring of the *A astičan* (1st Degree), has at its head the letters *I.P'.M.Č.T.*, which I recognized with pleasure as the abbreviation of a formula I could reconstruct in *grabar* containing some familiar terms: *I p'ars meci čartarapeti tiezerac'* "To the glory of the Great Architect of the Universe." Brethren were entertained at a meeting of the Lodge in February 1867 with a performance of songs by none other than *elbayr Mozart'*, "Bro. Mozart" (who, of course, had written specifically Masonic music as well as "profane" music imbued with the Masonic spirit). Most of the Brethren were intellectuals who came from well-to-do families, so the meeting often featured a learned lecture: in June 1866 Bro. Mamurian gave an impassioned oration on the life and recent death in Siberian exile of the Eastern Armenian revolutionary activist Mik'ayēl Nalbandian (1829-1866), declaiming the latter's famous poem *Erg azatut'ean*, "Song of Freedom."²⁰ The young poet Bedros Tourian also wrote of Nalbandian's martyrdom in distant Russia; and freedom, *azatut'iwon*, was a watch-

²⁰ See text in Simonean 1965, p. 61.

word and slogan of Ottoman Armenian Masonry. (Bro. Garibaldi and the Carbonari were front-page news in those years; and one recalls that the Armenian national anthem, *Mer Hayrenik'* ["Our Fatherland"], was originally a poem about the Italian liberation struggle against Austrian and Papal tyranny.) We have seen that Petros T'nkār did a lot of traveling; and this seems to have been typical of members of *Sēr* Lodge, some of whom lived for most of the year at Paris, Rome, Manchester, London, and Smyrna—all places where Western Armenians studied or did business. The Lodge must have been, even with its work in Armenian, a gathering place of impressive polyglots, even if T'nkār, with his Sanskrit, would have stood out among them.

In his illuminating series of articles on *Sēr* Lodge published in 1937 Rubēn Berberean seeks to place the growth of Freemasonry among Armenians in the political context of the time. By the mid-1860s, he argues, the hopes for reform and national liberation excited by the Constitution (*Sahmanadrut'iwn*) had been dashed. The community was rent by fractious and corrupt behavior: "In the '60s there were in Armenian life not only purely Armenian national ideological currents, but also moral and philosophical ones embracing all humanity [*hamamard-kayin*]. The age is typified by the attempt by the Turkish Armenian intellectual strata, for a brief time, to found and strengthen the structure of 'the benefit of the nation' and 'national unity' by fusing it with sentiments of 'universal brotherhood' and 'the harmony of mankind.'"²¹

Though in his booklet describing Schlerai, Petros T'nkār uses Armenian script constantly to explain the phonology of his language, the manual itself is in French and its precursor was in Greek: we do not know what view he took of Armenian communal and national activism. And although Masonry is tailor-made for a man of T'nkār's humanist and universalist convictions, it is somewhat difficult to imagine the ascetic denizen of the Ayzcratand as a gregarious Lodge Brother firing glasses of strong drink at Collation, though he did have constant friends—and even, perhaps, followers. However Masonry has always had room for eccentric thinkers whose life trajectory turns to late isolation; and Berberean cites the example of a member of *Sēr* Lodge whose linguistic interests, even, are akin to those of T'nkār. Bro. Serovbē T'agworean (Takvorian) left Constantinople and settled in Paris, where, in Berberean's words, he "withdrew into his shell" (*k'ašuec' ir pateanin mēj*). There, in 1881 (the year of T'nkār's death), he published an *Essai d'un système de linguistique comprenant l'interprétation des racines par les lettres de l'alphabet, appliquée à la langue Arménienne*.

²¹ Berberean 1937, part 1, pp. 74-75.

MERCURIANS

In his controversial recent monograph on modern Jewish history, the Slaviciſt Prof. Yuri Slezkine proposes a division of human societies into types he calls Apollonians and Mercurians, after telling characteristics of the ancient gods: the Apollonians are rooted in land, hierarchy, honor, and military service; while Mercurians live by traveling, trading, and exchanging information. Jews, some Armenians, Overseas Chinese, some Roma, and other like cosmopolitan groups comprise the latter, global fraternity; while the traditional, landed aristocracies of Germany, England, Russia, etc. exemplify the former. It is as much in the interests of Mercurians—who are in many ways transnational, and represent the common human denominator in the most positive sense—to knit the world together with one language, legal system, and currency as it is vital to the status of Apollonians—whose essence is parochial and reactionary—for these things to be divided among nation-states.

The T'nkorean clan and the other families of the Armenian *amira*-nobility of the Ottoman Empire were Mercurians *par excellence*: they dominated finance but were barred from the military, they slipped effortlessly from one language into another, and they traveled ceaselessly. In Smyrna, one might add to the Mercurian roster the "Levantineſ," thoſe huge, wealthy trader-clans of mixed Western European and Eastern Mediterranean Chriſtian lineage who reſided in garden-wreathed palaces in Smyrnaic ſuburbs like Bournabat, T'nkōr's Buca, and even a diſtrict called Paradise.

Idealistic visionaries of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries created hundreds of invented languages,²² but only two have ſurvived, and Jews made both. The firſt, perhaps more a reſurrection than a creation *ex nihilo*, is Modern Hebrew. Eliezer Ben Yehuda (1858-1922), who grew up in the Pale of Settlement of the Ruſſian Empire, read in Ruſſian translation George Eliot's novel *Daniel Deronda*, in which a young Engliſh aristocrat diſcovers he is a Jew, but inſtead of burying his ſhameful ſecret comes out of the cloſet, as it were, and determines to revive Hebrew and live in the Land of Iſrael. Following the pogroms of 1881, the year of T'nkōr's death, Ben Yehuda followed the example of his fictional hero and emigrated from Ruſſia to Jeruſalem, ſeeking to erase his Mercurian ſtatus by reclaiming his ancestral homeland. (Mercurian Armenians felt the ſimilar pull of *Yergir*, "The Land," though many, like Bedros Tourian, imagined its fallen glories but never pulled up ſtakes and went.)

²² Okrent 2010 provides a liſt of ſome five hundred, though Sehlerai is not among them.

The second made-up tongue is Esperanto, meaning literally "one who hopes." Its inventor, Ludwik Zamenhof (1859-1917), a Jewish oculist from Bialystok, witnessed the same anti-Semitism as his contemporary Ben Yehuda. Though sympathetic to Zionism, he elected to remain in Europe, hoping with his *internacia lingvo* to promote world peace through mutual understanding. In 1887 he published at Warsaw in Russian his booklet outlining the rules and lexicon of his new language. Although Esperanto was the creation of Jews, it was Armenians who propagated it in the Caucasus: In Tiflis, Hayk Artem'evich Astvatsatriants (Astuacatreanc') from March 15, 1910, published and edited the journal *Kaukaza Esperantisto* ("The Caucasian Esperantist"), which featured articles in Esperanto, Russian, Armenian, and Georgian on art and music, *belles lettres*, and the theater, and provided also lessons in Esperanto and a review of the press. At Baku from 1911, Abel Ivanovich Ter-Bagdasarian (Tēr-Baldasarean) published, and Yakov Kalustovich Khodzhamir (XoJamir) edited, the commercial and humor paper *Nerkarar* (Arm., "The House Painter") in Esperanto, Russian, and Armenian. And at Constantinople, as we shall see presently, Greeks were at the forefront of the Esperanto movement.²³

These trends in cosmopolitan, global thinking reached the Islamic world mainly through Mercurian, Christian communities and individuals. It is true that in the sixteenth century a hypothetical faith or abstract religious philosophy called *Dīn-e Elāhī*—"Divine Religion" in Persian—was created by intellectuals of the different religions that flourished at the cosmopolitan court of the Mughal emperor Akbar. It united the teachings of these diverse confessions—Hindu, Muslim, Zoroastrian. And the Parsi Zoroastrian author of the *Desātīr* ("Instructions"), a mystical treatise in the spirit of the *Dīn-e Elāhī*, composed his work in a hybrid language. There is another, likewise Persian-based invented language employed to convey Sufi mysteries to initiates, Balaibalan.²⁴ And in the early decades of the twentieth century the leader of the Baha'i faith championed the study and use of Esperanto in Iran. However it would seem that Sehlerai is the only invented language intended specifically for all nations and faiths that was invented in the Near East by a native of a Near Eastern nation, a Mercurian, an Armenian, Petros T'nkār.

AN INTERNET DETECTIVE STORY

Unsatisfied by one word of the invented language, I pursued my search for Sehlerai and turned to an Italian dictionary of imaginary languages, and found a brief reference. Albani and Buonarrotti 1994, p. 371 s.v. *Sehlerai*, report that the inventor of

²³ See Vlasov 2011, pp. 57-58 and 58 n. 1.

²⁴ See Bausani 1954.

Seh-lerai published at Smyrna in 1864 under the pseudonym Tghransar a description of his language. They provide a sample sentence with translation: *Rum shai yran bes lerai vom, shaiz il le sam lerai iun sim, mim serai vam shaiz il le som* "Nel mondo sarà preferita una lingua scientifica unica à numerose lingue con una scienza unica" (or, in the Esperanto translation of Stamatiadis, *En la mondo estas prefere por la scienco unu sola lingvo/ Ol multinombraj lingvoj kaj plej malgranda scienco.*) A history of international languages in Esperanto offers a brief notice: *La libro de Tghransar portis la nomon "Alphabetarion Ansailanzar Sahlerai" kaj estis eldonita en Smyrna. La eldonjaro de la libro ne estas konata, sed lau la havataj informoj ĝi estis publikigita en ĉiu okazo ne pli malfrue ol ĉe la fino de la XVIII jarcento.* ("Tghransar's book bore the name *Alphabetarion Ansailanzar Sahlerai* and was published at Smyrna. The date of publication of the book is not known, but according to the information we possess it was published at any event no later than the end of the 18th century." [tr. by JRR])²⁵ But that would place the invention of the language at or before the date of Bedros' birth; and this erroneous statement seems to be the source of a still more inaccurate assertion by the linguist Mario Pei—that Sehlerai (as he calls it) was invented around 1800 but published in 1921.²⁶ For the latter date is erroneous as well. 1921 is the date of an abridged translation of T'nikar's work into Esperanto, with facing text in Greek, published in two consecutive issues of the journal *Bizantio* at Constantinople by its editor, the Greek physician and author of the standard Greek-Esperanto dictionary, Anakreōn Stamatiadēs (Stamatiadis in general transliteration).²⁷ I did not understand that Stamatiadis was a person: my reference suggested this was the title of a journal.

I wrote to the e-mail address of Dr. Arika Okrent, a professional linguist and author of a very entertaining book on invented languages already noted here, hoping she might have a lead. She promptly replied, apparently much amused and approving of my pleasantly lunatic quest. She had not heard of Sehlerai, but suggested I contact her learned friend Ms. Olga Kerziouk, Esperanto librarian of the British Library, to whom I wrote at once. Ms. Kerziouk answered straightaway, explaining that Stamatiadis was a person. And she located his journal, *Bizantio*, at

²⁵ Drezen 1967, p. 61.

²⁶ Pei 1968, p. 147.

²⁷ See Tg[h]ransar 1921, reproduced at the end of this study as Appendix 1. According to Wikipedia, Stamatiadis was born at Florence in 1868 at Florence and died in 1964. He worked as a physician on Samos, was exiled in 1913, and settled in Athens. He published *Bizantio* from July 1921 to July 1924, and was active in Greek Esperanto associations and publications. His first book of many on Esperanto, *Hē diethnes boēthetikē glōssa* (Greek, "The international auxiliary language") was published at Samos in 1912.

a British Esperanto library. But my e-mail to its curator somewhere in the English countryside languished without response for some time. Olga, anxious that my work not be delayed in the interim, kindly located another set of *Bizantio* in the Planned Languages (this is another designation of "invented" languages) collection of the Austrian National Library at Vienna; and Dr. Bernhard Tuidar and the rest of their helpful staff immediately sent me scans of both articles. They are reproduced here, with my translation of Dr. Stamatiadis' introductory essay. They allude to a publication by T'nkār in Greek. In the meantime, Prof. Johann Strauss, a historian of Ottoman Turkey at the University of Strasbourg, was intrigued by the question and sent me a reference to a biographical note on T'nkār and to a documentary history of the Ottoman Armenians of the nineteenth century by the contemporary Istanbul Armenian savant Pars Tuğlacı. Both are cited in this study.²⁸

At my request, my colleague Prof. Taner Akçam of Tufts University, the eminent historian of the Armenian Genocide, took time from preparing for yet another lecture tour and contacted his old friend Osman Köker, founder and editor in chief of *Birzamanlar Yayıncılık* ("Once Upon A Time Publishers") at Istanbul, who instantly sent me the photograph reproduced here of the place where Petros T'nkār had lived. Both these men have, at enormous personal cost, including prison and torture, dedicated their lives to studying the record of Armenian life and death in Ottoman Turkey. My peregrinations on the internet have involved quiet heroes of collegiality and scholarship, and real life, flesh and blood heroes of politics too. The speed of their collegial aid vied with the lightning rapidity of electronic communication.

But the book by T'nkār himself, printed at Smyrna in 1864,²⁹ still eluded me. Neither the British Library nor the Library of Congress nor the Bibliothèque Nationale de France possessed a copy; and it proved well-nigh impossible to contact the libraries of the two Mekhitarist monasteries at Venice and Vienna. (Perhaps T'nkār's papers are hiding in the Mechitharistengasse or on the isle of St. Lazzaro.) But my colleague and friend Prof. Valentina Calzolari of the University of Geneva (to whom I am also indebted for her close reading of the draft of this study and her many helpful comments) recommended I ask Dr.

²⁸ Seropyan 1999, vol. 2, p. 624; and Tuğlacı 2004.

²⁹ For the year 1864 there is but this mention of the T'nkārean clan recorded by Tuğlacı 2004, Vol. 2, p. 227: *8 Eylül 1864: Tınçırzade Ohannes Efendi'nin Der saadet Maliye Nezareti muaviniğine atanmasına irade buyruldu* "8 September 1864: Mr. Yovhannēs T'nkār at Constantinople was appointed to the post of assistant at the Ministry of Finance." Though the declaration is less than earth-shattering, it illustrates well the special privilege of *sarraf* enjoyed by the Armenian *amīras*.

Raymond Kévorkian, director of the AGBU Nubarian Library at Paris and an eminent Armenian historian, whether that collection might have the volume. And indeed, a copy of Tgransar's manual, perhaps the only one in existence, had been given in 1928 by an Armenian from Istanbul to Aram Andonian, the library's first director and author of *Mec oçir* ["The Great Crime"], one of the first histories of the Armenian Genocide. To my delight and astonishment, Dr. Kévorkian instantly provided a miraculous scan of the precious little book by e-mail; and you now hold it in your hands. (See Appendix 2.) The booklet deals with the writing system of Sehlerai and contains mainly the names of letters, diacritical marks, and numbers, with the single sentence quoted by the Italian authors of the encyclopedia noted above; the fuller grammar and dictionary Tnkar compiled have not yet come to light. And in March 2013 I received this letter:

Philippos Iliou Bibliology Workshop
Benaki Museum
Athens
Greece
To Mr. James R. Russell

Athens, March 18th 2013

Dear Mr Russell,

I am the responsible [director] of the "Philippos Iliou Bibliology Workshop" of the Benaki Museum, Athens, Greece (<http://www.benaki.gr/bibliology/>). Last Wednesday we received as a present a copy of the Sehlerai alphabet and we are sending you the scanned copy; some pages are missing. The book has been mentioned by the Greek *Bibliography* of Ghinis-Mexas (v. 3, 1957) as an edition of circa 1820. Philippos Iliou, who started the new edition of the Greek Bibliography of [the] 19th century that we are continuing, was not sure of the date and, as the copy was lacking, he did not include the entry in his description of the Greek books of the 1820's (posthumous v. 2, 2011), assuming that it might be a later edition.

After the copy (in which the date is not mentioned) reached our hands, my colleague Anastassia Mylonopoulou found your exciting article ("The Sehlerai Language." FL-000011-00, *Fiat Lingua*, <<http://fiatlingua.org>>. Web. 01 February 2013) and our question is whether we could also assume that the date is 1864 for the Greek edition as for the French one you have seen. As at the moment my colleague Sandra Vretta is preparing the (Greek) bibliography of Smyrna, we are looking forward to your answer.

We thank you very much for your attention and, of course, for your article.

Yours sincerely,
Popi Polemi.

The Greek version of *Ans haĭlanzar* is now appended to this article as Appendix 3, as it goes to the press (having been available for a while to conlangers on the Web), with thanks to the Benaki Museum. The place of publication is given in *katharevousa*, or neo-Classical Greek on the title page, *En Smyrnēi* "At Smyrna"; but the book is undated. Very likely it precedes the French edition by only a few years or even months. From the look of it, it came off the same presses.

We do not have much of Schlerai, then, but what we do possess is a lot better than nothing. And if one seeks the holy grail of the inventors of planned languages—the state of human fraternity and mutual assistance across religious confessions and national frontiers—one place it is surely to be found is on the electronic strands of the worldwide web, where collegial scholars, quiet heroes of the mind, weave the magical brocade of learning. And one can travel there, unlike the hobbit Bilbo Baggins, without leaving one's front door.

ANS HAĬLANZAR.

So here, finally, is the Book, *Ans Haĭlanzar ou Alpha-Gnomonomic de Seh-lerai: ouvrage*, by Tghransar, Petros T'nkər. Its Greek precursor lay before Dr. Stamatiadis, who published in *Bizantio* on September 30, 1921, these reflections on it, which I translate from the Esperanto:

For a long time people have not ceased to invent artificial languages as international ones. For this purpose they have from time to time proposed various projects, which belong to three different systems.

According to the first, the inventor proposed languages *a priori*, made without reference to languages already existent, such as those of Descartes (1629), Leibniz (1716), the Solresol of Sudre (1817), the Spokil of Dr. Nicholas (1900), etc.

According to the second type, they took into consideration the already existing languages, and, principally, the European ones: of this kind were those of Faiguet (1765), Schöpfer (1839), Zamenhof (Esperanto, published in the year 1887), and others. Finally, according to the third system, the projects are based upon both principles of the abovementioned schemes: of this kind were the languages of Von Grimm (1860), the Volapük of Pastor Schleyer (1880), the *langue bleue* of Bollach (1899), etc.

A project appeared again in the Near East, in olden time, of an artificial language to be employed as an international one. This one was named Sehlerai (Σελερών) and was published in the Greek language—at least the old undated booklet which we have before our eyes and introduce. It was published once, under the pseudonym Τγρανσάρ (Tgransar), which means, according to the language, 'intellectual movement'.

What distinguishes this old artificial language is that it can be written in three different ways: from above to below, from left to right, and from right to left. Before becoming acquainted with its strange alphabet, we consider it good to present the literal translation from Greek of the preface by the inventor. It will be evident therefrom, that 'There is nothing new under the sun,' and that the same principles that inspired our Master of blessed memory [i.e., Ludwik Zamenhof, who died four years earlier, in 1917] to invent Esperanto likewise impelled Tgransar to create Sehlerai. [Tgransar's preface from *Ans Hailanzar* follows, in Esperanto and Greek.]

The second and final installment of Stamatiadis' contribution in the next issue of *Bizantio*, October 31, 1921, presents in Esperanto and Greek the consonants, vowels, diacritics (all named, which is not done in the French booklet of 1864), the reading lesson (all of one sentence, the ditty cited above), and the numbers, in Esperanto and Greek. Here is an annotated translation of Tgransar's booklet, his ABC or *Ans hailanzar*, from the French. I have not put in the various invented characters, for which the reader is referred to the appended facsimile of the text. Where they are supposed to appear, I signify the space with hooked quotation marks, thus: < >.

Tgransar, *Ans Hailanzar*, or, an explanation of the rules of the alphabet of Seh-lerai. A work Smyrna, 1864.

Preface. It is a most natural tendency the world over to observe objects of curiosity and in particular to satisfy the sense of sight. That is taken for granted.

I now place before the eyes of the public a new object for observation, the product of a fantasy that is not fantasized—that is, the lovely form and basic model, the means of pronouncing the words of a new language called thus: Sehlerai, that is, a Universal Language, composed and enriched not as other languages are, by some taking from others, but original, entirely pure, from a single unsullied idea, or, to put it better, without imitation but invented through the faculties of the spirit and the imagination in direct relationship with the Natural Law, put in order in this language. For it would be absurd and unseemly to make a universal project such as this compatible with a particular, non-universal language.

It is already known that the most detestable calamity has sundered human hearts to espouse diverse preferences. There are nationalities in the world, and, by consequence, their languages and dialects. These are: the Chinese language and its relatives; the Chaldaean, and its; the Egyptian, and its; the Teutonic, and its; and

finally, the Illyrian, and its.³⁰ Of all these remarkably original tongues, the Chinese is the most lively in sound; the Chaldaean, crude; the Egyptian, majestic; the Teutonic, elegant; and the Illyrian, energetic. It follows that there are many languages, with their innumerable dialects, of which French has a charming and very touching quality, while English tickles, and is in our day the most profitable. This being the case, perhaps only an imbecile would venture upon the error of such a new linguistic form: in effect one might say, What purpose is served by such superfluous rubbish? Bah! It would have to end there, were it my purpose to add a new nation to the existing ones; and a new language, to the other tongues. Heaven forbid! To undertake any project, however excellent, that is detrimental to reason, is but a perversion of the same. Indeed, it would be the work of a hare-brained individual, for a good project is one that is forever and is advantageous.

Whatever the case may be, if it seems to those attached to our real world, a world that is morally topsy-turvy, that the creation of a universal language is bizarre, unnecessary, and, on the whole, a lot of garbage, I would recommend it to the various quotidian observers of such theatrical spectacles that likewise find an obstacle to acceptance of this offering of my modest invention that I present, most humbly, to the learned public, not as an exacerbation— a new national and linguistic divide— but to the contrary, as a possibly complete harmonization and means of connection.

At the outset I would wish to offer to public knowledge this *Alphabetar* (*Alpha-Gnomonic*), or Alphabet, of the language in question, in order to make study as easy as possible for the elementary students of SEHLERAI, who will be obliged always and in every way to remember with acknowledgment and gratitude, not me but the wisdom of the ineffable and supreme Providence.

Borrowed characters suitable for the pronunciation of the words of Sehlerai: h, in Latin, Italian, and French, for < > Y: Armenian for < > Z, z: Armenian for < > J: French for < > G: Latin, Italian, and French for < > B: for < > G: Latin and Italian for < > C: for < > D: for < > U: French for < > Armenian *shu* and French short e for < >. The rest are as in French.

Instruction in the *Alpha-Gnomonic* of the Universal Language. The basic characters of Sehlerai. Sehlerai (the Universal Language) is composed of nineteen syllabiforms. These characters are called syllabiforms because they are in effect syllables by reason of the value of their assumed vowel a, which can be deleted by means of a perpendicular stroke, thus < >, called *šekənāll*. This makes them equivalent to the letters of already known languages.³¹

In order to ensure from the start the most exact possible pronunciation of these forms, one lists them individually, with the pronunciation of each in French and Armenian, noting to either side the characters of the two ancient languages Hebrew and Arabo-Persian, as follows:³²

³⁰ By Chaldaean the author means "Semitic"; by Teutonic, "Germanic"; and by Illyrian, "Slavic."

³¹ T'nikar here borrows the scheme of Devanagari for Sanskrit, in which each letter is pronounced with a short a following unless a short diagonal stroke, the *śrīma*, is written at the lower right-hand corner of the character.

³² The list of letters commences on page 10 of the text, with the character in the center, the Hebrew equivalent to the left and the Arabic to the right, with the name of the letter in French above and Armenian below. I transcribe the Armenian in accordance with the Hübschmann-Meillet system; so the reader

- No. 1. Handizer, Heb. *h*, < >, Ar. *h*, *Hantizér*.
 No. 2. Iandizer, Heb. *y*, < >, Ar. *y*, *Eantizér*.
 No. 3. Landizer, Heb. *l*, < >, Ar. *l*, *Lantizér*.
 No. 4. Mandizer, Heb. *m*, < >, Ar. *m*, *Mantizér*.
 No. 5. Sandizer, Heb. *s*, < >, Ar. *s*, *Santizér*.
 No. 6. [No Fr.], Heb. *z*, < >, Ar. *z*, *Zantizér*.
 No. 7. Dzandizer, [no Heb.], < >, [no Ar.], *Contizér*.
 No. 8. Jandizer, [no Heb.], < >, [no Ar.],³³ *Zantizér*.
 No. 9. Chandizer, Heb. *š*, < >, Ar. *š*, *Šantizér*.
 No. 10. Gandizer, Heb. *q*, < >, Ar. *q*, *Kantizér*.
 No. 11. Fandizer, Heb. *f*, < >, Ar. *f*, *Fantizér*.
 No. 12. Vandizer, Heb. *v*, < >, Ar. *v*, *Vantizér*.
 No. 13. Bandizer, Heb. *b*, < >, Ar. *b*, *Pantizér*.
 No. 14. Nandizer, Heb. *n*, < >, Ar. *n*, *Nantizér*.
 No. 15. Gandizer, [no Heb.], < >, Ar. *j*, *Čantizér*.
 No. 16. Ciandizer, [no Heb.], < >, [no Ar.], *Čiantizér*.
 No. 17. Dandizer, Heb. *d*, < >, Ar. *d*, *Tantizér*.
 No. 18. [No Fr.], Heb. *r*, < >, Ar. *r*, [no Arm.].
 No. 19. Ghandizer, [no Heb.], < >, Ar. *gh*, *Lantizér*.

Chapter One. Function of syllabiforms.

No. 1. Handizer (syllable of *hʾaʾ*), the first consonant, with its assumed vowel *a*, has three sounds: 1. In its own basic form, simply formed, it is equivalent to the character *h* in Latin, Italian, etc. 2. When it has a point on top of its upper hook it takes the value of Hebrew *h*, Arabic *kh*, Greek *χ*, and Armenian *x*. 3. When it has a circle in the same position it renders an *éye* [perhaps a misprint for *éye*, "chiming"?] sound, or one like the breath of birds or their likes, which one can note and produce with the characters of other known languages.

No. 2. Iandizer (syllable of *ia*). This has a single pronunciation, identical to Hebrew *y*, Arabic *y*, and Armenian *e* [i.e., *ye*, with on-glide].

No. 3. Landizer (syllable of *la*). It takes the place of the three following sounds: In its simple, basic form it is equivalent to Latin, French, and Italian *l*, Hebrew *l*, Arabic *l*, and Armenian *l*. When it is marked with an accent like a circumflex, thus < >, or sometimes by two points, thus < >, at the ends of words, this signifies gemination, or at the end a doubling vibration of the same character, performed by touching the tongue to the palate and sliding it at once, as in English.

No. 4. Mandizer (syllable of *ma*). The shape of one sound only, equivalent to the *m* of French, Italian, etc., Arabic *m* and Armenian *m*.

No. 5. Sandizer (syllable of *sa*), the basic radical of five sounds: 1. Written simply, it is equivalent to the *s* of Latin, French, etc., Arabic *s*, and Armenian *s*. [2.] Marked by a sinuous line like the Greek perispomene at the middle and bottom, thus < >, it becomes equivalent to Greek *θ* and French *th*. 3. Surmounted by a

should keep in mind that in T'nikar's Western Armenian the voiced stops are unvoiced and vice-versa, the diphthong *ea* is pronounced /ya/, etc.

³³ There is of course the Persian and Ottoman Turkish *z*: the Arabic *r* with three dots above it; it is noted and printed in the discussion of syllabiform no. 8, so its absence seems to be one of a number of errors for which one can but commiserate with the harried typesetter!

semicircle thus < >, it produces the sound of French *z*, or the radical *s* *nakkōni* (?) in a *Sehlerāi* word. 4. Surmounted by a hook touched by a point at the right edge, thus < >, it is pronounced like French or Italian *xā* and Greek *ξ*, while if deprived by a *šerkōdāl* of its *a*-vowel, thus < >, it becomes equivalent to Greek *ξ* and French *x*. 5. When it is surmounted by the miniature syllabiform < > of no. 9, thus < >, it is pronounced like Russian *uz*, Italian *scia*, and Armenian *əḥ'ia*.

No. 6. *Zandizer* (syllable of *zā*), written as a simple radical. But written with a point below, thus < >, it has the value of Armenian *c* [in the Hübschmann-Meillet system in *W. Arm.*, *dz*], and does not differ from the following base syllable

No. 7. *Dzandizer* (syllable of *dza*). Finally, touched by another point below, thus < >, it renders the stronger sound of *zā*: Hebrew *z* or Armenian *j* [Hübschmann-Meillet; in *W. Arm.*, *z*].

No. 8. *Jandizer* (syllable of *ja*). The pronunciation of this form is identical to French *j*, Armenian *ž*, and Persian *ž*.

No. 9. *Chandizer* (syllable of *ča*). This has only one sound, of the same pronunciation as Arabic *č* and Armenian *ž*.

No. 10. *Gandizer* (syllable of *ga*). In simple form as a radical it is pronounced like *gā*, or Arabic *g*, or Persian *g*. If there is a point touching the top, thus < >, it becomes the equivalent of French and Italian *k*, Arabic *k*, and Armenian *k'*.

No. 11. *Fandizer* (syllable of *fa*). This form has only one sound, equivalent to French *f*, Arabic *f*, and Armenian *f*.

No. 12. *Vandizer* (syllable of *wa*). This form has only one sound, and is pronounced like French and Italian *v*; Hebrew *v*; Arabic *v*; and Armenian *v*.

No. 13. *Bandizer* (syllable of *bā*), a form with two sounds. The basic one, without a point, is equivalent to French *b*, Arabic *b*, and Armenian *p* [pron. *b* in *W. Arm.*]. The other, touched by a point on the right edge and above its circular figure, thus < >, or else to the left side, thus < >, is equivalent in value to French *p*, Persian *p*, and Armenian *b* [pron. *p* in *W. Arm.*].

No. 14. *Nandizer* (syllable of *nā*): the form has only one sound, equivalent to French *n*, Arabic *n*, and Armenian *n*.

No. 15. *Giandizer* (syllable of *giā*): the form has only one sound, equivalent to Latin and Italian *g*, Arabic *j*, and Armenian *č* [pron. *j* in *W. Arm.*]; French *g* has a corresponding character.

No. 16. *Ciandizer* (syllable of *ciā*). The form has only one sound, corresponding to Latin and Italian *c*, Persian *č*, and Armenian *j* [pron. *č* in *W. Arm.*]; French *c* has a corresponding character.

No. 17. *Dandizer* (syllable of *dā*), the base form, with four sounds: 1. Written simply, it is equivalent to French and Italian *d*. 2. Pointed in the middle above, thus < >, it has the sound of French and Italian *t*, Arabic *t*, and Armenian *t'*. 3. Surmounted by a semicircle, thus < >, it becomes equivalent to Greek *θ* [i.e., Modern Gk. *th*]. 4. Finally, < > surmounted by the same semicircle renders the sound of Greek *θ* and French *th*. But one must take care not to confuse the form with the perispomene of no. 5, < >, with this character of the same value, keeping in mind that the latter, always in the middle, interiorly, has an entirely particular function characteristic of abstract nouns in *Sehlerāi*.

No. 18. *Randizer* (syllable of *rā*) is a base form with two sounds. Written simply it is equivalent to French and Italian *r*, Arabic *r*, Hebrew *r*, and Armenian *r*.

Reinforced by a point, thus < >, it renders the sound of Greek 'ρ or Armenian 'r [i.e., a trilled r], almost equivalent to the value of French, Latin, and Italian *br*.

(No.) 19. Ghandizer (syllable of *gha*), a base form with two sounds. Written simply, it is of the same pronunciation understood by French *gh*, Greek γ, Arabic *gh*, or Armenian / [pron. *gh*]; and being marked thus, by a point [not shown], it produces a guttural sound cruder and more forceful than either Arabic *gh* or Armenian /, while < > pointed by no. 10 introduces a more mitigated sound, between a strong [Arm.] *x* and the natural [Ar.] *kh* and [Arm.] *x*, equivalent to the χ of Greek. And that suffices for the entire function of the consonants of the universal language.

Second chapter. Vocalization, or the movement of the syllabiforms in Sehlerai. The first grade of pupils studying and memorizing the forms and function of the 19 syllabiforms of Sehlerai, following their precise image and punctual delineation, are to progress directly to the study of their vowels, this being absolutely necessary in order to execute the act of reading.

Now, the vowels in question most current for the pronunciation of the words of this universal language are 12 in number, beginning with < >. An *a* is assumed for every syllabiform, as I have already mentioned earlier; and when it is marked within with the figure of a Greek or Latin comma, thus < >, it renders the sound of Hebrew 'אָ and Arabic 'اَ, while the rest is as follows [the Latin transcription is followed by the Arm., which I italicize]:

No. 2. < > *e* *é*

No. 3. < > *i* *î*

No. 4. < > *o* *ô*

No. 5. < > *eu* *ëu*

No. 6. < > short *e* *ə*

No. 7. < > *ou* *û*

No. 8. < > *u* *ü*

No. 9. < > *iou* *ïo*

No. 10. < > *iu* *iü* [Arm. *iü* represents the diphthong *yü*]

No. 11. < > *ieou* *ïéu*

No. 12. < > *ieu* *ïéu*

Note: It is evident and perfectly clear to all grammarians that the five vowels *a*, *e*, *i*, *o*, and *u* are simple ones, the rest being compounds, or diphthongs. The two last and most complicated are < >, *ieou*, < > *ieou*— *ïéu*, *ïéü*— whose use in Sehlerai is most rare and perhaps serves when necessary to pronounce certain Chinese words and the like.

Now, those beginning the study of Sehlerai, after having strictly imprinted upon their imagination the preceding consonantal forms, as well as their vowels delineated above, must now apply themselves to combining them together and making syllables of them, carefully following the combinations below:

< > *he* *hê*

< > *hi* *hî*

< > *ho* *hô*

< > *héu* *hëu*

< > *he* *hə*

< > *hou* *hü*

<> hu hūw
 <> hīou hūw
 <> hūa hūw
 <> hīeou hūw
 <> hīeu hūw

Then one must practice sufficiently before syllabifying, with each separate consonant with its vowels on the same model, which is done by changing only the successive consonants: that is, in the place of *hū*, one puts an *īa*, then *ūa*, and so forth— which I think it superfluous to repeat here to my ingenious pupil. Still, if he wishes to practice only with the formal representation of their aspects, and one by one, he can see them in my Prototype paradigm in Greek, where all 19 consonants are arranged and set in motion, explicitly.³⁴

Note: The vowels ought to be proportional to their syllabiforms as much as possible, so students at the outset are to arrange them between two evenly spaced lines, the adornment being thus lovelier. And this is a most necessary exercise, whereby you behold them at every instant, and at every point, to ravish them as bees do flowers, in order to produce the most exquisite sweetness of this universal language.

Third chapter. The diacritic signs of Sehlerai.³⁵ The comma is an inverted triangle, thus

< >, when pointed in this way < >, it marks the division of a phrase. The full stop to end a sentence is a round mark and appears thus, < >. Accent is a line inclined slightly to the right, thus < >, and must always be written under the syllable to be accented. The question mark is a perpendicular stroke capped above by a semicircle, thus < >, which is written at the end and sometimes under the *serkendil*s of words that bear the sense of a question.³⁶ The exclamation point is likewise a perpendicular stroke with a hook just to one side, thus < >, or sometimes inclined thus [not shown], when its hook is placed upon the accent of an interjection. Note: The doubling of syllabiforms (a variety of the Arabic *talafuz*)³⁷ is

³⁴ This would clearly be the earlier pamphlet to which Stamatiadis had access. The table would have resembled somewhat the scheme of Ethiopic, in which each consonant is altered in shape slightly by the vowel added to it.

³⁵ The text from which Stamatiadis worked gives the Sehlerai names of the signs of punctuation, which he renders in Esperanto (and Greek): *komo* [comma], *raniedil*; *punkto* [period, full stop], *periendil*; *malakuta akcento* [accent grave], *prondil*; *demanda punkto* [question mark], *aisendil*; *eckria punkto* [exclamation point], *fran-safrandil*; *signo pro la koincido de la radikaj elementoj* [sign for the coming together of radicals, i.e., gemination], *sefrkendil*; *signo por korekti la malbonsonecon* [sign for the correction of cacophony], *ferurindil* (Tg[h]ransar 1921, part 2, p. 100). In the original Sehlerai each name would have ended with a double *i*; cf. the spelling of *serkendil* in the 1864 text, above.

³⁶ Here T'nsar adopts the usage of Armenian, whose question mark is a diacritical sign placed above the stressed syllable of the questioning word in a phrase, rather than at the end of the sentence as in English.

³⁷ This is the common Arabic-in-Persian term that T'nsar would have known from either Persian or Ottoman Turkish, grammarians of Arabic themselves preferring to call the symbol *sedda*, literally "strengthening," a sign of gemination.

done with two points separated by a *šerkerāšū*, and is called a *šerkerāšū*, thus < >. Finally, to soften and assimilate two dissonant consonants found at the end of a word and the beginning of another, one uses the sign < >, called *šerkerāšū* (see the rest in the Grammar).³⁸

Reading lesson. < >.

Accent.

hrošm chāš īram, bes lerāi
vom chāšz illē sam
lerāi ioun sem mimserāi
vam chāšz illē som;

[in Armenian transliteration]

Hron šay, eirou, pēs širay sōm
šēšzū lē sam:
Lerāy eirōm, mimšeray sōm
šēšzūllē sōm.

Meaning.

One language on all the earth,
A plethora of sciences is worth more
Than various languages in great number
Which scarcely contain any knowledge.

Nota bene. Seh-lerāi may be written in three ways: right to left, left to right, and in vertical columns like Chinese. Even the existential law itself is written together in all three fashions (see it in its place).³⁹

Fourth chapter. The numbers, or, characters for noting the numbers in Seh-lerāi. Aside from its alphabetic characters, Seh-lerāi is also the possessor of its own arithmetical signs to mark numbers, following the forms below:

< > 1 aik *ayk*⁴
< > 2 fir *fir*
< > 3 chia *šia*
< > 4 hun *šōw*
< > 5 ghir *kir*

³⁸ *Feruriundill* seems to follow the practice of consonantal *sandhi* in Sanskrit grammar and orthography. In the writing of the classical Indian language one does not separate words in writing a phrase, and an unvoiced stop at the end of one word is harmonized to a voiced stop at the beginning of the next, for instance, by being written as its voiced equivalent (t becomes d; k goes to g; p changes to b; etc.). Whaddaya mean? The same thing happens in actual English speech; but since we separate words in writing the phonetic process is not represented on the page, except when reproducing colloquial north-eastern American ("What do you mean?").

³⁹ This would presumably refer to some recapitulation of Rousseau's *loi naturelle* in the credo of a universal religion intended to accompany Sehlerai, the international language.

- <>6 ūks ūk's
- <>7 fiks fīk's
- <>8 chūks šūk's
- <>9 lūks lūk's
- <>10 jūrai žiray
- <>11 akmanjir ak'manvāzīr
- <>12 firmanjir firmanvāzīr
- <>13 chāmanjir chāmanvāzīr
- <>14 leumanjir leumanvāzīr
- <>15 ghīmanjir ghīmanvāzīr
- <>16 īksmanjir īk'smanvāzīr
- <>17 fīksmanjir fīk'smanvāzīr
- <>18 chīksmanjir chīk'smanvāzīr
- <>19 lūksmanjir lūk'smanvāzīr
- <>20 firajjir firajjīr
- <>21 akmanfijir ak'manvāzīr
- <>30 chirajjir chirajjīr
- <>31 akmanchijir ak'manvāzīr
- <>40 leuraijir leuraijīr
- <>41 akmanhijir ak'manvāzīr
- <>50 ghīmanjir ghīmanvāzīr
- <>60 īksanjir īk'sanjīr
- <>70 fīksanjir fīk'sanjīr
- <>80 chīksanjir chīk'sanjīr
- <>90 lūksanjir lūk'sanjīr
- <>100 jaiurai žayiray
- <>1000 jerōm žerōm
- <>10,000 jerāi i jerom žirayajirōm
- <>1,000,000 jeromkom žerōmk'ōm
- <>10,000,000 jeronikari jerom kom žerōmk'arīžerōmk'ōm

Note: These arithmetical characters, as one can see, are formed in an ordered system, of which the basis is a point, augmented successively. It is written from left to write and with a composite system. This is done intentionally to abbreviate the writing of the characters and to abridge them even when one is computing mentally. Still, if one wants to express them also according to the methods of arithmetic, it will go much better that way for beginning students. As to an alternative function for these characters, note well that the same numerical symbols up to seven render also the notes of the [musical] scale, when one writes them in their entirety at a slant and uses for the sharps the division of a *sekeradill*.

And for the concise instruction in Seh-lerai, that suffices.

The End.

Advertisement. The studious pupil, after having studied assiduously my little course of primary instruction in Seh-lerai is then to have the grammar, after its dictionary, which are already complete and ready to be printed, at the service of the public, with sole thanks for the assistance of divine Providence.

Table of Contents of this work, the *Alpha-gnomonic*.
Page 7. Preface.

9. Characters loaned for pronunciation, etc.

9. Instruction in the *Alpha-gnomonic*.

17. Ch. 1. The function of the syllabiforms.

21. Ch. 2. Movement of the syllabiforms.

25. Ch. 3. Signs of punctuation.

27. Reading lesson.

28. The numbers of Seh-lerai.

32. Advertisement.

And that, to the best of my knowledge, is all that is known or can be known, on present evidence, about Seh-lerai, though I should be happy to be discover the lost Grammar and Dictionary. What can we extract from it? *Seh-lerai* means "universal language"; and from the rhymed reading passage it is plain *lerai* means "language," with the base *ler-* and *-ai* most likely a suffix; cf. *žirai* "ten" alone but *žir-* "ten" in compounds. The name *Tghransar* means "moved by mind"; and the title *Ans hallanzar* means "Alpha-gnomonic." The first syllabiforms are H, Y, and L; accounting for *hall-*, "ABC"; that leaves the suffixes *-sar* and *-zar* meaning, most likely, "mind" and "gnomic"; and *ay-zer-* "wisdom" (in *Ayzeratand*; *tand-* pronounced, of course, *dant-* then meaning "temple," with the final *-t* perhaps the marker of an abstract noun and the root word then possibly inspired by Pers. *dān*, "container," from which is Arm. *-aran*?) with the initial sibilant modified by verbal *sandhi*; and to this same root having to do with thought or order one might add *-zer*, probably "form," with a different vowel gradation, in *X-anti-+zer*, "syllabiform of X". (Could the ending *-antfi* be participial, and thus from Indo-European?) The base *tigr-* would then mean "move"; and *ans*, "law." The *-en* and *-an(t)* would thus be nominal suffixes in compounds (in numbers, *-an-* means "times"). So we can analyze *šerkendill*, the *virāma* stroke that cuts away the *-a* following each syllabiform consonant, as *šerk-* "cut," *-en* suffix, and *dill* "line," following which we can derive the bases *ram-* "comma," *peri-* "stop," *pron-* "accent," *aiš-* "question," *fran-šafr-* "exclamation" with related *šefir-k-* "geminatation" (with the shared root *šafr-* meaning something like "intensify"), and *feriuri-* "harmony" (perhaps sharing a root with *fr-an*?). The bases *peri-* and *pron-* sound like they have Indo-European prepositions as their precursors. But when one deals with an avowedly *a priori* language, and one for which so little evidence exists besides, such impressions may be mere mirages. Returning to the reading sample in verse, *seh-* would be "universal"; and *šaiž-ille*, "sciences." Supposing a use of vowel gradation as above, *sam/sem/som* might mean "plethora, many, hardly any"; whilst rhyming

vom/vam could be the connective terms of the comparative "more... than." *Bes* would be "one only, sole" (for *aik* is ordinal "one", cf. Sanskrit *eka*-, Persian *yek*); and *iun*, "various". The phrase *hrum šai iram* could be "on all earth" in that order, with *rum/ram* a pair with the root sense "surface" perhaps. All roads, a Greek or Armenian might say, lead to Hrum (for a rough breathing must precede the initial R of the name of the Eternal City where the itinerant Bedros briefly sojourned)... The numbers give us *-mun*-, "and, plus" and *-om*, the marker of a hundred. Most of these decipherments are of necessity hypothetical and could quite easily be wrong.

Bedros Tghransar, whom I like to imagine, not as "moved by mind" but as an immovable Tigransar, a lonely mountaintop (Arm. *sar*) with the proud name of the Armenian king of the first century B.C., Tigran II the Great (and, *inter alia*, the invented *nom de plume* encodes his outer-world surname, *T-n-g-r*, so for all we know there is a three-way word-play hidden here), shows a marked predilection in his *a priori* language (the only word I have found related to anything is that for "one") for monosyllabic roots—a nod, perhaps, to Chinese, for which he seems to have a particular regard and consciousness. Though his alphabet provides amply for Arm. *ts*, *dz*, *ch*, and *ch'*, these are strikingly absent from what little Seh-lerai we have; and the value of the vowels follows French, not Armenian: the vowel spelled as *-u* is frequent but to be pronounced as in French, transliterated into Arm. as *-iu*- /yu/, not *-ow*- /u/. It would have been a cumbersome language, no matter whether written left to right, right to left, or from the top down. Yet one hopes the poems, grammar, and glossary may yet be discovered.

At the beginning of Kevork H. Gulian's *Elementary Modern Armenian Grammar* (printed by the Vienna Mekhitarists) is this quotation from Lord Byron (who stayed at San Lazzaro with the Venice Mekhitarists in 1816, when Bedros was a seminarian at Vienna): "I have begun, and am proceeding, in the study of the Armenian language ... It is a rich language, and would amply repay any one the trouble of learning it." Few take that trouble; and although the dervish-like Bedros evidently had frequent callers at his temple of wisdom with its cabinet of curiosities and somber tomb, we are told that they contented themselves with French translations of his verses, so one feels fewer still learned Seh-lerai. But this fleeting acquaintance with a nineteenth-century eccentric, intellectual, and idealist does afford an intriguing glimpse into the rich diversity of late Ottoman Armenian life and letters, and that is ample repayment. As though the quest were anything but an exciting adventure in any case.

AN ELEGY FOR SMYRNA.

Smyrna, Izmir, Zmiwînîa—the second largest city of the Ottoman Empire—was the major trade emporium of the Aegean and a cosmopolis of culture, enlightenment, and sophistication. It stood in the heart of ancient Hellenic Ionia: Homer was born, according to traditional legend, on the nearby island of Chios. Armenians are known from the thirteenth century and their numbers grew following the collapse of the Cilician kingdom in the fourteenth century and the chaotic conditions in the Anatolian heartland during the Jalali rebellions of the seventeenth century. The Church of St. Stephen was built in the sixteenth century and restored in 1853. The first Armenian printing press of Smyrna opened in the eighteenth century (T'ëodik gives the precise year 1676, however, as the date when the *Tparan S. Êymiacni ew S. Sargisi Zôravarî*, "Press of Holy Echmiadzin and St. Sergius the *Strategos*" opened its doors); and in the nineteenth century the city was a center of Western missionary operations, with Mekhitarist schools (the first one founded in 1847), Protestant presses, etc.

The majority of Smyrniotes were Greeks; the Armenian quarter, Haynoc', was next door to the Jewish one. In 1841 the American traveler Valentine Mott wrote of the Armenians of Smyrna, which he calls the Paris of the Levant, "These people have their own quarter, and are numerous and wealthy, of fine persons and great dignity of deportment, and wear a costume of their own, of which the huge cap is the most striking." He then describes vividly a church service in Haynoc'.⁴⁰ In 1861, the city had about 124,000 inhabitants.

Armenians were prominent in commerce, with trading connections at Trieste, Vienna, and Manchester, but never numbered more than 15,000 or so. It was a city of the Armenian cultural renaissance: major figures include the author Grigor Č'ilingirian; the philologist Galust Kostandian; the lexicographer Mesrop Nuparian; the poet Rubën Vorberian; and many others. Major institutions included the Mesropian School and Surb Lusaworič' (Holy Illuminator) National Hospital. A number of benevolent societies functioned, including the Siwneac', Aragacuneac', and Haykazean. The prominent Freemason Matt'ëos Mamurian shines perhaps most brightly in the constellation of Smyrna Armenian intellectuals of the day: he translated Voltaire, Dumas, Goethe, Lessing, Stendhal, and Tolstoy, wrote the social critique *English Letters* mentioned earlier in this study, and championed an Armenian woman writer, Srbuhi Tiwsap, in her struggle to make a career in *belles lettres*.⁴¹ The publishing

⁴⁰ Cited in Ghazarian 1997, p. 308.

⁴¹ See Hovannisian 2012; for pictures of the Haynoc', S. Step'anos, and the Mesropian school, see Kévorkian and Paboudjian 1992, pp. 160–172. Köker 2005, p. 133 pl. 278, provides an illustration of the church of the Capuchin

house of the Dedeyan Brothers, mentioned above, was founded in 1851: among its publications was a book on Joseph Balsamo, or Cagliostro, the enigmatic Freemason of legend and conspiracy theory.⁴² "(Smyrna's) prosperity," wrote the American traveler John Price Durbin in 1845, "is to be attributed chiefly to the capital of the Armenians, and the commerce of the Greeks and Franks, that is, to the Christian population," of a country, he adds darkly and presciently, "in which, though they be subjects, they are not citizens." (This could be the epitaph of millions of Mercurians of the twentieth century.)⁴³

The nineteenth century was a time of hope for progress in the Ottoman Empire punctuated by Imperial decrees that expanded, or purported to expand, the liberties and protection of individuals and national-religious minorities: in 1839, the edict *Hatt-i Şerif* guaranteed life and property; the *Hatt-i Humâyûn* of 1856 expanded these reforms and liberties; the Tanzimat period of 1839-1876 saw the formation of commercial and criminal courts and the establishment of a unified customs tariff; and at the mid-point of the nineteenth century Victor Hugo prophesied that in a hundred years Constantinople would be the capital of the world.

In 1863, one year before the printing of T'nkār's manual of *Seh-lerai*, Armenians celebrated the promulgation of a national Constitution (*Sahmanadrut'iwn*) codifying their communal rights. The poet Bedros Tourian in a prose poem evoked that Constitution as a mighty ship sailing into a shining future. But that future might better be seen as the Titanic. The massacres of Armenians in 1894-1896 were the whiff of arctic cold; and the 1908 revolution of the Young Turks was the ghostly ice mountain looming suddenly in the dark, with its murderous submarine mass cutting a gash in the hull in the black waters below the surface where lights glittered and the band played.

The metaphorical ship carrying the passengers celebrating their century of progress, with all its bright hopes, went down in the night; and all historical Armenia was destroyed. Smyrna itself was spared, for a time. The horrors of the Genocide of 1915 bypassed the city: it was too profitable a place, nearly all *gâvur* "infidel" Smyrna was Christian, and there were too many foreign eyes trained on the city. After the Great War the Greeks invaded Ionia, pursuing the phantom of Venizelos' *megalē idea*, but what had begun as a triumphal sweep towards Angora ended as a rout. In early September 1922, a few days short of one year after

priests at Buca (Boudja), the village where Petros T'nkār lived. It is a pleasant white building in a park of cypresses.

⁴² See T'ëodik 1912, pp. 133-138, on the history of Armenian publishing in the city.

⁴³ Cited by Ghazarian 1997, p. 330.

the publication in *Bizantio* of Stamatiadis' "*La lingvo Sehlerai*," Turkish forces under the command of Mustafa Kemal (the hero of the defense of Gallipoli, soon to be dubbed Atatürk, "Father of the Turks") conquered Smyrna. His men forced its Christian inhabitants to the quayside and systematically burned the great city behind milling, teeming crowds, in such a conflagration as history had not known hitherto. Thousands were massacred in the town and on death marches into the interior. Turkish troops waded into the helpless multitude at the shore, severing limbs and casting victims into the sea, even as the crews of Allied warships moored in the harbor watched impassively, sometimes turning up their gramophones to drown out the clamor. Fleets of Greek fishing boats rescued some of the survivors, and ancient Athens saw the construction of a new kind of city, a refugee quarter, Nea Smyrnē. But in a matter of days in September 1922, the largest and most secular, cosmopolitan city of the eastern Mediterranean, the embodiment of the proposition that Muslim, Jew, and Christian might live and prosper together, had ceased to exist.

The grim story is well known: the American consul and eyewitness George Horton published his scathing *Blight of Asia* four years after the disaster, and his white hot fury still burns through the pages. Marjorie Housepian, professor of English and dean of Barnard College, published in 1971 her meticulously researched *Smyrna 1922*, whose archival sources and testimonies recount the horror with a different, cool precision that makes the blood of the reader, too, run cold. Most recently, Giles Milton, *Paradise Lost: Smyrna, 1922*, fills out the record with a lyrical memoir of the opulent life that preceded the sudden and utter destruction: the villas, parties, cinemas, cafes, theaters, sports clubs, daily papers in a score of languages.

Marge Housepian-Dobkin is the mother of one of my oldest friends and Columbia classmate, Stephen Andrew Johnson. Though I first met her when I was an undergraduate, I first read her book a few years later as a graduate student at Oxford, opening it early one fall evening at the Wadham College library and meaning to read for an hour, only to finish the last pages in the chill morning after a sleepless night. The murder of an entire modern city and the world's indifference on a scale just as grand became a precedent for both vast crimes and moral oblivion. As I write these lines one of the oldest cities on earth, magnificent Aleppo, with its vibrant Armenian community dating back to the Middle Ages, is being destroyed and not a single world power is helping its population. One recalls the Nazi massacre at Babi Yar and then the silence captured in Yevtushenko's poem: Над Бабьим Яром памятников нет:/ Крутой обрыв, как грубое надгробье. "There is no monument over Babi Yar:/ A steep

ridge, like a crude grave piled." There is a monument on the outskirts of Kiev now; but memory in the rebuilt Izmir belongs to the victors, who were mass murderers like the Nazis, not liberators like the Red Army. And each calendar day of the deadly month Eylûl/September of conquest and destruction has become the gloating name of an Izmir street, or a square. The officially defined, homogeneous *türkîlik*, "Turkishness," of the present has no room for the cosmopolitan babel of Greek, Armenian, Ladino, French, Italian ... or *Seh-lerai*. Yet there are cracks widening in the wall of silence, and Turkish scholars and humanists themselves (for there is no such thing as a criminal nation) are, more and more loudly, speaking the truth of history. Some day when the entire record is written, perhaps this small study will be a footnote. I tried in a book to render the homage he felt his due to young Bedros of Constantinople, the poet; and here I have attempted the rescue of another Bedros from the same city, then of Smyrna, of Boudja and Aspra Khomata, of Paradise lost, from oblivion.

The square stone edifice of the man alone on the hill, the Ayzeratand, is gone, too, though here memory is not entirely dead. For the place at Buca where the Temple of Wisdom once stood is still called Tingirtepe, "T'nkər Hill"; and upon its summit is now a statue (see Plate 4), frozen in its whirling dance, of the thirteenth century Persian poet and mystic Mevlana Celaleddin Rumi (Maulānā Jalāl al-Dīn Rūmī), whose tomb at Konya in western Turkey is a major pilgrimage site. Rumi had espoused a mystical strand of Islam, Sufism, that addresses God through love, as Christians are taught to do. Rumi taught his dervish disciples through poems, parables, meditation, chanting, melodies, and the dance; and he shunned the divisions of language and creed as illusion and wickedness. Some of the mourners who joined his funeral procession, indeed, were Armenians. There, there, in that undiscovered country from whose bourne no traveler returns, there where there are no dogmatic religions, divisive ideologies, or determined nationalisms, there Mevlana and Bedros, and Bedros, walk together.

Here on earth, happily, the Tingir clan survives, and here my evidence is photographic: Dr. Raffi Tingir describes the family pictures from Istanbul he has kindly provided, here Plates 5-7 (letter of 27 November 2012): "The first picture has my father Nurhan with his brother Levon (with glasses) and their father Mihran, *circa* 1952. The second picture depicts three generations of Tingirs: my younger brother Zohrab and I, with our father Nurhan and paternal grandfather Mihran Tingir, *circa* 1959. The third picture shows the Armenian-American author William Saroyan visiting with my maternal grandparents, father, brother

and me, circa 1962. Bedros Tingir is three, four, and five generations apart, respectively, from Mihran, Nurhan and Raffi."

May Bedros' family prosper. To him, to them, and to the gentle dreamers and inventors of a peaceful future, I dedicate this work.

LIST OF PLATES

- 1-3: Pages of the Folger MS.
- 4. Tingirtepe, Buca, Izmir.
- 5-7. The Tingir family, Istanbul, 1952-1962.

LIST OF APPENDICES

- 1. Tg(h)ransar [Petros T'nkorean], "La lingvo Sehlerai" (Esperanto tr. from Gk. by Anakreōn Stamatiadēs), *Bizantio: Esperantikē Epitheōrēsis, Revue rédigée en esperanto, en Grec, et en Français*, 1.3, Constantinople, 30 Sept. 1921, p. 64; 2nd part in *Bizantio* 1.4, 31 Oct. 1921, p. 99.
- 2. Tghransar, *Ans Hailanzar ou Alpha-Gnomonomic de Seh-lerai: ouvrage*, Smyrne, 1864.
- 3. *Ansailanzar, Sehlerakon Alfabētaron, En Smyrnē*, n.d. (the Greek version of *Ans Hailanzar*).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Paolo Albani and Berlinghiero Buonarroti, *Aga Magéra Difūra: Dizionario delle lingue immaginarie*, Bologna: Zanichelli, 1994.
- Sebouh David Aslanian, *From the Indian Ocean to the Mediterranean: The Global Trade Networks of Armenian Merchants from New Julfa*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2011.
- Abraham Y. Ayvazean, *Šar hay kensagrut'eanc'* ["Series of Armenian biographies"], parts I-III, Constantinople: Tpagrutiwn G. Paltatlean [K. Baghdadlian Printers], 1893.
- Alessandro Bausani, "About a curious mystical language *Bāl-a i-Balan*," *East and West*, Year IV, No. 3, Rome: IsMEO, 1954, pp. 234-238.
- Rubēn Berberean, "*Hay masōnner ew 'Sēr' ot'eakə Polsoy maj*" ["The Armenian Masons and the Lodge *Sēr* ('Love') in Constantinople"], *Hayrenik' amsagir* ["Hairenik Monthly"], Mar.-Jul. 1967.
- E. Drezen, *Historio de Mondolingvo*, 3rd ed., Osaka: Pirato, 1967.

Vatche Ghazarian, ed., *Armenians in the Ottoman Empire: An Anthology of Transformation, 13th-19th Centuries*, Waltham, MA: Mayreni Publishing, 1997.

R.G. Hovannisian, ed., *Armenian Smyrna/Izmir: The Aegean Communities*, UCLA Armenian History and Culture Series: Armenian Cities and Provinces 11, Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2012.

John T. Irwin, *American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1980.

Raymond Kévorkian, Paul B. Paboudjian, *Les Arméniens dans l'Empire Ottoman à la veille du génocide*, Paris: Arhis, 1992.

Osman Köker, ed., *Armenians in Turkey 100 Years Ago, with the Postcards from the Collection of Orlando Carlo Calumeno*, Istanbul: Birzamanlar Yayıncılık, 2005.

H.C. Robbins Landon, *Mozart and the Masons: New Light on the Lodge "Crowned Hope"*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1982 (2nd ed., 1991).

Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, New York: International Publishers, 1968.

S. Brent Morris, *The Folger Manuscript: The Cryptanalysis and Interpretation of an American Masonic Manuscript*, Bloomington, IN: The Masonic Book Club, 1992.

Paul Nettl, *Mozart and Masonry*, New York: Philosophical Library, 1957.

Arika Okrent, *In the Land of Invented Languages*, New York: Spiegel and Grau, 2010.

Vahe Oshagan, "Cosmopolitanism in West Armenian Literature," in Vahe Oshagan, ed., *Armenia, Review of National Literatures* Vol. 13, New York, 1984, pp. 194-212.

Mario Pei, *One Language for the World*, New York: Biblo and Tannen, 1968.

Fr. Ep'rem Pölosean, *Guyumčean ew Tənkərean gerdastannerə* [German title: *Die Familien Kouyoumdjian und Tingir*], Vienna: Mxit'arean tparan (Mechitharisten-Buchdruckerei), 1951.

Andrew Robinson, *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-François Champollion*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

James R. Russell, "The Craft and Mithraism Reconsidered," *Proceedings of the American Lodge of Research (Masonic)*, Vol. 18, New York, 1989, pp. 15-28.

J.R. Russell, "Mithraism and Freemasonry," *Heredom*, Vol. 4, Scottish Rite Southern Jurisdiction, Washington, DC, 1995, pp. 269-87.

J.R. Russell, *Bosphorus Nights: The Complete Lyric Poems of Bedros Tourian*, Armenian Heritage Press and Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 10, Cambridge, MA, 2005.

J.R. Russell, "The Script of the Dove: An Armenian Hetaerogram," *Journal of Armenian Studies*, Belmont, MA, Vol. IX, Nos. 1-2, 2010, pp. 61-108.

J.R. Russell, "Armenian Secret and Invented Languages and Argots," in publication, *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana*, Institute of Linguistic Research, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, Vol. VIII, part 3, St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2012, pp. 602-684.

Noah Schachtman, "The Manuscript," *Wired* magazine, Dec. 2012, pp. 211-218.

Vağarşag Seropyan (Vağarşak Serop'ean), "Tingryan, Bedros", *Yaşamları ve yapıtlarıyla Osmanlılar ansiklopedisi* ["Encyclopedia of the lives and deeds of the Ottomans"], Istanbul, 1999, vol. 2.

Simon Simonean, ed., *Arewelahay grakanut'iwon*, Beirut: Sevan, 1965.

T'ëodik, *Tıp u tar* ["Press and letter"], Constantinople, 1912, repr. Aleppo (Halêp): Kilikia, 2006.

Tg(h)ransar [Petros T'nkorean], "La lingvo Sehlerai" (Esperanto tr. from Gk. by Anakreón Stamatiadês), *Bizantio: Esperantikê Epitheôrêsis*, *Revue rédigée en esperanto, en grec, et en Français*, 1.3, Constantinople, 30 Sept. 1921, p. 64; 2nd part in *Bizantio* 1.4, 31 Oct. 1921, p. 99.

Tghransar, *Ans Hailanzar ou Alpha-Gnomonomic de Seh-lerai: ouvrage*, Smyrne, 1864.

Pars Tuğlacı, *Tarih Boyunca Batı Ermenileri* ["The Western Armenians through history"] (Vol. 2: 1851-1890), Istanbul, 2004.

Dmitrii Vlasov, *Esperanto: polveka tsenzury. Razvitie Esperanto-dvizheniia i ego zhurnalistika v usloviakh tsenzury v Rossiiskoi Imperii i SSSR (1887-1938 gg.)* ["Esperanto: a half century of censorship. The development of the Esperanto movement and its journalism in the conditions of censorship in the Russian Empire and the USSR (1887-1938)"], Moscow: Impeto, 2011.

Plate 1. Folger MS.

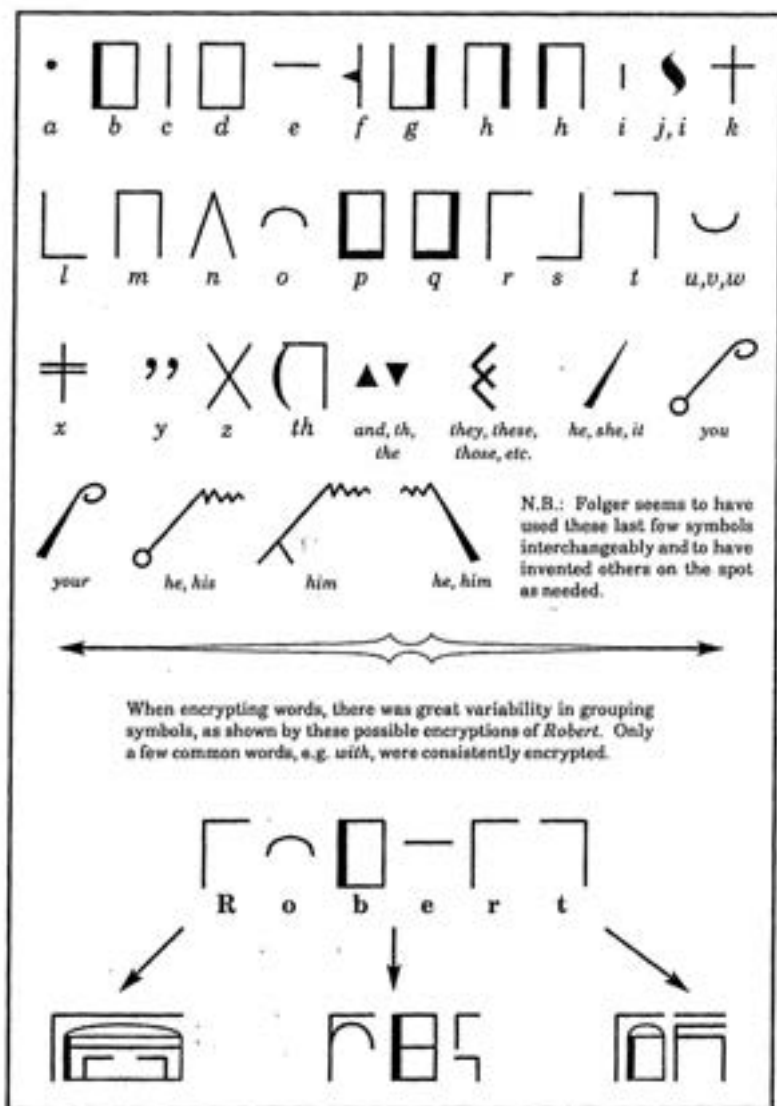


FIGURE 5. The Key to Folger's Cipher

Plate 2. Folger MS.

Page 21 of the Folger Manuscript

- 1 hat inconvenient because four habits such men and such rules or doctrines as I have alluded to are to be
 2 found and it is believed that everyone who
 3 has strove to do [his] task as a D and F will seek and find [them]
 4 [This] gre light of is ever open in a proper [Lodge] to that end that we should be reminded of the
 5 at Masonry ng and practising the excellent precepts it contains and if we as far as we can
 6 scrupulously
 7 examine both the character of [those] who gave the precepts and the influences
 8 [they] have had upon society
 9 and still have upon it if we examine the great ends and views of the doctrines here written and thus become
 10 acquainted with [this] volume we shall
 11 xperience that [this] volume is an inestimable treasure and should be viewed as such by all good men it is in
 12 fact the book that
 13 contains the rules of life pointing out to man [his] whole duty
 14 [this] volume is of great antiquity and splendid monuments of the ancients have decayed and nations who
 15 peopled the countries where [these] things were written
 16 have vanished or are scattered over the face of the earth [their] former
 17 yet the book survives and the enemies of order
 18 and opposen
 19 obduracy and snowed with jets
 20 with philos
 21 effort of [their] genius to bring [this]
 22 volume into contempt
 23 taken in vain it stands deservedly
 24 considering the character of the
 25 writers for [this] vol
 26 ing [the] doctrines contained in [this] volume and observing [their] union with truth and [their] beneficent
 27 influence upon society and upon individuals thinking upon the great antiquity of [these]
 28 writings and the many revolutions which [they] have survived and [their] complete victory over the efforts of
 29 enemies [there] with continually increasing in the estimation of the world at large
 30 of the friends of good order and of truth [there] it can be said even if [there] were no other reasons for so
 31 saying that [this] volume is not to be neglected but
 32 on the contrary that it ought to be examined and should be made the subject of our attention and study and see
 33 how correct is its philosophy how interesting the history how
 34 sublime and beautiful the poetry how acceptable the doctrines of religion and morality contained in [this]
 35 volume it is calculated in every point of view to engage our attention and if attended to the truths it con
 36 tains make man better wiser and happier and the benefits arising from [these] sacred truths are not limited to
 37 the period of human life [they] point not forward to the grave as the boundary of our
 38 xistence as the place where men shall cease to be no the thick gloom of death is dissipated by a divine truth a ray
 39 of sacred light makes visible to the eye of faith a state
 40 of xistence beyond the grave a state of xistence at the approach of which all must fear for it lasts to all eternity
 41 for it is a state of rewards and punishments
 42 for it is dependant upon divine mercy for no man can claim a place [there] happy indeed is [the] man who has
 43 strove to subdue [his] passions and to lay aside
 44 [his] prejudices and thus is fitted for the task of the F and studying and executing
 45 the designs and rules
 46 of the M by contemplating upon the image of the pillar of beauty [he] may have
 47 observed [his] own weakness
 48 and [his] own inability to make [his] work according to the pattern given [him] by
 49 the M if [he] is sensible of his own incapacity and imperfections

Plate 3. Folger MS.





Plate 4. Tingirtepe, Buca, Izmir.



Plate 5. The Tingir family.



Plate 6. The Tingir family.



Plate 7. The Tingir family with William Saroyan.

Appendix 1: Tg(h)ransar [Petros T'nkorean], "La lingvo Schlerai" (Esperanto tr. from Gk. by Anakreōn Stamatiadēs), *Bizantio: Esperantikē Epitheōrēsis, Revue rédigée en esperanto, en Grec, et en Français*, 1.3, Constantinople, 30 Sept. 1921, p. 64; second part in *Bizantio* 1.4, 31 Oct. 1921, p. 99.

1 Janro

SEPTEMBRE 1921

Numero 3

RIZANTO

* BYZANTION *



* BYZANCE *

Ĉu Esperantistaj Kongresoj
estas vere utilaj?

ΤΑ ΕΣΠΕΡΑΝΤΙΚΑ ΣΥΝΕΔΡΙΑ
ΕΙΝΕ ΑΛΗΘΟΣ ΟΦΕΛΙΜΑ:

Internacia Esperantista Kongreso en
Ceboslovaĵo, antaŭkongreso en Ge-
nosujo, postkongreso en Hungarujo,
Naciaj Kongresoj en Anglujo, Francujo,
Usono, Hispanujo, Bulgario kaj en aliaj
landoj... Ĉu pluviga la Esperantista
kongreso!

Ĉu tiaj Kongresoj estas vere utilaj? Ĉu ili estas necesaj por la progresigo de nia afero? Pri tio la opinioj estas diversaj. Kiom da kapoj t'om da opinioj.

Laŭ la propono de nia neforgebla Majstro D-ro Zamenhof pri organizo de niaj Kongresoj, «Internacia Esperantista Kongreso estas antaŭ ĉio festo de la Esperantismo kaj propaganda manifestado, ĝi havas krom tiu la gravan rolon diskuti kaj decidi pri ĉiuj demandoj, kiuj koncerne ĝian tutan aferon kaj ne povas esti solvataj de apartaj personoj, societoj aŭ institucioj Esperantistaj».

En la nunaj malfacilaj cirkonstancoj, kiujn kaŭzas la lasta grando milito, ne estas facile al ĉiu Esperantisto, eĉ la plej fervora, ĉeesti internaciajn esperantistajn kongresojn kaj konsekvence partopreni sin belan ĉiujaran feston; tamen se niaj laŭ la favoroj de la sorto, kiuj nuntempe sukcesas partopreni Esperantistajn kongresojn, estas trege malmultaj proproble al la nombro de la nun ekzistantaj geesperantistoj: en la tuta mondo, la rezulto estas ĉiam bona precipe je la vidpunkto de propagando manifestado.

Krom tio se vi estas el la partoprenantoj, la vojaĝo de la deira punkto ĝis la

Thysanopora 'Euphorbia' *Isotria medeolae* & *Yucca glauca*, *Asplenium* & *Figwort*, *Monarda* & *Ostrya*, *Alnus* *cordata* & 'Aquila', *Salix*, *Asplenium*, *Isotria medeolae* & *Yucca glauca*... *Asplenium* *cordata* & *Yucca glauca* *Isotria medeolae*!

Tenella oviformis does display *oviformis*; *Elaenia rubra* displays *rubra* the appropriate the *oviformis* *habeo*; *Hapi* volume of *oviformis* does *habeatorem*. "Ours *oviformis*, since our volume."

Συμπέριεξ ὁ ἀποστόλος τὸν ἀδελφόντες ἐ-
πεὶ ἠδωκέναι ὅτι οὗτοι θύουσιν καὶ ὑπερ-
βάλλουσιν τὴν ἀσκήσιν ποῦ. Ἰδοὺς ἡ Κορινθί-
ατος ἐκείνη, ἡμεῖς καὶ οὐδεὶς λογῇ καὶ
ἡ Κορινθίανος καὶ ἀπομαρτυροῦν ἀνελθόντες,
ὅτι ἐπὶ τῇ ἐκείνῃ τῇ καὶ ἀποδοῦναι οὐκ αὖ-
τοῦτον καὶ ἀπομαρτυροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς τὴν ἐκ-
είνην, ὅτι ἀπομαρτυροῦν καὶ ἡμεῖς τὴν ἐκ-
είνην, καὶ ἡ ἀποδοῦναι καὶ ἡμεῖς τὴν ἐκ-
είνην, καὶ ἡ ἀποδοῦναι καὶ ἡμεῖς τὴν ἐκ-
είνην.

[illegible]

*Banyak tulisan dan hasil di sini dipublikasikan
juga, di berbagai web dan majalah. Jika dirangsang
dengan tulisan-tulisan ini, maka akan ada banyak.

BIZANTIO

LA LINGVO SEHLERAI

De longa tempo oni ne ĉesis fari proponojn por alpenso de artefaritaj lingvoj, kiel interlingvaj. Je tia celo oni ĉiujfoje proponis diversajn projektojn, kiuj apartenas al tri apartaj sistemoj.

Lan la unua, la elpensintoj proponis lingvojn originale verkitaĵoj de la senkonidero de la jam ekzistantaj lingvoj, kiel tiuj de Descartes (1639), Leibniz (1716), la Solresol de Sudre (1817), la Spokil de Dro Nikolai (1900) kaj aliaj.

Lan la dua oni proponis en konsideron la jam ekzistantajn lingvojn kaj precipe la Esperantojn; tiuj estis ĉi de Faiguet (1904), de Schuyler (1899), de Zamenhof (Esperanto publikigita en la jaro 1887 kaj aliaj). Fine lan la tria sistemo, la projektoj bazigitaj sur ambaŭ pri, (poj de la antaŭaj projektoj); tiuj estis la lingvoj de Von Grimm (1800), la Volapük de l'pastro Schlever (1880), la lingvo blua de Bollach (1890) kaj aliaj.

Lan la tria sistemo, aperis en malnova tempo ankoraŭ en Proksima Oriento projekto de artefarita lingvo por ke ĝi estu uzata kiel interlingva. Ĝi estis nomita Sehlerei (Σηλερεια) kaj publikigita en Greka lingvo, almenaŭ la malnova libreta nedatumiĝis, kion ni havas antaŭ la okuloj tion montras al ni. Ĝi estis publikigita unue sub la pseŭdonimo de Typeros (Τυπερος), kio signifas lan ĉi tiu lingvo; intelekta nova.

Tio kio distingas tiun malnovan artefaritan lingvon estas, ke oni petas ĝin skribi per tri diversaj manieroj: de supre malsupren, de maldekstre dekstren kaj de dekstre maldekstren. Antaŭ ol konigi ĝian strangan alfabeton, ni juĝas bone doni la laŭvortan tradukon el la Greka lingvo de la protogo de l'elpensinto. Per tio evidentiĝos, ke enenio nova sub la suno, kaj ke la samaj principoj, kiuj inspiris nian konstantoran Majstron al la elpenso de Esperanto, instigis ankaŭ Typeron al la elpenso de Sehlerei.

«Estas laŭnature, ke la homo estu kaptita de l' deziro leri ĉiun novon en la mondo, kaj tio okazas ĝenerale inter ĉiuj homoj. Per plenumi tiu deziron oni uzas krom aliaj sentoj precipe tiu de la vivo.

Mi do prezentas al vi kuriozan sed tute ne strangan, belan vidon: la skribsignojn, kiuj rilatas la novan lingvon el kio literoj konsistas ĝin nove elpensitaj vortoj. Per ĉi tiu mi komencas la elementojn el kiuj estas esprimita la uni-

versala lingvo Sehlerei, kromita kaj ordigita ne kiel la aliaj lingvoj, unaj de la aliaj, sed el la trezoroj de la pura kaj ĉasta patrino, de la natura kaj senmalica famazio. Alivorte, ĝi ne estas imitado sed absoluta elpensado per la forto de la pensolapablo havanta kiel precigas la naturon legon pri ĝeneraleco kaj absoluteco. Estas ankoraŭ nedecoj kaj nekongruencoj imiti tion, kio estas komuna.

Evidente estas, ke la destino senkompate malkunigis la korojn de la homoj. En la Universitato ekzistas multaj nacioj sekve ankaŭ multaj lingvoj, kies unaj estas simplaj kaj aliaj multaj.

La Greka lingvo kaj ĝiaj najbaraj lingvoj, la Ĉina kaj ĝiaj najbaraj, la Egipcia kaj ĝiaj najbaraj, la Tebana kaj ĝiaj najbaraj, fine la Iliria kaj ĝiaj najbaraj lingvoj.

La specialaj ujoj, kiuj karakterizas ĉi tiujn lingvojn estas la skuto de la Ĉina, la skuto de la Greka, la grandiozo de la Egipcia, la plebeo de la Tebana kaj la aktiveco de la Iliria.

Ni do havas multajn lingvojn kaj sen nombrajn dialektojn. El ĉi tiuj la Greka estas ĉarma je la esprimo kaj multe parolata. La angla fariĝas multproleta. Sekve senprudentulo povas sin malkondiĝi: Pri kiu nova kaj malkondita malpaco ankoraŭ estas la afero? Bible pri la senutila senveneco!

Kaj li estas prava se mia celo estis plimultiigi ankoraŭ per unu nacio la jam ekzistantajn naciojn kaj aldoni lingvon al la nun ekzistantaj. Ke Dio min gardu!

Sekve estas senprudente mallogi iam ajn celon se ĝi estas bonintenco, la homo estas ĉiam evidenta, ĝi estas ĉiam laŭga kaj utila.

Tamen se multaj personoj imagis, ke ĉi tiu nova lingvo estas neutila en la mondo kaj ili ĝin konsideras, kiel strangaĵon kaj senvencaĵon, mi mia turnas al tiuj, kiuj multenombraj aldonas pri tiuj celoj, kio ĉi tiu malhelpus akcepti ankaŭ ĉi tiun modestan elpensadon, kion mi humile prezentas al la poliko, ne kiel malkunigas ideon kaj plimultiigon de naciaj lingvoj, sed kontraste, kiel ilian kunordigon kaj kombinaĵon kiel eble plej perfektan.

La nova Amikantara Sehlerei alfabeto, mi dediĉas per kompento al la komencantoj de la Sehlerei. Ĝiuj bildoj nedubeble dodon kaj profundan dankon ekskluzive al la respondeculo por la homo savaco de la proklamado de la Plejaltulo.

(Dedikaĵo)

TERANJAR

D^o AKAKILOJ SEHLETERIS

1 Jaro OKTOBRO 1921 Numero 4

BYZANTIO

* BYZANTION * ★ * BYZANCE *

**Kelkaj vortoj pri propaĝando
DE ESPERANTO**

**ΛΕΞΕΙΣ ΤΙΝΕΣ ΠΕΡΙ ΠΡΟΠΑΓΑΝΔΑΣ
ΤΗΣ ΕΣΠΕΡΑΝΤΟ**

Tiuj kiuj havis la okazon propaĝandi en grandaj mezuraj Esperanton kaj sur tiuj, estas en stato scii pri la ĉiutagaj renkontataj malfacilaĵoj. Ĉi tiuj se efektive ne estas ĉie tute samaj, tamen ili mal multe diferencas rilate al la landoj kaj regionoj en kiuj agas ĉiu propaĝandisto.

Ordinare por provi Esperantistigi personon oni atentis antaŭ ĉio pri ĝiaj profesiaj kondiĉoj, pri la aĝo kaj sekso de la persono al kiu tiucele oni volas utili. Certe la helpaj argumentoj ne mankas por tio ĉi al la apertuloj, sed la ĉefa punkto, kiel ni spertis, estas, ke la varbata persono ne nur rekonu la veran senton de tiel alta idealo, kiel Esperantismo, sed precipe ke ĝi persistu en la bona opinio, kiun ĝi formis pri nia afero serione daŭrigante sin okupi estonte pri Esperanto.

Nuntempe pro la malfacilaj vivkondiĉoj ĉiutage, la argumentoj, kiuj rilatas Esperantismos, kiel ankaŭ ĉiun similan idealon ne estas bedaŭrinde destinitaj havi por multaj personoj grandan sukceson. Certe oni ofte renkontas elektindajn homojn, kiuj kan evidenta ĝojo kaj al nekutita plezuro akceptas sincere viajn homantajn ideojn, sed ĝenerale apenaŭ vi kontencas preparoli pri Esperanto, via Esperantismo profitante de punkto je la fino de via frazo, intermetas jene: «Kaj kio estas, mi petas, la praktika celo de tia afero?» La si, nio estas donite. Detrigi paroli pri idealo kaj idealismo en tiuj cirkonstancoj estas tute vana. Do laŭgi direkton, kaj kvazaŭ vi estas

Tutmonde elstaras ĉiutage ĉiuj elstaras pri la malmultaj personoj kiuj estas «*Byzantion*» kaj «*Byzance*». Tio estas la nomoj de du landoj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj, kaj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj. Tio estas la nomoj de du landoj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj, kaj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj. Tio estas la nomoj de du landoj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj, kaj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj.

Tio estas la nomoj de du landoj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj, kaj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj. Tio estas la nomoj de du landoj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj, kaj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj. Tio estas la nomoj de du landoj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj, kaj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj. Tio estas la nomoj de du landoj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj, kaj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj.

Tio estas la nomoj de du landoj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj, kaj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj. Tio estas la nomoj de du landoj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj, kaj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj. Tio estas la nomoj de du landoj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj, kaj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj. Tio estas la nomoj de du landoj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj, kaj kiuj estas en la Balkanoj.

BIZANTIO



NOMOS DE LA LITEROJ

1 fand, 2 jand, 3 land, 4 mand, 5 send,
6 cand, 7 dand, 8 jand, 9 fand, 10 gand,
11 fand, 12 vand, 13 band, 14 nand, 15
jand, 16 fand, 17 dand, 18 pand, 19 ghand
[y Greks].

SANGUO DE LA LITERO!

El ĉi tiuj radikaj literoj, 9 estas submetataj al elparola ŝanĝo per aldono de punktoj aŭ de diversaj aliaj signoj. Se ekzemple al la unua p [hand], ĉiu estas elementa litero, oni aldonas punkton je la ekstremo de ĝia radlinio, tiel p, tiam ĝi estas elparolata kiel birdflavo (').

INTERPUNKCIO KAJ EKONOMIGILOJ. *Dispersiindaj signaloj.*

Kono, wōpōn, riniedil. — Pundio, wātoŋ ū onyā, perianjil. — Malokato akcento, bogela, prondil. — Denzanda punkto, kumqumamōn ayawōn, zikendil. — Ekhis punkto, dūmawomōn, fūn — ūafandil. — Signo pōr la kōncido de la radikaj elementoj, ayawōn ūā ūā ayawomōn ūā ūā ayawōn onyōwōn. — ūafirandil. — Signo por korekti la malbonsoncon, ayawōn ūāfawōn ūāwōn ayawōn. a, ūafirandil.

Raniedil Periendil Proendil

	V	O	N	P
Akkendi	1	1	1	1
Frans-Safran	1	1	1	1
Safran	1	1	1	1
Peruani	1	1	1	1

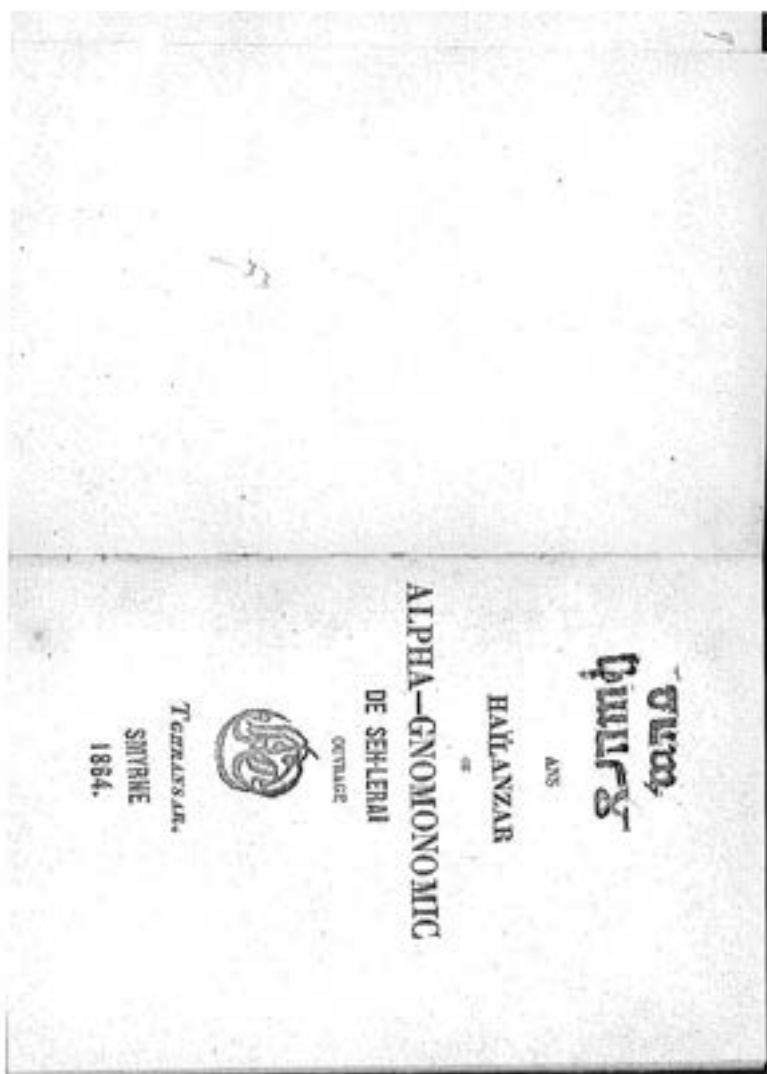
Q P . I O

BIZANTIO

NUMERALOJ — ΑΡΙΘΜΗΤΙΚΑ

Esperanto Sohlerataj nomoj	Ἑλληνιστὶ Σημεῖα, ὁνόματι		Esperanto Sohlerataj nomoj	Ἑλληνιστὶ Σημεῖα, ὁνόματι	
1 ak	ἀκ	1	8 ok mona ĵir	ὀκ μὲν φησί	21
2 fir	φίρ	2	9 ĉiraĵir	ἐχίραζι	30
3 sia	σιὰ	3	Δ ak men eĉiĵir	ἀκ μὲν ἐχίζι	31
4 ĥiĥ	ἥιχ	4	Ν ĉiraĵir	ἐχίραζι	40
5 ĝhiĵr	γῆιζ	5	Δ ĝhirmanĵir	γῆρμανζι	50
6 ŝk	ῥῥ	6	Ε eksanĵir	ἐξανζι	60
7 ksilf	ῥῥ	7	3 eksanĵir	ἐξανζι	70
8 kile	χιῖ	8	8 ĉiksanĵir	ἐχίξανζι	80
9 loks	λόξ	9	8 aksanĵir	ἀξανζι	90
0 ĵiri	ζιρῖ	10	Θ ĵir	ζιρ	100
1 ok mon ĵir	ὀκ μὲν ζιρ	11	Θ ĵerom	ζερὸμ	1000
2 fir mon ĵir	φίρ μὲν ζιρ	12	Ἰ ĵera, ĵerom	ζερὰ, ζερὸμ	10,000
2 ĉir mon ĵir	ἐχίρ μὲν ζιρ	13	Ἰ ĵerom k m	ζερὸμ κ μ	1,000,000
2 leĉr mon ĵir	λέχρ μὲν ζιρ	14	Ἰ ĵerom kum	ζερὸμ κὺμ	1,000,000,000
2 ĝhiĵr mon ĵir	γῆιζ μὲν ζιρ	15			
2 ŝks mun ĵir	ῥῥ μὲν ζιρ	16			
2 ŝiks mun ĵir	ῥῥ μὲν ζιρ	17			
2 siĥs mun ĵir	σιῥ μὲν ζιρ	18			
2 loks mun ĵir	λόξ μὲν ζιρ	19			
8 ĉiraĵir	ἐχίραζι	30			

Appendix 2: Tghransar, *Ans Hañanzar ou Alpha-Gnomonic de Seh-lerai*: ouvrage, Smyrne, 1864



Avant propos.

C'est un penchant très naturel à tout le monde de vouloir observer les objets de curiosité et de satisfaire particulièrement la faculté de la vue. Ceci posé,

je viens mettre sous les yeux du public un nouvel objet d'observation, produit d'une fantaisie non fantasmagorique, c'est la joie forme et le modèle fondamental, instrument de prononciation des mots d'une Langue nouvelle, ainsi appelée *Seh-le-rai*, c'est-à-dire, Langue Universelle, composée et enrichie non comme les autres langues les unes des autres, mais originale, tout à fait pure, d'une idée sans tâche, et à mieux dire non imitée, mais inventée par la faculté d'esprit et d'imagination absolue relativement à la Loi Naturelle composée dans cette Langue. Car il était absurde et inconvenant de combattre un tel projet universel avec une Langue non universelle ou particulière.

On connaît déjà que la faculté la plus détestable a divisé les cœurs des humains à plusieurs particularités. Dans l'univers il y a des Nationalités, conséquemment leurs Langues et Dialectes. Ce sont, la Langue Chinoise et ses cognatiques, la Langue Chaldéenne et ses cognatiques, la Langue Egyptienne et ses cognatiques, la Langue Téthienne et ses cognatiques, enfin l'Indique et ses cognatiques.

De toutes ces Langues remarquables raciales, la Chinoise est de voix vive, la Chaldéenne de voix rude, l'Egyptienne majestueuse, la Téthienne élégante, et l'Indique énergique. Il s'ensuit qu'il y a plusieurs Langues et leurs Dialectes innombrables, dont la Française, d'un accent charmant, très touchant, et l'Anglais, d'un accent enthousiasmant et le plus profitable en nos jours. Et dans ce cas, peut-être qu'un habile métisera une telle formation nouvelle linguistique, ou di-

— 8 —

ra-t-on en effet, à quoi sert un tel rébat superflu? Bah! il fallait aller finir de cette sorte, si ma n'intention était d'ajouter un nouvelle Nations sur les Nations, et nouvelle Langue, sur les autres Langues. Dieu m'en garde! Mépriser donc un projet quelconque excellent, au détriment de la raison n'est que d'un gâle-raison, plus, d'un étour di, car un bon projet, est bon pour tous jours et éternels.

Quoiqu' il en soit, s' il parait, aux attachés à notre monde actuel mortellement boudé, la formation d'une Langue universelle, comme extraordinaire, supérieure, et un objet plutôt de rebut, je dirai aux divers observateurs journalistes de tant d'objets purement illégitimes, qui empêchent d'agréer pareillement cet offre de mon humble invention que je présente très humblement au public savant, non comme accroissement d'une nouvelle division national-linguistique, mais au contraire comme leur accord et liaison possiblement complets.

Au commencement, j'ai voulu bien accorder succédant à notoriété populaire le présent *Anshaianzar* (*Alphab. Gnomozantier*), ou l'Alphabet de la langue en question, pour rendre plus facile à l'étude des élèves commençants de SEH-LERAI, qui serait obligés longtemps et en général de se souvenir d'un bien reçu et de gratitude non envers moi mais envers la sagesse de ineffable et suprême Providence.

TOMMASINI.

Caractères empruntés convenus pour prononcer les mots en Seh-Lerai.

h.	Lat.	h.	Fr.		pour	l'
χ.		ie	arm.	.....	"	u
z.	z		arm.	.....	"	f
j.		Fr.	.....	.....	"	p
ga	Lat.	ll.	h.	.....	"	c
b		.....	.....	.....	"	v
g.	Lat.	ll.	.....	.....	"	w
c.	.....	.....	.....	.....	"	z
d.	.....	.....	.....	.....	"	m
u	h.	.....	.....	.....	"	f
l	arm.	.....	.....	.....	"	t
			Emmelle fr.			

Le reste comme en français.

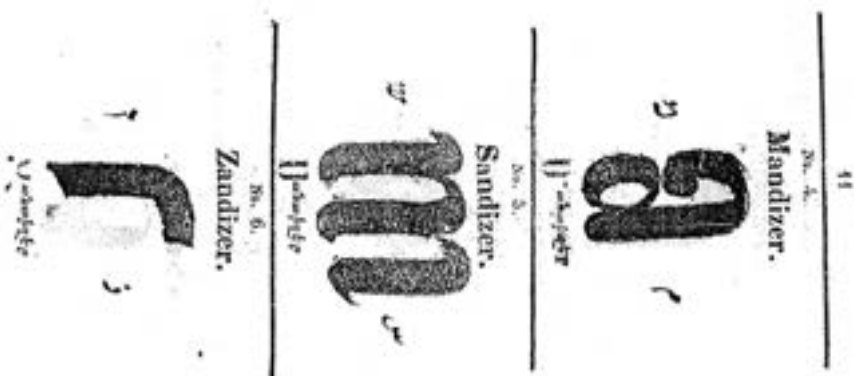
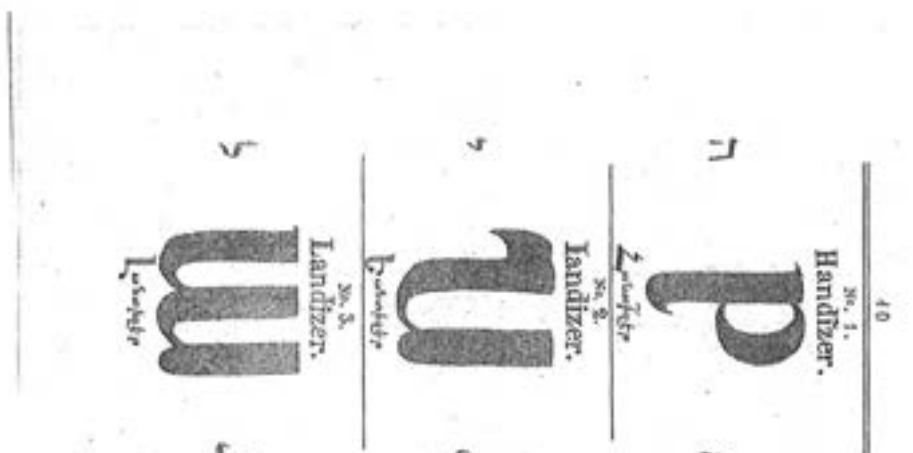
INSTRUCTION

ALPHA—GNOMONOMIC^d
de la Langue universelle.

Les Caractères basculés de Schlerai.

Schlerai (Langue universelle) est composée de dix neuf syllabifformes. Ces caractères sont appelés syllabifformes, Car ils sont des syllabes en effet pour la valeur de leurs voyelles sous-entendues *a*, qui étant coupées par une ligne perpendiculaire, ainsi (1) appelée *chêrëndill* se rendent égaux aux lettres des autres langues déjà connues.

Pour assurer d'abord la prononciation possiblement exacte de ces formes, on a voulu les indiquer à une et une, en les prononçant par des caractères étrangers Français et Arméniens, et les remarquer de côté et d'autre par les caractères de deux anciennes Langues Hébraïque et Arabe-Per-sanne comme suit:



12

No. 7.

Dzandizer.



Copyright

No. 8.

Jandizer.



Copyright

No. 9.

Chandizer.



Copyright

13

No. 10.

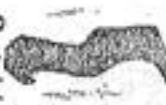
Gandizer.



Copyright

No. 11.

Fandizer.



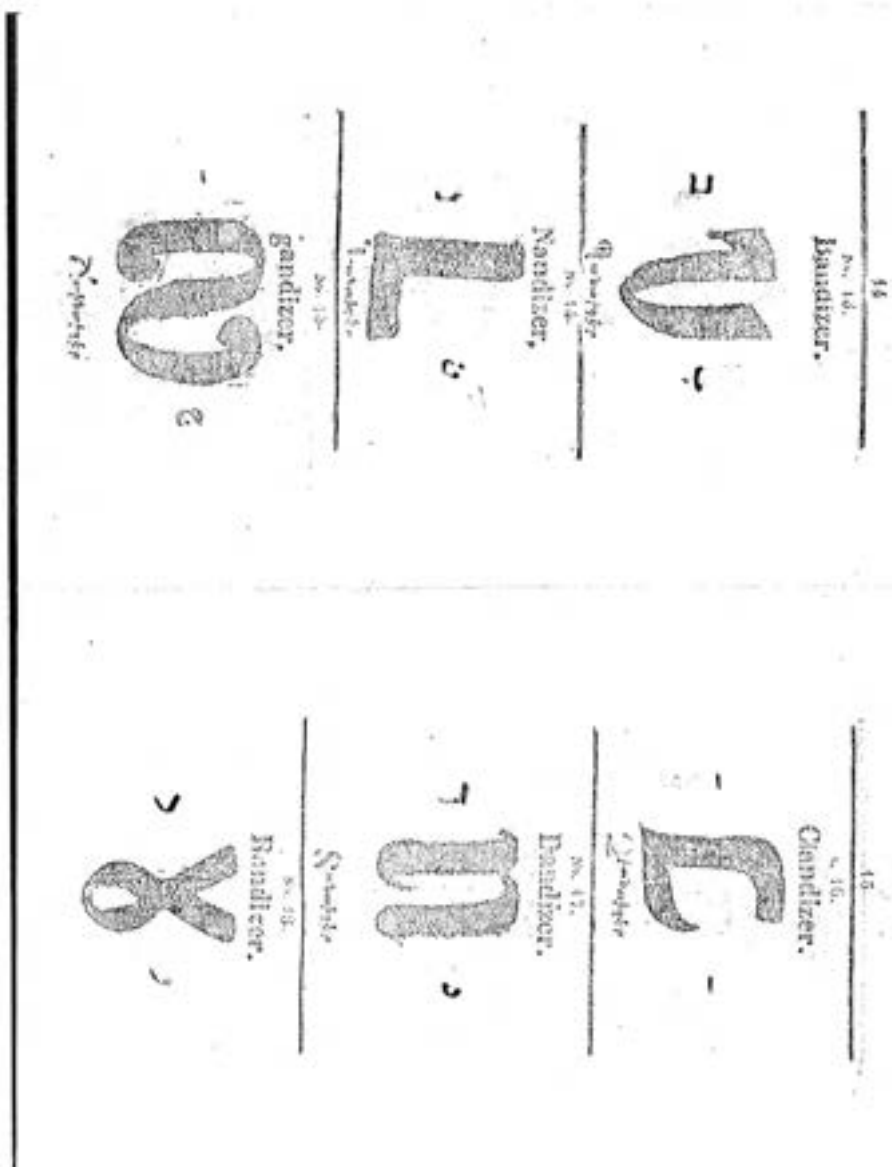
Copyright

No. 12.

Vandizer.



Copyright



No. 49.
Chandizer.



é

1
m
b
e
r

§ CHAPITRE PREMIER.

Fonction des Syllabiformes.

N. 10. *H a n d i z e r* (Syllabe de H), la première consonne, sous-entend une voyelle a, est de trois voix. 10. En sa propre forme basale simplement déliné, égalise le caractère h, lat. it. etc.

20. Lorsqu'on la voit touchée par un point à l'extrémité de son crochet supérieur, ainsi elle prend la valeur de *Hebr.* 2 ar. 7 *Sr* 4 ar. 30. avant à l'extrémité de même crochet un rond, alors elle prend une voix égale, ou comme le soufflement des ciseaux et des semblables, ce qu'on peut marquer et prouver par les caractères des autres langues connus.

N. 20. *I a n d i z e r* (Syllabe de ia] elle est d'une seule prononciation égale à 3 *Hebr.* 5 ar. — 4 ar.

N. 30. *L a n d i z e r* (Syl. de La). Elle remplace les trois voyelles. Dans sa forme basale simplement de liné est égale à 1, lat. it. etc., 1) *Hebr.* 1 ar. 4 ar.

Lorsqu'on la voit marquée par un accent comme circonflexe ainsi a (quelque fois par deux points ainsi : dans la distinction des mots, se détermine à une double prononciation, ou plutôt à une vibration de double son de même caractère qu'on opère en touchant l'organe de langue au palais et la glissant de suite comme en anglais.

12

N. 40. Mandizer (Syl. de Ma) Forme d'une seule voix est égale à celle de M. tr. li. etc. (S) ar. s arm.

N. 50. Sandizer (Syl. de Sa) forme radicale de cinq voix.

10. Simplement délinée est égale à celle de S. Lat. tr. etc. (S) ar. (u) arm. Étant marquée par une ligne exigée comme de persienne grec au milieu, à l'extrémité inférieure ainsi t̄t̄ devient égale au 9 gr. - lb fr. 30. Surmontée par un demi oiseau ainsi t̄t̄, elle réelle son de z fr. ou d'un S radical radonei dans un mot de Sehe-ral. 40. Surmontée d'un crochet touché par un point à l'extrémité envers la droite ainsi t̄t̄ on prononce xa fr. li. etc. et t̄t̄ grec tant qu'il est privé de sa voyelle a, par un Cherhendili, ainsi (t̄t̄) devient égal au t̄t̄ grec y fr. etc. 50. Lorsqu'on la voit surmontée d'un petite syllabiforme de (t̄) de N. 9. ainsi t̄t̄ on prononce comme (u) Russe z̄ia J soit li, z̄ia arm.

N. 60. Zander (Syl. de Za) forme radicale simplement délinée. Puis étant marquée par un point à l'extrémité inférieure, ainsi t̄t̄ a la valeur de z - Bra arm. et ne diffère de Syl-abi carme basale qu'en ce que N. 7 Dandiger (Syl. de Dz) Enfin touchée par un point de plus à l'extrémité inférieure ainsi t̄t̄ elle rend le son le plus fort d, (t̄s) Hebr. ou z arm.

13

No. 8 Jandizer (Syl. de ja) La valeur de cette forme est tout égale à j. tr. s arm. etc. (S) Perm.

No. 9. Chandizer (Syl. de Cha) Forme d'une seule voix. Elle est d'une paren. P. comme-à-tout avec le (S) ar. et z arm.

10. Gander (Syl. de Ga) Forme radicale, se lit si pi mon ou ang? in ou po- nuce co n. egr. ou S ar. et S ar. kef. ne e Per-ann. P. egr. "ant" tournée par un point à l'extrémité supérieure ainsi t̄t̄ devient égale à k fr. li. e. c. (S) ar. s arm.

N. 11. Fandizer (Syl. de Fa) Forme d'une seule voix, égale à f. tr. (S) ar. s arm.

N. 120 V. a n d i z o (Syl. de va) Forme d'une seule voix, on prononce co avec v fr. li. etc. (S) ar. s arm.

Hebr. (S) ar. s arm.

130. B a n d i z e r (Syl. de Ba) Forme de valeur de d avec b. Une basale, et comme écrite sans point, égale à b. fr. (S) ar. s arm. L'autre touchée par un point à l'extrémité droite et supérieure de sa ligne cyclique, ainsi v au à côté gauche ainsi v̄ égale à la valeur de p fr. tr. Pers. . . s arm.

N. 140. Nandizer (Syl. de Na) Forme d'une seule voix égale à celle de n fr. (S) ar. s arm.

N. 150. Rāndizer (Syl. de Ra) Forme d'une seule voix égale à celle de r lat. li. etc.

(S) ar. s arm. et à caractère convenant. N. 160. Cia n d i z o r (Syl. de Cia) Forme d'une seule voix, égale à celle de c lat. fr. (S) ar. s arm. et à caractère convenant.

N. 17. Dautizer (Syl. de Da) forme basée de valeur de quatre voix. 1^o simplement, étendue est égale à l. fr. it. etc. 2^o pointue : au m. l'au, au sa. persennement; ainsi, *la, it*, est de valeur 1 it. it, etc. (C) ar. Fern. 3, surmonie par un d'ambroie, ainsi *it* devient égale à *g ec A*. Enfin *y*, surmontée par 1^o même d'écrite rend la voix de *g grec th f*. Mais il faut première grille de ne confondre la forme de *yo* persennement de N. 5 avec celle de la même valeur, attendu que ce (*yo*) persennement toujours au malien in écriturement est d'un emploi tout à fait particulier, et caractérise de noms abstraits de S. h. l. rai.

N. 18. R a n d i z e r [Syl. de Ra] forme basée de valeur de double voix. Deliaev, sim. l'eman; est égale ar. fr. it. etc. > Hebr. *frar* a pu s'étant renforcée par un point au d' *g*, elle rend la voix de *g grec*, ou *g-arm*, presque égale à la valeur de *br it lat it*.

N. 19. G h a n d i z e r (Syl. de Gha) forme basée de valeur de double voix. Deliaev, simplement, est de même prononciation consonne fr. gh. y. fr. (*g*) ar. *h* arm, et étant marquée par un point, ainsi produit la prononciation gorgiale plus rude et plus forcée que *g ar h* arm, tandis que (1^o) pointe de N. 10, introduit une voix plus molle entre le *g* forcé et les *g*, *h*, naitrels égale à la voix de *X grec*.

Et pour la fonction totale des Consonnes de la Langue universelle dans *suffi*.

CHAPITRE SECONDE.

Vocalisation, ou mouvement des

Syllabifermes de *Seherat*.

La première classe de *Seherat*, en étudiant et en connaissant les formes et la fonction de 19 Syllabifermes de *Seherat* suivant leurs images exactes et linéairement ponctuels, il passeront immédiatement à l'étude de leurs voyelles, comme absolument nécessaire pour en exécuter la lecture.

Or, les voyelles en question les plus usitées pour prononcer les mots de cette Langue universelle, son de Nombre 12 qui comprennent d'v

a sousentendue dans chacune des syllabifermes comme j'ai déjà mentionné en avant, et que étant marquée en dedans par un signe de figure d'une comma grecque, ainsi *o* elle rend le son d'(*o*)

Hebr. ע ar. puis le reste sout
comme suit.

22

No 2.	י	e	é
No 3.	י	i	é
No 4.	ל	o	o
No 5.	ל	eu	é
No 6.	ל	e muette	é
No 7.	י	eu	é
No 8.	י	u	é
No 9.	י	hou	é
No 10.	י	in	é
No 11.	י	ion	é
No 12.	י	ieu	é

Remarque. Il s'est évité de bien clair à tous
les grammaticiens que, cinq de ses voyelles: a, o,
i, u, sont des voyelles simples, et le reste,
composées, ou des diphthongues. Et il y en a
deux autres les plus composées: (eu)
i é ou y i é u. (é) i é u. (é) i é u. (é) i é u.
Seul l'arabique très rare, et l'usage en
prenant ces quelques mots l'arabique et l'arabique.

23

Or, les commençans qui étudient la seh-lerai,
après avoir étudié l'arabique dans leur imagi-
nation les lettres des consonnes arabiques, ain-
si, que leurs voyelles: et après délinées à part il faut
se mettr à les combiner ensemble et les s'habili-
ter avec soin suivant les concours ci dessous.

he	é
hi	é
ho	é
hén	é
he	é
hou	é
ha	é
hion	é
hieu	é
hion	é
hieu	é

24

En suite, il faut s'exercer et tirer avant l'action de syllabier en séparant chacune des consonnes par leurs voyelles sur le même Modèle, que l'on fait, en y changeant seulement les consonnes successivement, c'est à dire: à la place de Ha, j'emplacant ia, après la, et ainsi avant, ce que je pense comme superflu répéter ici au mes Elèves ingénieux, cependant, si l'on veut s'exercer même sur la représentation formelle de l'un s traite et une à une, il peut les voir dans mon exemplaire Prototypus en grec, ou sont arrangés et mises en mouvement les toutes les 49 Consonnes, en experts.

Remarque. Les voyelles doivent être proportionnées relativement à leurs Syllabiformes autant que possible, que les Elèves au commencement les arrangeront entre les deux lignes également tracées, dont la parure est fort jolie, et exercez très nécessaire, l'audis que vous les voyez à la fin à chaque instant et à chaque pas bannir comme les abeilles sur les fleurs pour prodire la couteur très exquise de cette Langue universelle.

CHAPITRE TROISIEME.

Des signes diacritique des voyelles

Comme, Est un Triangle marqué à la gauche ainsi (∇). Etant posé à un (∇) marque la moitié d'une Phrase.

Poin, par conclure une Phrase, est une marque ronde et vide ainsi (O)

A ce n'est, est un trait, peu incliné envers la droite ainsi (\swarrow) et qui doit être marqué toujours sous la syllabe que l'on veut acrochier.

De même, Est un trait peu pendi que l'on revêt supérieurement d'un demi cercle ainsi (\frown) que l'on place à la fin et quelque fois sous le Chorkendils des mots qui portent le sens d'interrogation.

De l'admission, C'est pareillement un trait perpendiculaire ayant un crochet d'un seul côté ainsi (\lrcorner), et quelque fois incliné ainsi lors qu'on voit son crochet posé sur l'accent des mots interjectionaux.

Remarque.

Redoublement des Syllabiformes [un espèce de Tchidid arabe] on fait par deux points entrecoupés par un cherkendil, qu'on appelle alors cherkendil ainsi ($\text{ }^{\circ}\text{ }^{\circ}$)

21
 Enfin pour valoir et accorder la di-sonance
 de deux consonnes qui renouent, l'une en ex-
 tremité d'un mot, et l'autre au commencement d'un
 autre mot, qui lui succède immédiatement, on em-
 ploie un tel signe (—) appelé *lifonari* -
ouedill.
 (Le reste voir dans la grammaire.)

Leçon

Leçon de Lecture.

xlē ŷ qxl vīm wlxcl
 ŷ qxlū mē

wlx wlx mē dē wlxcl
 ŷ qxlū mē

Accent.

hroim chā ūm, bes lerā
 vom chāz ilē san
 lerā ioum sin minserā van
 chāz ilē som;

— *hroim chā ūm, bes lerā*
vom chāz ilē san
lerā ioum sin minserā van
chāz ilē som;

Sens

Une seule langue sur toute
 la terre,
 Comble des sciences, vant
 mieuxque,
 Plusieurs des langues et en
 grand nombre
 Qui renferment guère des
 sciences.

N.B.²⁸

Seh-leräi écrit en trois manières de tracer les lettres de droite à gauche, de gauche à droite et à colonne, à l'usage des Chinois. La loi existentielle même, est écrite communément dans toutes ces trois façons d'écrire. (Voir dans sa place).

CHAPITRE. 4. LES CHIFFRES.

ou

Caractères pour marquer les Nombres en seh-leräi.

Seh-leräi outre ses caractères Alphabétiques est maître aussi de propres chiffres Arithmétiques pour en marquer les nombres, suivant les formes ci-dessous:

1	Àik	ou f
2	Fir	phr
3	Chia	zhw
4	Lun	l'ob
5	ghir	ghr
6	lis	lew
7	likis	ghew
8	Chiks	zhew
9	Loks	l'ew
10	jirai	ghew
11	àik mun jir	ou ghew l'ew
12	fir mun jir	ghew l'ew
13	chi r' mun jir	ghew l'ew

R e m a r q u e. Ces caractères Arithmétiques comme on vult, sont formés en système algèbre, dont la base est en point, augmentée avec système. On écrit de gauche à droite et à système mixte. C'est pour rendre un plus court l'extension des chiffres marqués en espère, et les abréger lorsqu'on opère mentalement. Cependant si l'on veut les exprimer aussi d'après la Méthode d'arithmétique, va tant mieux et plus sur pour les commençants.

Quant à fonction ultérieure de ces Chiffres. Notabene, que les mêmes caractères numériques jusqu'à 7 rendent aussi les Notes de Gamme, lorsqu'on écrit obliquement les notes et par une Table de Cherbonni les dièses.

Et pour l'Instruction concise de Schétau c'est assez.

F I N.

Avertissement.

L'Élève étudieux après avoir suivi avec assiduité ce petit cours de l'Instruction primordiale d'Alpha-gnomonic et arrivé au point de lire et écrire franchement en Schétau il en suit conséquemment la grammaire, après son Dictionnaire, qui son déjà préparée et disposée à être imprimée et à saluer le public, à la merci, sans de l'assistance de la divine Providence,

TABLE des contenus dans cet ouvrage Alpha-gnomonic.

Avant propos.	7
Caractères empruntés pour prononcer, etc.	9
Instruction d'Alfa-gnomonic.	9
Chap. 1 ^{re} . Fonction des Syllabiformes.	17
Chap. 2 ^{de} . Mouvement des Syllabiformes.	21
Chap. 3 ^{de} . Des Signes diacritiques.	25
Leçon de Lecture.	27.
Les Chiffres de Schétau.	28.
Avertissement.	32.

Appendix 3: *Ansailanzar, Sehleraiikon Alfabêtarion, En Smyrnê*, n.d. (the Greek version of *Ans Hallanzar*).



ΠΡΟΛΟΓΟΣ ΕΛΛΗΝΕΣ.

Ὡς ἔγρητο καὶ καταβύθισεν αὐτὸν ἐν τῷ ὕδατι· ἀλλ' οὐκ ἔσται ἐν τῷ Κόσμῳ ὡς πρότερον ἀνέστηκεν ἔνθεν. Ἐκείνη γὰρ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ἀποκατάστασις αὐτοῦ. Καὶ παύσει τὸν αἴματι αὐτοῦ ἀνέστησε, διὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς γῆς.

Ἰδοὺ οὖν ἡτοίμηται ὁ κόσμος ἀναστήσειν τὸν σώματος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς γῆς. Ἐκείνη γὰρ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ἀποκατάστασις αὐτοῦ. Καὶ παύσει τὸν αἴματι αὐτοῦ ἀνέστησε, διὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς γῆς. Ἰδοὺ οὖν ἡτοίμηται ὁ κόσμος ἀναστήσειν τὸν σώματος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς γῆς. Ἐκείνη γὰρ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ἀποκατάστασις αὐτοῦ. Καὶ παύσει τὸν αἴματι αὐτοῦ ἀνέστησε, διὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς γῆς.

Ὁ κόσμος οὖν, ὁ αἴματι αὐτοῦ, ἀναστήσει τὸν σώματος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς γῆς. Ἐκείνη γὰρ ἀνάστασις καὶ ἡ ἀποκατάστασις αὐτοῦ. Καὶ παύσει τὸν αἴματι αὐτοῦ ἀνέστησε, διὰ τὴν ἀνάστασιν τοῦ σώματος αὐτοῦ ἐκ τῆς γῆς.

happening. Then we shall, however in such case
 happen, it is a fact that there is a fact that
 we are not yet at the end of the world. At the end
 of the world we shall find a fact that there is a
 fact that we are not yet at the end of the world.
 At the end of the world we shall find a fact that
 we are not yet at the end of the world. At the end
 of the world we shall find a fact that we are not
 yet at the end of the world. At the end of the
 world we shall find a fact that we are not yet at
 the end of the world. At the end of the world we
 shall find a fact that we are not yet at the end of
 the world. At the end of the world we shall find
 a fact that we are not yet at the end of the world.

At the end of the world we shall find a fact that
 we are not yet at the end of the world. At the end
 of the world we shall find a fact that we are not
 yet at the end of the world. At the end of the
 world we shall find a fact that we are not yet at
 the end of the world. At the end of the world we
 shall find a fact that we are not yet at the end of
 the world. At the end of the world we shall find
 a fact that we are not yet at the end of the world.
 At the end of the world we shall find a fact that
 we are not yet at the end of the world. At the end
 of the world we shall find a fact that we are not
 yet at the end of the world. At the end of the
 world we shall find a fact that we are not yet at
 the end of the world. At the end of the world we
 shall find a fact that we are not yet at the end of
 the world. At the end of the world we shall find
 a fact that we are not yet at the end of the world.

THE END

THE END

At the end of the world we shall find a fact that
 we are not yet at the end of the world. At the end
 of the world we shall find a fact that we are not
 yet at the end of the world. At the end of the
 world we shall find a fact that we are not yet at
 the end of the world. At the end of the world we
 shall find a fact that we are not yet at the end of
 the world. At the end of the world we shall find
 a fact that we are not yet at the end of the world.
 At the end of the world we shall find a fact that
 we are not yet at the end of the world. At the end
 of the world we shall find a fact that we are not
 yet at the end of the world. At the end of the
 world we shall find a fact that we are not yet at
 the end of the world. At the end of the world we
 shall find a fact that we are not yet at the end of
 the world. At the end of the world we shall find
 a fact that we are not yet at the end of the world.

At the end of the world we shall find a fact that
 we are not yet at the end of the world. At the end
 of the world we shall find a fact that we are not
 yet at the end of the world. At the end of the
 world we shall find a fact that we are not yet at
 the end of the world. At the end of the world we
 shall find a fact that we are not yet at the end of
 the world. At the end of the world we shall find
 a fact that we are not yet at the end of the world.
 At the end of the world we shall find a fact that
 we are not yet at the end of the world. At the end
 of the world we shall find a fact that we are not
 yet at the end of the world. At the end of the
 world we shall find a fact that we are not yet at
 the end of the world. At the end of the world we
 shall find a fact that we are not yet at the end of
 the world. At the end of the world we shall find
 a fact that we are not yet at the end of the world.

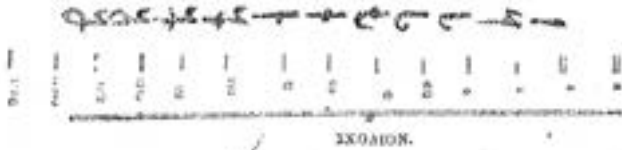
— 10 —
 2
 3
 4
 5
 6
 7
 8
 9
 10
 11
 12
 13
 14
 15
 16
 17
 18
 19
 20
 21
 22
 23
 24
 25
 26
 27
 28
 29
 30
 31
 32
 33
 34
 35
 36
 37
 38
 39
 40
 41
 42
 43
 44
 45
 46
 47
 48
 49
 50
 51
 52
 53
 54
 55
 56
 57
 58
 59
 60
 61
 62
 63
 64
 65
 66
 67
 68
 69
 70
 71
 72
 73
 74
 75
 76
 77
 78
 79
 80
 81
 82
 83
 84
 85
 86
 87
 88
 89
 90
 91
 92
 93
 94
 95
 96
 97
 98
 99
 100
 101
 102
 103
 104
 105
 106
 107
 108
 109
 110
 111
 112
 113
 114
 115
 116
 117
 118
 119
 120
 121
 122
 123
 124
 125
 126
 127
 128
 129
 130
 131
 132
 133
 134
 135
 136
 137
 138
 139
 140
 141
 142
 143
 144
 145
 146
 147
 148
 149
 150
 151
 152
 153
 154
 155
 156
 157
 158
 159
 160
 161
 162
 163
 164
 165
 166
 167
 168
 169
 170
 171
 172
 173
 174
 175
 176
 177
 178
 179
 180
 181
 182
 183
 184
 185
 186
 187
 188
 189
 190
 191
 192
 193
 194
 195
 196
 197
 198
 199
 200
 201
 202
 203
 204
 205
 206
 207
 208
 209
 210
 211
 212
 213
 214
 215
 216
 217
 218
 219
 220
 221
 222
 223
 224
 225
 226
 227
 228
 229
 230
 231
 232
 233
 234
 235
 236
 237
 238
 239
 240
 241
 242
 243
 244
 245
 246
 247
 248
 249
 250
 251
 252
 253
 254
 255
 256
 257
 258
 259
 260
 261
 262
 263
 264
 265
 266
 267
 268
 269
 270
 271
 272
 273
 274
 275
 276
 277
 278
 279
 280
 281
 282
 283
 284
 285
 286
 287
 288
 289
 290
 291
 292
 293
 294
 295
 296
 297
 298
 299
 300
 301
 302
 303
 304
 305
 306
 307
 308
 309
 310
 311
 312
 313
 314
 315
 316
 317
 318
 319
 320
 321
 322
 323
 324
 325
 326
 327
 328
 329
 330
 331
 332
 333
 334
 335
 336
 337
 338
 339
 340
 341
 342
 343
 344
 345
 346
 347
 348
 349
 350
 351
 352
 353
 354
 355
 356
 357
 358
 359
 360
 361
 362
 363
 364
 365
 366
 367
 368
 369
 370
 371
 372
 373
 374
 375
 376
 377
 378
 379
 380
 381
 382
 383
 384
 385
 386
 387
 388
 389
 390
 391
 392
 393
 394
 395
 396
 397
 398
 399
 400
 401
 402
 403
 404
 405
 406
 407
 408
 409
 410
 411
 412
 413
 414
 415
 416
 417
 418
 419
 420
 421
 422
 423
 424
 425
 426
 427
 428
 429
 430
 431
 432
 433
 434
 435
 436
 437
 438
 439
 440
 441
 442
 443
 444
 445
 446
 447
 448
 449
 450
 451
 452
 453
 454
 455
 456
 457
 458
 459
 460
 461
 462
 463
 464
 465
 466
 467
 468
 469
 470
 471
 472
 473
 474
 475
 476
 477
 478
 479
 480
 481
 482
 483
 484
 485
 486
 487
 488
 489
 490
 491
 492
 493
 494
 495
 496
 497
 498
 499
 500
 501
 502
 503
 504
 505
 506
 507
 508
 509
 510
 511
 512
 513
 514
 515
 516
 517
 518
 519
 520
 521
 522
 523
 524
 525
 526
 527
 528
 529
 530
 531
 532
 533
 534
 535
 536
 537
 538
 539
 540
 541
 542
 543
 544
 545
 546
 547
 548
 549
 550
 551
 552
 553
 554
 555
 556
 557
 558
 559
 560
 561
 562
 563
 564
 565
 566
 567
 568
 569
 570
 571
 572
 573
 574
 575
 576
 577
 578
 579
 580
 581
 582
 583
 584
 585
 586
 587
 588
 589
 590
 591
 592
 593
 594
 595
 596
 597
 598
 599
 600
 601
 602
 603
 604
 605
 606
 607
 608
 609
 610
 611
 612
 613
 614
 615
 616
 617
 618
 619
 620
 621
 622
 623
 624
 625
 626
 627
 628
 629
 630
 631
 632
 633
 634
 635
 636
 637
 638
 639
 640
 641
 642
 643
 644
 645
 646
 647
 648
 649
 650
 651
 652
 653
 654
 655
 656
 657
 658
 659
 660
 661
 662
 663
 664
 665
 666
 667
 668
 669
 670
 671
 672
 673
 674
 675
 676
 677
 678
 679
 680
 681
 682
 683
 684
 685
 686
 687
 688
 689
 690
 691
 692
 693
 694
 695
 696
 697
 698
 699
 700
 701
 702
 703
 704
 705
 706
 707
 708
 709
 710
 711
 712
 713
 714
 715
 716
 717
 718
 719
 720
 721
 722
 723
 724
 725
 726
 727
 728
 729
 730
 731
 732
 733
 734
 735
 736
 737
 738
 739
 740
 741
 742
 743
 744
 745
 746
 747
 748
 749
 750
 751
 752
 753
 754
 755
 756
 757
 758
 759
 760
 761
 762
 763
 764
 765
 766
 767
 768
 769
 770
 771
 772
 773
 774
 775
 776
 777
 778
 779
 780
 781
 782
 783
 784
 785
 786
 787
 788
 789
 790
 791
 792
 793
 794
 795
 796
 797
 798
 799
 800
 801
 802
 803
 804
 805
 806
 807
 808
 809
 810
 811
 812
 813
 814
 815
 816
 817
 818
 819
 820
 821
 822
 823
 824
 825
 826
 827
 828
 829
 830
 831
 832
 833
 834
 835
 836
 837
 838
 839
 840
 841
 842
 843
 844
 845
 846
 847
 848
 849
 850
 851
 852
 853
 854
 855
 856
 857
 858
 859
 860
 861
 862
 863
 864
 865
 866
 867
 868
 869
 870
 871
 872
 873
 874
 875
 876
 877
 878
 879
 880
 881
 882
 883
 884
 885
 886
 887
 888
 889
 890
 891
 892
 893
 894
 895
 896
 897
 898
 899
 900
 901
 902
 903
 904
 905
 906
 907
 908
 909
 910
 911
 912
 913
 914
 915
 916
 917
 918
 919
 920
 921
 922
 923
 924
 925
 926
 927
 928
 929
 930
 931
 932
 933
 934
 935
 936
 937
 938
 939
 940
 941
 942
 943
 944
 945
 946
 947
 948
 949
 950
 951
 952
 953
 954
 955
 956
 957
 958
 959
 960
 961
 962
 963
 964
 965
 966
 967
 968
 969
 970
 971
 972
 973
 974
 975
 976
 977
 978
 979
 980
 981
 982
 983
 984
 985
 986
 987
 988
 989
 990
 991
 992
 993
 994
 995
 996
 997
 998
 999
 1000
 1001
 1002
 1003
 1004
 1005
 1006
 1007
 1008
 1009
 1010
 1011
 1012
 1013
 1014
 1015
 1016
 1017
 1018
 1019
 1020
 1021
 1022
 1023
 1024
 1025
 1026
 1027
 1028
 1029
 1030
 1031
 1032
 1033
 1034
 1035
 1036
 1037
 1038
 1039
 1040
 1041
 1042
 1043
 1044
 1045
 1046
 1047
 1048
 1049
 1050
 1051
 1052
 1053
 1054
 1055
 1056
 1057
 1058
 1059
 1060
 1061
 1062
 1063
 1064
 1065
 1066
 1067
 1068
 1069
 1070
 1071
 1072
 1073
 1074
 1075
 1076
 1077
 1078
 1079
 1080
 1081
 1082
 1083
 1084
 1085
 1086
 1087
 1088
 1089
 1090
 1091
 1092
 1093
 1094
 1095
 1096
 1097
 1098
 1099
 1100
 1101
 1102
 1103
 1104
 1105
 1106
 1107
 1108
 1109
 1110
 1111
 1112
 1113
 1114
 1115
 1116
 1117
 1118
 1119
 1120
 1121
 1122
 1123
 1124
 1125
 1126
 1127
 1128
 1129
 1130
 1131
 1132
 1133
 1134
 1135
 1136
 1137
 1138
 1139
 1140
 1141
 1142
 1143
 1144
 1145
 1146
 1147
 1148
 1149
 1150
 1151
 1152
 1153
 1154
 1155
 1156
 1157
 1158
 1159
 1160
 1161
 1162
 1163
 1164
 1165
 1166
 1167
 1168
 1169
 1170
 1171
 1172
 1173
 1174
 1175
 1176
 1177
 1178
 1179
 1180
 1181
 1182
 1183
 1184
 1185
 1186
 1187
 1188
 1189
 1190
 1191
 1192
 1193
 1194
 1195
 1196
 1197
 1198
 1199
 1200
 1201
 1202
 1203
 1204
 1205
 1206
 1207
 1208
 1209
 1210
 1211
 1212
 1213
 1214
 1215
 1216
 1217
 1218
 1219
 1220
 1221
 1222
 1223
 1224
 1225
 1226
 1227
 1228
 1229
 1230
 1231
 1232
 1233
 1234
 1235
 1236
 1237
 1238
 1239
 1240
 1241
 1242
 1243
 1244
 1245
 1246
 1247
 1248
 1249
 1250
 1251
 1252
 1253
 1254
 1255
 1256
 1257
 1258
 1259
 1260
 1261
 1262
 1263
 1264
 1265
 1266
 1267
 1268
 1269
 1270
 1271
 1272
 1273
 1274
 1275
 1276
 1277
 1278
 1279
 1280
 1281
 1282
 1283
 1284
 1285
 1286
 1287
 1288
 1289
 1290
 1291
 1292
 1293
 1294
 1295
 1296
 1297
 1298
 1299
 1300
 1301
 1302
 1303
 1304
 1305
 1306
 1307
 1308
 1309
 1310
 1311
 1312
 1313
 1314
 1315
 1316
 1317
 1318
 1319
 1320
 1321
 1322
 1323
 1324
 1325
 1326
 1327
 1328
 1329
 1330
 1331
 1332
 1333
 1334
 1335
 1336
 1337
 1338
 1339
 1340
 1341
 1342
 1343
 1344
 1345
 1346
 1347
 1348
 1349
 1350
 1351
 1352
 1353
 1354
 1355
 1356
 1357
 1358
 1359
 1360
 1361
 1362
 1363
 1364
 1365
 1366
 1367
 1368
 1369
 1370
 1371
 1372
 1373
 1374
 1375
 1376
 1377
 1378
 1379
 1380
 1381
 1382
 1383
 1384
 1385
 1386
 1387
 1388
 1389
 1390
 1391
 1392
 1393
 1394
 1395
 1396
 1397
 1398
 1399
 1400
 1401
 1402
 1403
 1404
 1405
 1406
 1407
 1408
 1409
 1410
 1411
 1412
 1413
 1414
 1415
 1416
 1417
 1418
 1419
 1420
 1421
 1422
 1423
 1424
 1425
 1426
 1427
 1428
 1429
 1430
 1431
 1432
 1433
 1434
 1435
 1436
 1437
 1438
 1439
 1440
 1441
 1442
 1443
 1444
 1445
 1446
 1447
 1448
 1449
 1450
 1451
 1452
 1453
 1454
 1455
 1456
 1457
 1458
 1459
 1460
 1461
 1462
 1463
 1464
 1465
 1466
 1467
 1468
 1469
 1470
 1471
 1472
 1473
 1474
 1475
 1476
 1477
 1478
 1479
 1480
 1481
 1482
 1483
 1484
 1485
 1486
 1487
 148

— 12 —
 8
 jadčig
 9
 chadčig
 10
 gadčig

— 13 —
 11
 padčig
 12
 badčig
 13
 kadčig

14
L
Nadk
15
W
Gard
16
E
Gard

15
W
Ard
18
Y
Pard
19
E
Yard



The χ^2 statistic is used to test the hypothesis that the observed frequencies are equal to the expected frequencies. The χ^2 statistic is calculated as follows:

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

where O is the observed frequency and E is the expected frequency. The χ^2 statistic is then compared to a critical value from the χ^2 distribution table to determine the significance of the results.

For the purpose of this study, the χ^2 statistic was used to test the hypothesis that the observed frequencies are equal to the expected frequencies. The results of the χ^2 test are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

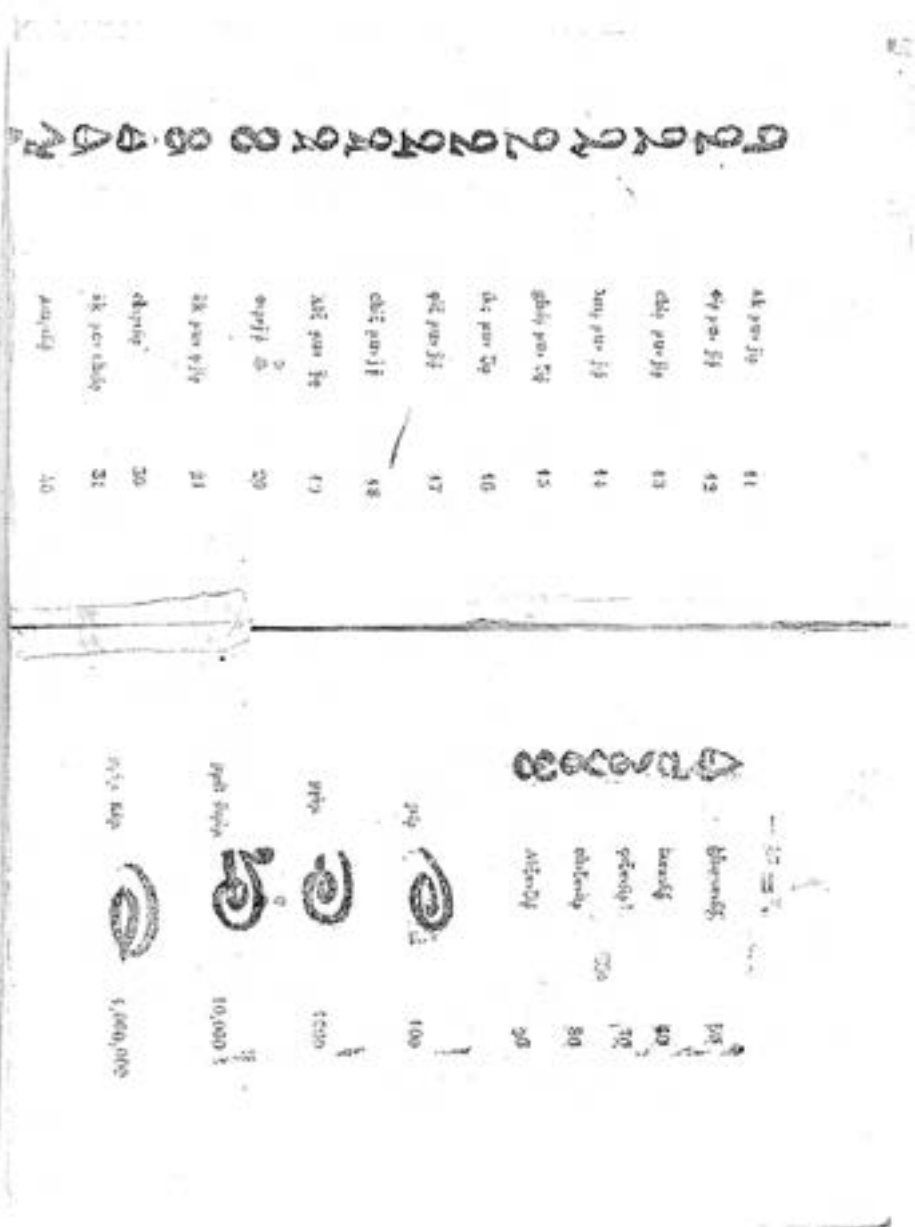
Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results

Table 1. χ^2 Test Results



u x u
 L w
 q s s
 p r m
 B m n d

Iranians, Armenians, Prince Igor, and the Lightness of Pushkin

James R. Russell
Harvard University

Abstract

The Animal Style that characterizes Scythian art came into Armenia and Russia, where it is attested in bas-reliefs on churches; and the epic Song of Igor's Campaign, a unique verbal reflection of it, inspired Pushkin and his descendants in their poetic visions.

Keywords

Scythian Art, Animal Style, Pushkin, Ruslan and Lyudmila, Kitovras, Song of Igor's Campaign, Aght'amar, Cathedral of St. Demetrius at Vladimir, Mandel'stam, Ch'arents', Kusikov

For Professor Nina Georgievna Garsoian on her goth birthday

PREFACE

In the early 1920s the Russian archaeologist and art historian Mikhail Rostovtzeff coined the term “Animal Style” to describe a type of ancient art, one which endured into the Middle Ages, in which wild and tame animals are the predominant image. Animals are, of course, prominent in every kind of art; but the most striking feature of the Animal Style in particular is its capture of the kinetic aspect—of creatures flying, running, fighting. The animals are in motion. It is a style marked by lightness, often also by what seems to be a kind of playfulness. The human and vegetable realms of nature are also depicted in this style of art, which was diffused east and west in a band across the northern tier of Eurasia from a home somewhere in the steppes of Central Asia, probably among nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples, most of whom spoke a northern Iranian language, early in the first millennium before Christ. Men in art of the Animal Style are

not frozen as static portraits. They gallop on horseback to the hunt, or wrestle with each other, or do physical work. The reach of the Animal Style is paralleled in scope only by the later Greco-Roman art forms of the Classical and Roman Imperial ages or by the globalized fashions of the present day. Celts brought the style from their Eastern European homeland to the westernmost shores of Ireland, and we can see its reflection in mediaeval manuscripts like the Book of Kells and the Lindisfarne Gospels; while artifacts in the Animal Style are still being unearthed in western China. The inspiration art of this art of the “western barbarians” came to felt in the Middle Kingdom proper, as well.

Most objects produced in the Animal Style are small, and are functional and decorative pieces appropriate in their portable form to the needs of nomadic peoples: golden jewelry for personal adornment, silver vessels for household use, and bronze and golden items of horse tack and wagon equipment. A separate and vast category, not to be considered here, is that of body art: the tattoo. The Scythian horseman's idea of beauty was not a still life in a heavy gilt frame but the form of a strong and agile creature, imprinted on his body, whose motions undulated with the rippling of his own muscles. It is not surprising that there are parallels between these ancient tattoos, preserved by the permafrost in south Siberian burials, and the biker tattoos of today. And it is not surprising either that this dimension of the subject lies outside the ken and competence of most academic savants, who tend to be innocent of the rich and vibrant culture of the American motorcycle rider. But perhaps the greatest surviving artifact of the Animal Style in both its size and the sheer, rich abundance of its images, is a very massive and stationary object, indeed—the 10th-century Armenian Church of the Holy Cross on the island of Aht'amar, Lake Van, where we find the form endowed, though only partially, with a Christian didactic purpose. And from Armenia, in part, this style came to be employed also for the carvings in bas-relief on some Russian churches of the 12th century.

I propose that the Animal Style, whose endurance from antiquity into the Middle Ages is an established fact for the visual arts, enjoyed a perhaps unique literary expression as well, in the 12th-century Russian epic *Слово о полку Игореве*, “The Song of Igor's Campaign”. The poet Alexander Pushkin, who can fairly be considered the founder of modern Russian

literature, was able to break with the ponderous forms of the past by shaping a new mode of expression that critics from the beginning have noted specifically for its lightness. Pushkin was an avid, critical, and perceptive reader of the Igor Epic, the unique manuscript of which had belonged to a relative, and whose publication the year after the poet's birth was an epochal event for Russian letters. Pushkin's first major *poema*, *Ruslan and Lyudmila*, is steeped in material drawn as much from the Song as from other folkloric sources—and, of course, the bedtime stories of his famed nanny, Arina Rodionovna. I offer the not entirely audacious suggestion that the Animal Style in the Epic could have been an important element that helped in the shaping of Pushkin's ineluctable but crucial lightness and that of his literary heirs, notably Osip Mandelshtam.

1. THE ANIMAL STYLE

Death and time have not slowed them; gold and bronze have not stilled them. The sinuous felines, sinewy horses, and screaming eagles of the Scythian "Animal Style", that art of the great steppe-land that is north Iranian and south Russian, lope and gallop and soar in the viewer's imagination. Their supple limbs stretch as they run in endless herds across the plains (Pl. 1); their tensed muscles swirl and clench as they tumble in deadly combat (Pl. 2); and the men for whom the teeming animal world is life are in motion, too: they gallop to the hunt and wrestle with each other (Pl. 3) (Rostovtzeff 1929, Pls. XIV, XVI, XXIX). The Celts on the western edge of the plains embraced the Animal Style permanently and made it their own: so antic creatures whose like can be unearthed in Xinjiang disport themselves also in the dense and stylized foliage of mediaeval Irish manuscripts. There are echoes of the Animal Style—and perhaps of the Armenian *xač'k'ar* or Cross-stone as well, for Christian Armenians travelled to the distant hyperborean climes of Slavs and Celts alike—in the stone crosses of Ireland (Pl. 4) (Henry 1964).

But it is the Slavs, for whom the plains dotted by the grave-mounds called kurgans are home, who tenaciously claim primary kinship with the ancient nomads. We are *Skify*, Scythians, declared the 20th-century poet Alexander Blok of the denizens of the south Russian steppes of the 7th century B.C. We are Sarmatians, the Polish *sztachta*, or nobility, had boasted long before—for the escutcheons of the Sarmatians, forebears

from the 4th century B.C. of the Alans or Ossetes of the north Caucasus of today, looked uncannily like their own. These claims have foundation in historical and ethnographic actuality, though they were buttressed by romantic notions of hard-riding, hard-drinking, fighting men close to nature, with wild and poetic souls. Since the growth of nationalism in the 18th century European peoples have sought their own antique roots in local sources other than Biblical and Greco-Roman scripture and history. The Scythians were local. Herodotus in the fourth book of his *Histories* evokes their vivid way of life; and the Royal Scythians lived in Russia itself: the Greek historian helpfully provides their native name, *Paralatai*, a north Iranian form corresponding to the designation of the earliest heroes and kings of the Iranians in the Zoroastrian Avesta, *parađāta-*, and in the Persian epic *Šāh-nāma*, the *Book of Kings* of Firdausī, *pīšdād*. The term means, suitable, made or created first or foremost. The golden and silver treasures of the kurgans—the Scythian burial mounds—unearthed since the days of Peter the Great, with their wildly exuberant style, glitter in the treasury of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg and still take one's breath away.

What did they fashion? From Tolstaya Mogila, 4th century B.C., comes a golden pectoral of three horizontal bands: a pastoral scene of men and animals in the upper register; a floral design meandering across the middle; and wild animals—gryphons attacking horses—in the lower, third band. The vegetable images thus order the piece, dividing the tame from the feral, the human world from that, which lies beyond it. (Herodotus seems to have swallowed whole this schema in its mythical elaborations, with his Issedones and dragons guarding gold in the remotest north.) As we are to observe presently, the sculptors of the church at Alt'amar were likewise to employ vertical bands, notably the vine scroll, to divide worlds and themes. Fights between animals, often rendered in such a way as to have the leaping beast cover the falling one in a yin-yang-like circle, express both the violence of nature and its cyclical energy and change (Jacobson 1995: fig. 11). From Chertomlyk, at about the same time and of the same precious metal, there is a crown: three bands again, one floral and the other two depicting animals fighting (ibid.: fig. 32). From Kelermes, three centuries earlier, comes a golden overlay for a scabbard: some winged Mesopotamian genii, and then a descending line of fantastic

beasts holding bows in the manner of sagittarian centaurs, endowed with wings in the shape of fish (ibid.: fig. 103). There is a gold plaque to be affixed to clothing, with a running hare, too (ibid.: fig. 61). Remember this rabbit: he will show up again and again. There are some pieces that show men fighting, but they are few; and despite the ferocious reputation of the nomads, the very numerous petroglyphs of the Scythian and related cultures depict mostly wild animals and pastoral scenes, likewise with very few of battles and fights (ibid.: fig. 31). But we do find insteads scenes of wrestling, which is not merely ritualized fighting, but, I would suggest, an activity with overtones of the eroticism of the embrace and the delicacy of dance—the fight, that is, as lightness and play.

The impression one takes away from Scythian art is of the pleasure of movement, the beauty of the kinetic body. And if one recalls that this art was meant to be portable, often to adorn a rider and his mount, it is understandable that it celebrated the galloping horse, the swooping falcon, the hare or stag in full flight—*zvazeln etanc' ew zvargeln eġeruac'*, “the running of the deer and the bounding of the stags” in the elegy of the 2nd century B.C. of the dying king Artasēs I recalling the morning hunt in the month of Nawasard—the first month of the new year—in the *Letters* of Grigor Magistros. But it is not so much the wistfulness of an elegy I mean here to emphasize, to capture, as playfulness and lightness. A famous vignette of another hunt may serve to illustrate the attitude. When the forces of king Darius were arrayed against the Scythians, Herodotus reports, “a hare ran between the two sides, and every Scythian who saw it pursued the hare. As the Scythians were wildly excited and shouting, Darius asked the meaning of this tumult among his enemies. When he learned that they were pursuing a hare, he spoke with his usual confidants and said, ‘These people despise us utterly...’” (*Histories* 4.134). The Persian monarch conquered some Scythians anyway, and his triumphal relief at Behistun, the Place of the Gods, a mountain towering over the main road from Iran down to the lowlands of Mesopotamia, shows at the end of the line of a line of despondent captives of various nationalities, tied together at the neck, one Scythian, or Saka, distinct in his *tiyraxauda*, his tall conical hat. (Both the Iranian roots that form this word came into Armenian: for the first, meaning sharp, we have the famous regnal name *Tigran*; for the second, meaning tiara, we have the *xoyr*, a priestly vestment.) And a

seal-impression of the Achaemenian era found at Artasat, Armenia, shows a line of six captive Scythians in a careful imitation of the style of the Behistun relief (Santrot 1996: 222-223, pls. 210 a-b.). They were, there too, a known neighbor, or rival. (In peaceful times, it was Scythian tutors who taught the sons of Persian nobles how to ride.) But, given the choice between a battlefield set piece with the imperial Persians and a dash after a hare, the horsemen-hunters of the steppes did not hesitate; and in any case, the tactic of hit and run, of retreat and attack, was more effective for them. Kutuzov was to use it against another imperial invader in 1812, a fateful year we will have occasion again to recall. To the Scythians, one thinks hunting, fighting, and wrestling were equally games men play; and the first of the three meant a tasty dinner and a soft pelt. Let us let the hare run away for a bit. We can catch him later.

2. THE ANIMAL STYLE IN ARMENIA: ALT'AMAR

The church of the Holy Cross on Alt'amar island in Lake Van, Armenia, was built by the architect Manuel in A.D. 920 next to the palace of king Gagik Arcruni, which has not survived but which T'ovma Arcruni in his *History* of the noble Arcruni house describes as adorned with reliefs of warriors, wrestlers, lions and other wild beasts, and flocks of birds. "He also devised and depicted around the church", T'ovma continues, "companies of game animals and flocks of birds, also all varieties of wild beasts, boars and lions, bulls and bears facing one another, recalling the opposition of their natures, which greatly pleases wise men. He girded the church with a remarkable and detailed frieze, which represented a grapevine animated with figures of vintagers, with wild animals and reptiles, accurately rendering the characteristics of each species" (Der Nersessian 1965: 4). Presumably Manuel did not execute or even plan all the carvings himself, but had at his disposal a crew of skilled masons (whose individual marks one finds on Armenian buildings) working from sketched plans and employing also model books.¹ Their sources would have been mainly

¹ See, for example, Mekhitharist Convent of San Lazzaro, Venice, MS 1434, 15th cent., possibly from the Lake Van area, with floral and geometric designs, sacred portraits, hybrid and fantastic creatures, and schematic compositions with multiple figures; and another model book of the 16th cent. bound into the same MS with a wild man, a Chinese dragon, etc. (Scheller 1995: 400-412).

the earlier Armenian churches of the 7th century² whose sculpture they or other authors of model books observed and sketched; but most likely there were also sources in the folk arts of the country that are less well attested.³ To be precise, we find carved in low or high relief on the walls these animals: bears, boars, bulls, calves, camels, cows, deer, dogs, elephants, fawns, foxes, goats, hares, harts, hinds, horses, hounds, ibexes, lambs, leopards, lions, oxen, porcupines, rabbits, rams, sheep, stags, swine, and wolves. It is a fairly thorough passenger manifest of the Ark that rested in the mountains of Ararat long before but not far away.⁴

² At Ptñi, for instance, one finds hunting scenes, the possible depiction of Samson's combat with the lion, and possible portrayals of the martyrdoms of men of the noble Amātuni clan: these could have inspired analogous scenes at Alt'amar and the depiction of the Arcruni martyrs Sahak and Hamazasp, according to Maranci 2014: 283 ff. As to animals, Ptñi has a striking number of birds, which Maranci plausibly explains as representative of the souls of the deceased, citing numerous Armenian sources, both literary and artistic, for the image (p. 304 ff.). This latter feature, however, is not so prominent at Alt'amar, leading one to suppose that the memorial of the dead was not a principal concern—the edifice was erected, after all, at the cheerful dawn of a dynasty its founders doubtless hoped was to be long-lasting. I am greatly indebted to Prof. Christina Maranci for allowing me to read the manuscript of her forthcoming study of 7th-century Armenian churches.

³ One promising source of information on this very scantily attested but enduring folk tradition of iconic sculptural representation would be the figured tombstones of Armenian Arc'ax (Karabagh) and Nakhichevan (especially what monuments are left of the vast cemetery at Julfa, now destroyed by the Azerbaijani authorities in control of the region). These depict scenes of the deceased's earthly joys or perhaps their renewed enjoyment in the life to come, and have very archaic overtones: a horseman flourishes aloft the ancient Iranian ring of glory, musicians play, servants bring jugs of wine, and nobles feast (for a preliminary study, see Russell 2001a). From the early Byzantine period the Balkans were a refuge or exile for sundry heretics, many of whom were Armenian T'ondrakites and Paulicians; and the famous Bogomil tombstones in Bosnia depict scenes familiar from the Armenian types noted, such as hunting, jousting, the ring of glory, astral bodies, various animals, such as the bear and stag, etc. (see Bihaji-Marin/Benac n.d.). Soviet Armenian scholars, partly for ideological reasons, sought secular and pre-Christian elements in the mainly ecclesiastical art that has survived from the country's past (cf. Mnac'akanyan 1955; Gevorgyan 1978).

⁴ The viewers of the church and its vine scroll, whether learned or unlettered, would have known a variety of animal fables to enliven their appreciation of the bas-reliefs. One famous compilation is the *Atuēsagirk'* (*Book of the Fox*) by Vardan Aygekc'i, 13th century. An exquisite little edition, with modern Armenian translation by Aksel Bakunts and graphic design by Hakob K'ojoyan, was published at Erevan in 1935, on the eve of the purges that swept Bakunts, Charents, and many others away. One tale (Bakunc' 1935: 61-

The overall plan of the outer decoration of the church, which is itself cruciform in shape, is highly symbolic and is meant to illustrate or teach sacred history, both cosmic and Armenian Christian, to the priests and lay faithful who participated in ritual perambulations of the structure. (The frescoes that encircle the inner walls of the church, appropriately, teach a parallel history, but one that is esoteric, that is, for those alone who are literally and metaphorically initiated: the cycle of the mystery of the Life of Christ.) The eastern outer wall, where the sun rises, shows figures associated, correspondingly, with awakening and beginnings: Adam, the first man; John the Baptist, who heralded the coming of Christ; and St. Gregory the Illuminator, who baptised the Armenians. The south façade features the theme of martyrdom, both Armenian and pan-Christian; while the north, the realm of darkness, is the domain of conflict and accordingly depicts the three warrior saints Sergius, George, and Theodore vanquishing their monstrous or demonic adversaries. Facing the west, where at the fulfillment of earthly history the sun will rise at the end of days, are Gagik with Christ and the angels.

These sacred scenes, large in scale and generally rather static in composition, with the figures staring hieratically outwards in fixed postures, or captured in the frames of medallions, command the scene just above the viewer's eye level. In relief above them on the outer walls, in both solid bands and random profusion, we find the moving animals, some of them Iranian *Mischwesen*, or hybrid creatures of folklore and religious myth, such as the three-toed, canine, winged *simurgh* (the Armenian loan-word, *siramarg*, had by then come to mean a peacock, with demonic overtones; the *Simargl* was a member of the pre-Christian Kievan pantheon attested on the eve of the baptism of Prince Vladimir in

62), for instance, relates that a man came to market to buy an ass for a single *dahekan* but could not find one that cheap. The merchants, seeing he was a fool, sold him a watermelon, telling him it was the egg of a great Indian donkey, but he had better take care not to drop it lest it break and the donkey run away. On his way home he dropped it, it rolled down a hill into some bushes, and out ran a hare (*napastak*). The hapless man cried out to the creature to stop but it ran off. In Persian, *inter alia*, the word for a hare is *xargūš*, "donkey-eared", suggesting a subliminal connection satirized in the fable. The more learned congregants might have read the *Physiologus* as well: Davies 1991 relied largely upon this source in his exegesis of the sculpture.

988) whom a sculptor has chosen to represent the *višap jukn* (“dragon-fish”) of Jonah, and the *yuškaparik*, the siren with her dire and heretical song (Pls. 5, 6) (Russell 1993). The inner walls, as was noted, chronicle Christ’s life, the interior and sanctified mysteries. But the outside of the church, facing the elements, is the place to portray something of the wildness of the outdoors, the untamed and dangerous world that was named in Eden, rescued by the Ark, and under God’s dominion, but still outside the protective confines of the sacred edifice. And, just as one often finds with the Scythian pieces, there is a defining band of foliage: in the art of the steppes it was employed to separate the pastoral from the feral; while the densely populated vine scroll here encircles the entire building, a scene that combines the wildness of nature and everyday human life, going its way apart from and parallel to the stately scenes of sacred history that unfold below in their symbolic order. So as saints lead their exemplary lives, prophets preach, and other Biblical events of war and peace proceed, above them is animal and human life in its energetic, quotidian profusion. A bear is eating grapes, a lion is attacking a bull, and, as we might expect, men are wrestling (Pls. 7, 8). There is also mounted archer and next to him proceeds a hunt for a hare.⁵

It is the garden or wilderness that is not Eden, but is still under the dominion of its Creator, whose kingdom the edifice proclaims; and as if to make this explicit, high on the East façade is a medallion portrait of Adam with the words of Genesis 2.20 relating that he named all the animals (Pl. 9).⁶ Much of the decoration has no apparent Christian meaning at all,

⁵ Sirarpie Der Nersessian thought the bas-relief of the mounted hunter, whose face has Oriental features, was inserted centuries after the Mongol conquest to replace a missing or damaged stone. Professor Christina Maranci (verbal communication) disputes this assertion, finding scant evidence for such a repair. And one might observe that by the 10th century the incessant traffic of the Silk Road and the infusion of Sogdian elements into the art of Iranian Khorasan had made East Asian features familiar.

⁶ The four letters of his name in Armenian are divided, two to each side of the central bust. This could be for symmetry and economy of space; but the designer or sculptor might also have had in mind that in Greek the four letters of the name of our common ancestor are also the initial letters—most conveniently for a cruciform church whose decoration, as we have seen, takes fullest advantage of the symbolism of the four directions—of *A(natolē)*, *D(ysis)*, *A(rktos)*, and *M(esembria)*, that is, East, West, North, and South! (for more of the symbolism of quaternity in Christian Armenia, see Russell 1997).

though: lines of animals course under the conical dome and there are bas-reliefs of severed heads, singly or in rows. Triumphant Sasanian kings festooned the walls of the fire temple of Ādur Anāhīd at Staxr with the severed heads of defeated Roman foes; and in earlier ages the Scythians had adorned their reins with shrunken heads: so perhaps the reliefs at Alt'amar echo this grisly token of victory (Pl. 10). But overall the Animal Style has been baptised: the siren of beguiling song of antiquity, Armenian *yuškaparik*, has now become an embodiment of heresy; and the proud *sēnmurw* is Jonah's whale, the obedient servant of Divine plans (Pls. 11, 12). Alt'amar was unique for its time; and it astonished and impressed mediaeval Armenians just as much as it does us: the later builders of the Church of St. Thaddeus in Persarmenia emulated the vine scroll from Van, but were unable to grasp its essence: the florid, heavy relief even has a pair of wrestlers, but it is dense with curlicues and arabesques and bristles with armed conflict. It is decorative and static, rather than vital and kinetic. The architects and sculptors working under the direction Alexander T'amanyan who shaped the cool parks, sparkling fountains, and imposing arched edifices of Soviet Erevan employed the vine scroll motif more gracefully and successfully, on the façade of the building of the Council of Ministers of the Armenian SSR (Manasyan et al. 1972).

As for the Scythians to whom the Animal Style originally belonged, they were no strangers to Armenia, and some of them were even blood ancestors: one of the nation's forefathers, according to its Father of Histories Movsēs Xorenac'i, was Paroyr (i.e., Scythian Partatua, "Capable in Battle") *Skayordi*, "the Scythian's Son". A Titan is called *hskay*, "well-and-truly Scythian". Artašēs (whose deathbed elegy was cited earlier) lassoed on the river Kura the Alan/Osete epic heroine Sat'enik (the mythical progenetrix Satana of the heroes called the "manly men", the *Nartæ*), married her, and bore the royal Artaxiad children; and Armenian- and Ossetic-speaking populations till recently met at that spot, too. A northeastern province of the country was called Šakašēn, "Scythian's Home". Although Armenians recognize Hayk (the eponymous ancestor, cf. *hay* "Armenian") and Biblical Togarmah (Arm. T'orgom, an ancient Anatolian ethnic designation) as their forefathers, they style themselves also *Ask'anazean*, the progeny of Biblical Aškenaz, i.e., the Scythians. Thus the Animal Style endured for many centuries past the Classical age, found its way from gold

and bronze to stone, and made a home in Armenia, even as did the descendants of the Scythians themselves. The most powerful expression of the Animal Style is surely the program of bas-reliefs at Ałt'amar; and even if the style was *not* very successfully recaptured at St. Thaddeus, still, farther north it *was*. We travel two centuries into the future from the tenth, and into Kievan Rus'—Russia.

3. THE ANIMAL STYLE: FROM ARMENIA TO KIEVAN RUS'

Armenians played a powerful if sometimes shadowy role in early Russian culture. It can be argued that the legend and names of the three brothers who were the founders of Kiev derive from a strikingly similar Armenian foundation myth of the Tarawn region preserved in the *History* attributed to the mysterious Zenob of Glak. At least it is easier to state that case than to suggest, as Academician D. S. Likhachëv dutifully did, that the early chronicle *Повесть временных лет* inspired Zenob instead—through some castling the long way to evade the issue of chronology, including—if textual transmission played a role—the knotty problem of the invention of a script in time for this act of textual transmission from the unlettered Slavs to the long-literate disciples of Maštoc' to happen several centuries before the arrival in Moravia of Sts. Constantine-Cyril and Methodius, the inventors of a script for the Slavs (Russell 2005). Armenian painters worked in Kievan Rus' and at a church at Ryazan' of the early 12th century an identifiably Armenian Cross has been unearthed (Vernadsky/ Karpovich 1959: 259 ff.). The church of the legendary sunken city of Great Kitezh, whose bells can be heard only by the faithful, bears the name of St. Gregory of Armenia, but that edifice is in another world, removed from banal reality, and stands now deep beneath the waters of Svetloyar besides. The legend itself might have been inspired by that of the bells of sunken Arčēš, that Armenian Dunwich, that are said to be heard to ring when there are storms in lake Van (Russell 2007).

But let us consider instead, for evidence of Armeno-Russian artistic relations, a church that is also easier of access. In 1194, Prince Vsevolod III erected at Vladimir the Cathedral of St. Demetrius (Св. Дмитриевский собор); a similar church, dedicated to St. Sergius (Св. Сергиевский), was constructed around the same time at nearby Yur'ev-Pol'skii. Both are densely encrusted with bas-reliefs, mainly of fauna and flora. On the latter

is one fine relief of a properly three-toed *simurgh*; a second has a decidedly vulpine face (Pls. 13, 14). There is also a centaur (Rus. *kitovras*) whose human portion, Orientally robed, looks decidedly like the model came from the same studio the sculptor at Alt'amar engaged. He seems to be returning successfully from the hunt, and carries a hare in one hand (Pl. 15). We can return to him presently. The West façade of the Cathedral of St. Demetrius is decorated with band after alternating band of fauna and flora—forests and mythical creatures, the vast and wild world—all safely presided over by an enthroned Christ (Pls. 16, 17), reminiscent of the calming (and explanatory) presence of Adam at Alt'amar (Kazarinova 1959). It is a scene, indeed, without doubt inspired in part by Alt'amar; and the style of the stone carving is much the same. There is, and we shall return presently to him, a bird with wings outspread as if ready to crow (Rus. *klikati*) or take flight, perched at the top of a tree whose pyramidal base suggests it may be, if not a mere stylized plant, then something symbolically important, a world-tree (Pl. 18).⁷ The vast and rich canvas of winged griffins, simurghs, centaurs, and lions ranged between lines of flora, with Christ above, governing His almost-peaceable and densely vital natural and mythological kingdom, can fairly be said to represent a final, architectural apotheosis of the Animal Style. It is a harmonious and majestic confluence of forms and ideas Christian and pagan, Scythian, Sasanian, Armenian, and Russian. Indeed, the influences of all those cultures have been invoked in bewildered attempts to explain its abundant wonder.

4. THE ANIMAL STYLE IN RUSSIAN EPIC

Which is all very well, and all of these disparate cultures contributed to the genius of the rich tradition of mediaeval Russia; but as a teacher of mine, Prof. Nicholas Sims-Williams, once insisted, a word is still worth a thousand pictures. It is not that the great philologist was or is hostile to art history, far from it; it is just that sometimes a person can explain clearly more of what he means, and more precisely, with words than by means of a picture. And if one has both—a picture that one can relate or

⁷ V. N. Toporov, indeed, interprets the Ur-image of the World-tree as one with birds on its crown, hoofed animals at the center to represent earth, and snakes and fishes below (Rempel' 1987: 98).

anchor to a text—well, so much the better. For the Animal Style, evoked in word-pictures, we have, I think, a text, a unique text: the concise 12th-century Russian epic of the campaign of the Kievan Prince Igor against the Polovtsians or Cumans to the south, in the steppe region north and east of the Sea of Azov. It is beyond reasonable doubt an authentic inheritance of that age, with elements of far hoarier antiquity abounding within it: there are numerous reasons to reject the closely-argued thesis of my learned and respected colleague Prof. Edward Keenan that the Russian epic *Слово о полку Игореве* was a forgery composed by the eminent 18th-century Czech Slavist Jozef Dobrovsky. The latter simply did not know Old Russian anywhere near well enough to compose such a poem *ex nihilo*, nor was he enough of a creative artist to reshape it out of the comparatively plodding strophes of the later *Zadonshchina*, which is more likely an awkward and stiff imitation (like the vine scroll at St. Thaddeus!). Dobrovsky was unaware of the very archaisms within it that we now examine. He was also too principled a scholar and too decent a man to engage in the act of forgery, a despicable and treacherous betrayal of everything science stands for.

So why would one think the Igor Tale a forgery at all? The epic stands out uncannily from the other Slavonic writings of the 12th century; but then, to adduce the closest parallel case, so too does *Beowulf* in the Anglo-Saxon canon. The sole MS of the former perished in the fire that consumed Moscow in the Great Patriotic War of 1812, at the home of its owner, Count Musin-Pushkin, a relative of the poet Alexander Pushkin (1799-1837); the one MS of the latter was but singed at the edges when a much less apocalyptic fire damaged Joseph Cotton's library at London. Both were bound in miscellanies, with similar eclectic, entertaining, and esoteric contents, as though their respective owners had similar tastes and interests. It is a curious parallel and one no forger would be likely to have considered. Had the tables been turned, and *Beowulf* survived not as an original manuscript but only in a handwritten copy done by an 18th-century gentleman, perhaps savants might now be questioning the authenticity of *Beowulf*'s monster Grendel rather than that of the Igor Tale's sinister *Div*-bird. But there is a particular feature most relevant to the present discussion that might also argue strongly for the authenticity and antiquity of the Song: It has long seemed to me that the beasts and birds that

constitute the bulk of the imagery of the Song of the Campaign of Prince Igor are neither more nor less than the unique *literary* expression of the Animal Style, in all its energy, lightness, playfulness, and color, still the living stock of artistic imagery of a culture whose Byzantine learning rubbed shoulders with an unbroken heritage of arts and ways of life connected with the steppes.

The great Russian-American writer Vladimir Nabokov, in my view the most insightful scholar and translator of the text, approaches this evaluation without explicitly invoking the Animal Style: "An army of animals, resembling the fauna of rich-hued rugs, and marginal designs of delicate plants play a changeable double role in the structure of the Song. They give its circumstances a touch of local reality, and they participate in the general theme of magic, prophecy, and conjuration, a theme bespeaking a singular freedom of thought and distinguishing this pagan poem from the pallid and rigid compositions of routine Christian piety, which by that time had begun to direct and to drain literary art" (Nabokov 1960, p. 8). And a scholar who analyzed the Greek poetical tropes codified by George Khoiroboskos and attested in Slavonic translation in the *Izbornik* of 1073 that she believed the poet employed—and let it be stressed that sophistication in the poetic craft is no necessary impediment to the employment of the Animal Style, for it is a conceptual error to confuse archaism with naïvete—observes that most of its metaphors are permeated by an animistic mobility, that the most pervasive image of the Epic is one of flight, and that verbs are used consistently to animate objects, to endow them with kinesis and sound (Besharov 1956: 51-52, 71, 89). Like Nabokov, she does not mention the Animal Style in so many words; but her every characterization of the Song seems to imply it.

The historian Michael Rostovtzeff, who first gave the Animal Style its name in print, in 1929, had authored a monograph on the art and archaeology of the Scythians and Greeks in Southern Russia, where he really defined it, in 1922. This is the region, too, where the action of the Song takes place. He was also a friend who assisted the Nabokovs' immigration from France to the United States at the beginning of the Second World War.⁸

⁸ Nabokov's father had been inadvertently killed by Russian émigré monarchists when he attempted to shield the liberal politician Milyukov from an assassin's bullet; and the

Vladimir Vladimirovich knew of these antiquities; and perhaps it crossed his mind that the swift steeds (*бръзья комони*), the falcons attacking swans, the blue-gray eagles gliding under clouds, the wagons creaking like dispersed swans, the jargon of jackdaws, the Cuman a black raven, the warrior Gzak a gray wolf, the foxes yelping at vermilion shields (*лисици крешут на чръвленя щиты*)—all are the friezes of the Dmitrievskii *sobor*, the treasures of the kurgans, endowed with a voice, with sound and motion, the living, kinetic literary imagery of a bardic poem steeped in the immemorial Animal Style of the steppes.

One collocation of verbal image in the Song and bas-relief is intriguing. We have seen the bird on its world-tree at Vladimir; and here is another bird in a similar perch, though this time we can hear its mighty screech carrying to far lands: *Тогда възступи Игорь князь въ златъ стремь и поъха по чистому полю. Солнце ему тъмою путь заступаше, ноць стонуци ему грозою птичь убуди, свистъ звъринъ възта, збися Дивъ, кличетъ брѣху древа, велитъ послушати земли незнаемъ, Влѣзь, и Поморию, и Посулию, и Сурожу, и Корсуню, и тебѣ, Тьмутараканьскыи блѣванъ*. In the rhymed translation by V. A. Zhukovsky found in Pushkin's papers we have: *Тогда вступил князь Игорь в золотое стремя/ И поехал по чистому полю./ Солнце дорогу ему тьмой заступило;/ Ночь, грозой шумя на него, птиц пробудила;/ Рев в стадах звериных;/ Див кличет на верху древа,/ Велит прислушать земле незнакомой,/ Волге, Поморию и Посулию,/ И Сурожу и Корсуню,/ И тебе, истукан тьмутараканский!*

And here is V. Nabokov's English translation: "Then Igor set foot/ in the golden stirrup/ and rode out to the campaign./ The sun blocks his way with darkness./ Night, moaning ominously unto him,/ awakens the birds;/ the whistling of beasts [arises?];/ [stirring?] the *daeva* calls on the top of the tree,/ bids hearken the land unknown—/ the Volga,/ and the [Azov] Seaboard,/ and the Sula country,/ And Surozh,⁹ and Korsun,/ and you, idol of Tmutorokan!"

murderers were to serve the Nazis during the occupation of France. His wife, Vera, was Jewish; and they had a son, Dmitri; so all three would have been in peril of their lives, had they remained in Europe.

⁹ That is, Sudak, ancient Sugdak—the Sogdian trading settlement on the north shore of the Black Sea.

Nabokov has understood this bird of loud and dismal tidings, called Div, as an Avestan demon, a *daēvā*. The nightingale (славий) is the bird identified with the bard Boyan who sings the glory (слава) of the princes (in the family tree of the rulers of Kievan Rus' there are eight common compound names with the final element *-slav* by my count: Svyato-, Yaro-, Msti-, Izya-, Bryachi-, Vse-, Vyache-, and Rosti-). So, this *Div* is a kind of anti-nightingale, a demonic herald of malglory. (In Avestan, the demon personifying Wrath, Aēšma *daēvā*—Asmodeus or Ašmedai, on whom see more below—and the chief of all evil spirits Angra Mainyu, or Ahreman, bear the epithet *dušxvarənah-*, “dys-glorious”, from which comes ultimately Armenian *t’šuar*, “wretched”.) Its dismal, stentorian screech, moreover, reminds one strongly of the famed Nightingale Robber, the *Коловей Разбойник* vanquished by the folk hero Il’ya of Murom, who brings it to the court of Vladimir at Kiev, in the famous ballad-tale (былина). And I have argued elsewhere that this creature has a long Indo-Iranian pedigree, appearing as a demonic child-robbing bird in Armenian *hma-yils*, or magical scrolls; and as the Indian Garuda imported from Buddhism into the Mongolian shamanic otherworld. In these various traditions there is a baleful bird with a stentorian voice perched on a tree in the middle of the universe. In the Armenian magical texts it is an embodiment of the demoness Lilith, called Al, and afflicts women in childbirth: God’s three warrior angels (cf. the three armed saints on the northern wall of Alt’amar) attack and subdue the creature, rather as Il’ya the folk hero does in his turn (Russell 2005).

That is all very interesting, too. But what strikes one when considering the image with reference to the spirit of the Animal Style is not so much the antiquity or function of this actually rather fearsome creature as the *lightness* of its role in the Song. The sun is eclipsed, the feathered harbinger of disaster crows, the beasts stir obligingly in chorus, yet where is the dark tragedy that sudden night and a demonic cry covering the farthest reaches of the land ought to ensure? As Nabokov insists in his novel *Pnin*, doom should not jam. Vut, just as in *Pnin*, it does: Igor is, indeed, vanquished, only to be entertained briefly by his erstwhile ally and reluctant captor Konchak and then sprung from captivity unharmed by the obliging Ovlur; while Igor’s son Vladimir falls in love with a Polovtsian princess and stays on the steppes. When Sovexportfilm released the cheerful

movie of Borodin's opera "Prince Igor", based on the Song, four decades ago, one had the impression of a colorful, light, somewhat exotic story with pleasant overtones of romance and few hard feelings (except for a pair of drunken layabouts on the Russian side who shirk army service and accost Yaroslavna, whose dirge incidentally, in its appeal to wind, river, and sun, is very much in the spirit of the Animal Style)—scarcely a grimly martial epic.

Let us consider one other creature that appears at the Cathedral of St. Demetrius and in Scythian art, and consider its echo in Slavonic literature. That should bring us to the final consideration at which the essay aims. It is the centaur, that half-human, half-equine *Mischwesen*—Sagittarius if it carries a bow, the fertility-being Gandharva if it is Indian, Achilles' tutor or a skilled physician or a lustful brawler at a wedding if it is Greek. Like the **daēvā*-bird it is old, its functions are complex, and its traces and sources are widespread across Asia and the ancient world (Russell 2004). Russian borrows Greek *kentauros* as *kitovras*, perhaps encoding willy-nilly but quite functionally into the name another loan, *kit*, from Greek *kētos*, "whale"—the creature in some legends has an association with the sea. (One recalls the Sagittarian Scythian creature with fish for wings!) But this *Mischwesen* appears most prominently in Russian in a mediaeval apocryphon, *Сказание о Соломоне и Китоврасе*, "The Tale of Solomon and the Centaur" (Dmitriev/Lixačev 1969: 370-375, 746-747), a text that for its wryly humorous and irreverent character was entered in lists of proscribed texts by the Orthodox Church. It is a version of the well-known apocryphon extant in Greek and other languages, notably Armenian (where it also forms the basis of an illustrated manual of demonology used by witches): the *Testament of Solomon*.

In the earlier Greek version, however, Solomon encounters not Kitovras but Asmodeus, that is, the Demon of Wrath mentioned earlier, the one who merits the Avestan epithet "malglorious". He appears first in Hebrew literature as Ašmēdai in *Tobit*, a dangerous supernatural being smitten with love for a Jewish girl in Ecbatana who kills all seven of her suitors. In *Test. Sol.*, God has rather unreasonably charged Solomon with the task of building the Temple of Jerusalem without using metal tools; but the king's capable vizier (all Oriental potentates of legendary fame have them; cf. the late Assyrian Aḫīkar, the Akir *premudryi* "most wise" of Sla-

vonian literature whose precepts were bound together with Song in the MS miscellany owned by Musin-Pushkin) suggests finding Ašmedai and getting him drunk when the latter stops at a favorite mountain spring on his way from daily morning study of Torah at the Heavenly Academy down to afternoon learning at a terrestrial yeshiva. The captive Asmodeus not only provides the *šamīr*, a stone-cutting worm, to Hiram of Tyre, the chief architect serving the king of Israel, but furnishes a whole contingent of demons to labor at the building. He supplies a personal dossier on each containing its name, function, a description of its appearance, and the spell that can summon and control it. Asmodeus himself appears as sardonic, world-weary, and wise (Russell 2001; idem 2013).

I suspect the centaur replaced Asmodeus because Solomon's opposite number in the ancient story is a character presented as strong and potentially dangerous, lascivious and rowdy when aroused, but also intelligent, capable, and world-wise. He is in some ways not unlike Solomon himself. That is, the Russians have lightened the tale, introducing a creature we know from the walls of St. Demetrius at Vladimir. And the story in its Slavonic iteration may also be contaminated by a popular text, the Lives of the Desert Fathers, in which Paul, the first hermit, loses his way in the desert one day at a scorching noontime and gets directions from a semi-articulate but helpful centaur (Waddell 1997: 44-45). But what is the centaur in the bas-relief actually doing there? He is shown holding a hare. Like the Scythians, those magnificent riders who were one with their steeds, he has not lingered for the scheduled war with Darius or an appointment with Hiram and Solomon to discuss progress on the First Temple: he saw a rabbit and galloped off after it! Rabbits are, of course, a nice semantic portmanteau: they are swift, they signify the hunt, and of course they are also proverbially procreative. I have already mentioned one Soviet cinematographic evocation of heroic Rus' *in illo tempore*, so perhaps it does no harm appositely to mention another, the classic *Alexander Nevsky* directed by Sergei Eisenstein (1938). On the eve of the fateful clash with the invading German horde, the prince walks pensively among his troops: an old man is telling a funny, slightly off-color fable in which a fox that has been chasing a hare gets herself caught between two trees and the hare then violates her maidenly honor. Alexander Yaroslavich takes this folk wisdom to heart and plans his strategy to trap the heavily-armored Teu-

tonic knights on the ice. The enemy will crash through into the frigid waters of Lake Chud; but the *lightly* armed Russians will escape. Lightness and rabbits, again. And so we come to the great Russian poet whose lightness has been called his particular virtue.

5. THE LIGHTNESS OF PUSHKIN

Alexander Blok, delivered his famous lecture on “The poet’s role” at Petrograd on 11 February 1921. In despair and defiance, he lamented the loss of air to breathe, the vanishing of poetic, inner freedom under the new Soviet order. He was to die in August of that year, and the speech proved a valediction. His fellow poets Esenin and Mayakovsky were to take their own lives in the middle and end of the decade so grimly inaugurated. Blok speaks of the poet whose work is the essence of the air to breathe and the freedom to create: *это лёгкое имя: Пушкин* “this light name, Pushkin”. He exclaims, *Пушкин так легко и весело умел нести свое творческое бремя*—“Pushkin knew how to bear his creative burden so lightly and gaily”. Then Blok plunges into the abyss of the creative process itself: *На бездонных глубинах духа, где человек перестаёт быть человеком, на глубинах, недоступных для государства и общества, созданных цивилизацией,—катятся звуковые волны, подобные волнам эфира, объемлющим вселенную; там идут ритмические колебания, подобные процессам, образующим горы, ветры, морские течения, растительный и животный мир.*—“In the bottomless depths of the spirit, where a man ceases to be a man, at the depths inaccessible to state and society created by civilization, there course the waves of sound that are like the waves of the ether that encompass the universe. There proceed the rockings of rhythm that are like the processes that form the mountains and winds, the currents of the seas, the vegetable and animal world” (apud Richards/Cockerell 1976: 122). Here Pushkin metamorphoses, like the shape-changing men and animals of the Igor Tale, into a sea creature (and we are presently to note Esenin’s telling use of a marine metaphor for images that move). It is at one with the currents as it swims, flexing and undulating, playful and serious in the deeps. The extended metaphor recalls Pushkin’s self-identification with ancient Greek songster Arion, rescued by a dolphin from a shipwreck. And for dolphins, see below the key poem by Mandelshtam.

Andrei Sinyavsky, the Soviet dissident who wrote under the pseudonym Abram Tertz, famously pondered this perennial question of Pushkin's lightness that has engaged, I think, many of us. In his *Прогулки с Пушкиным* (*Strolls with Pushkin*) he sets it out: *Легкость—вот первое, что мы выносим из его произведений в виде самого общего и мгновенного чувства. Легкость в отношении к жизни была основой мирозерцания Пушкина, чертой характера и биографии. Легкость в стихе стала условием творчества с первых его шагов. Едва он появился, критика заговорила о «чрезвычайной легкости» его стихов: «кажется, что они не стоили никакой работы» «кажется, что они выливались у него сами собою»* (*Невский Зритель*, 1820, No. 7; *Сын Отечества*, 1820, ч. 64, No. 36).

До Пушкина почти не было легких стихов—ну—Батюшков. Ну—Жуковский. И то спотыкаемся. И вдруг, откуда ни возьмись, ни с чем, ни с кем не сравнимые реверансы и повороты, быстрота, натиск, прыгучесть, умение гарцевать, галопировать, брать препятствия, делать шпагат и то стягивать, то растягивать стих по требованию, по примеру курбетов, о которых он рассказывает с таким вхождением в роль, что строфа—балерина становится рекомендацией автора... (Terc 1993: 7-8)

"Lightness—that is the first thing we take away from his works, in the aspect of the most general and immediate feeling. Lightness in relation to life was the foundation of Pushkin's conception of the world, that feature of his character and biography. Lightness in verse became the condition of his creativity, from his very first steps. Barely had he appeared on the scene when the critics began to speak of the 'extraordinary lightness and fluidity' of his verses: 'It seems that they took no labor at all,' 'It seems that with him they poured out of their own accord'".

"Before Pushkin there were almost no light verses. Well, there was Batyushkov. Well, Zhukovsky. And even at that we are at a loss. And suddenly, as if from nowhere, incomparable to anything, to anyone, his bows and turns, swiftness, dashing, hopping, deft prancing, galloping, taking obstacles, entwining and tensing or loosening the verse at will, in the

manner of the leaps he recounts with such absorption in the role that the strophe, a ballerina, becomes itself a recommendation of its author..."

After this essential insight Sinyavsky goes on to describe how Pushkin acquired easygoing manners at the Lycée, rejected the burden of the lofty calling of a poet, liked to write in bed, and so on. All that is doubtless true; yet one might stress in addition that Pushkin's lightness does not imply any of the triviality of form and thought of a superficially lived life: this lightness endows poems of considerable compositional complexity and high seriousness of content with a supernal joy, a classical playfulness. It is this quality that establishes Pushkin's oeuvre as the basis of the modern Russian language and its literature, that released it from the ponderous styles of the post-Mongol period and the hypercaloric frippery of 18th-century salon verse, and that also makes him untranslatable. Pushkin once opined that the epic *Слово о полку Игореве* could not have been a forgery of the 18th century, since not even Derzhavin knew Russian well enough to compose it. And Pushkin's own *Exegi Monumentum*, with its parting admonition not to quarrel with a fool, was a deliberate parody of Derzhavin's ponderous Horatian ode. It has, as such, a playful and daring lightness; yet there is a powerful undercurrent of profound seriousness in it, too, when one regards it in its proper context. It is the sixth and final part of the *Каменоостровский* (Stone Island) cycle, in which the reader follows the inner sign posts of a solemn Holy Week peregrination. The cycle begins with a reflection on verbal and aesthetic liberty; then Pushkin casts in a limpid Russian the great meditational prayer of Ephrem Syrus; then we visit the scene of the damnation of Judas; walk through a Petersburg cemetery; and finally encounter Pushkin's own monument not built with hands (See Puškin 2012: 91-95, with commentary on p. 181 ff. by S.A. Fomičev). The light parody, then, crowns a Lenten cycle of reflection.

So, one might add that not only was Derzhavin incapable of faking the *Song of Igor's Campaign* (never mind poor Jozef Dobrovsky, that decent and devoted Czech scholar who would never have done something so dishonest in any case)—perhaps Pushkin was the first fully to grasp it, the only one of his generation entirely to understand it. And with his reading of it, then—it was published in 1800, a year after his birth—he inherited with its flowing imagery of the living heraldic creatures of the ancient and mediaeval steppes the strong *literary* expression of that lightness that

runs through Russian art and storytelling, from its most ancient springs. But it took Pushkin to return it to *belles lettres*, to make of the rill a river.

We can see the direct inspiration of the Igor Tale in Pushkin's first long work, *Руслан и Людмила*, which teems with magical animals (Russell 2012), where the bard Boyan of the Tale sings, his identity as praise-singer with the nightingale, the *slavii*, even encoded subtly, pleasantly, and with originality and complexity into the text: *i slavit sladostnyi pevets/ Lyudmilu-prelest', i Ruslana,/ I Lelem svityi im venets* "The sweet singer praises/ Lovely Lyudmila and Ruslan/ And their diadem woven by Le'", with a complex progression from *slav*- "praise" to *slad*- "sweet" and a shift via the implied base *lad*- "love" in the latter to homonymic *lyud*- (before *mil*- "love") and then *Lel'*, Hymen. (Lel' and the homonymic and coincidentally also demonic/divine and erotic Lilith will join forces to become Nabokov's Lolita.) We have traversed time, but not space, from the curving shore of the Sogdian/Surozh sea in the Igor Tale (*Iz luka morya*) to the curving shore of *Ruslan and Lyudmila* (*U lukomor'ya*). Ruslan is, of course, a name derived, in any case, from Saka, that is to say, Scythian, Rostam—**rautas-taxma*- "strong as a river". Pushkin continued to read, and to write about, the Igor Tale throughout his life, which should have been as light, and as life-filled, as the animals that course through the epic. We know him as a boy listening rapt to the folk tales of Arina Rodionovna (Pl. 19); and then, when he was not yet forty, came the lethal duel with d'Anthès that brought such far-reaching harm to all the Russian land. It was all too short a life, and there was nothing light about its end at all.

But perhaps something of Pushkin's lightness of spirit crossed by some process of literary metempsychosis into his truest heir, Osip Mandelstam. For in the latter's first cycle of poems, *Камень* (*Stone*), one discerns what we might now dare to call the Pushkinian Animal Style. Here are a few examples: *Воздух пасмурный влажен и гулок;/ Хорошо и не страшно в лесу.* "The overcast air is damp and ringing;/ It is nice in the forest and not frightening". *С весёлым ржанием пасутся табуны/ И римской ржавщиной окрасилась долина./ Сухое золото классической весны/ Уносит времени прозрачная стремнина.* "The herds of horses pasture with gay neighs/ And Roman rusty red adorns the dale./ A Classical springtime, dry and gold,/ Is carried off in the limpid flood of time". *Сусальным золотом горят/ В лесах рождественские ёлки;/ В кустах*

изрушечные волки/ Глазами страшными глядят. “With tinselled gold burn/ The Christmas evergreens in the woods;/ And in the shrubbery toy wolves/ Stare with terrifying looks”. *О, вещая моя печаль,/ О, тихая моя свобода,/ И неживого небосвода/ Всегда смеющийся хрусталь!* (Mandel’shtam 1990). “O my sorrow wise,/ O my freedom still,/ And the lifeless dome of heaven’s/ Ever-smiling crystal!” (With respect to the latter strophe one remembers how Pushkin had written, famously, in his poem *На холмах Грузии* [“On the hills of Georgia”] ... *печаль моя светла*, “my sadness is bright”).

And the greatest Animal Style poem of *Stone*, is one in which the sea creature seems to swim in the creative depths to be evoked by Blok in the oration cited above (ibid.: 14):

<i>Ни о чем не нужно говорить,</i>	“It is not necessary at all to speak
<i>Ничему не следует учить,</i>	Nor anything at all to teach;
<i>И печальна так и хороша</i>	And sad she is, and as comely,
<i>Темная звериная душа.</i>	The dark soul of the beast.

<i>Ничему не хочет изучить,</i>	She doesn’t want to learn a thing
<i>Не умеет вовсе говорить—</i>	And knows nothing of speech—
<i>И плывет дельфином молодым</i>	And, a young dolphin, swims
<i>По седым пучинам мировым.</i>	The world’s deep and hoary seas”.

Another and different kind of heir was the powerful, charismatic Sergei Esenin, an avid reader of the Igor’ Epic and an elemental force of nature in his own right, who associated with the “Scythian” poets before the Revolution and after it rubbed shoulders with the Imaginist poet Alexander Kusikov and probably with the latter’s acquaintance, the great Soviet Armenian poet Elišē Č‘arenc’ (Yeghishe Charents, as his name is generally transliterated), as well. There is a curious mystery to be explored on the side here: the author of a standard English biography of Esenin misidentifies Kusikov, who was Armenian, as a Circassian; and seems to be entirely unaware of the presence of Č‘arenc’ in the Moscow of the Imaginists. I have in my library a copy of Kusikov’s *В нигуда* (*Into Nowhere*), Moscow, 1920, signed and dated by Charents: *Elišē Č‘arenc’ Moskva/ [1]922 t’.I.* (Elišē Č‘arenc’ Moscow/ [1]922 [year] [January]) (Plates 20, 21). Kusikov liked to fuse Muslim-Oriental and Christian-Russian themes and terms in his verse: his *Искандар Намэ* (i.e. *Iskandar-nāma*, Pers., “Book of Alexander”,

1921-22) is a play on his own name and the Persian version of the Hellenistic *Alexander Romance*. Charents borrowed from it these lines as the epigraph to his own autobiography in verse, the *Charents-name* (Moscow, Jan. 1922): *Москва, Москва, ты Меккой мне, Москва, а Кремль твой—сладость чёрной Каабы* “O Moscow, Moscow, thou art Mecca to me, Moscow; and thy Kremlin is the sweetness of the black Ka‘aba” (Č‘arenc‘ 1963: 151-176, 342 fn.). Kusikov (1896-1977) was born to a somewhat indigent branch of the prominent Armenian merchant clan of the Kusikyans at Armavir in the north Caucasus, but insisted to the very end of his life (he died in emigration in France) that he was a Circassian whose Muslim ancestors had been warlike horsemen. Kusikov seems to have made a great effort to conceal his true background, for the poet Ryurik Ivnev (a close friend of Esenin) claimed once to have picked up Kusikov’s passport, which the latter feverishly snatched away and hid in his pocket, though not before Ivnev saw the bearer’s nationality, “Armenian”, inscribed on one of its pages (Drozdov 2005: 174, 202-203). Perhaps the poet concealed his ethnic identity out of the sense of shame and self-hatred that often afflicts members of weak and persecuted peoples and leads them to claim some more manly pedigree. One recalls the analogous case of Lev Nussimbaum, the son of a wealthy Jewish family from Baku who converted to Islam, and wrote a biography of Stalin and a romantic novel, *Ali and Nino*, under the names Essad Bey and Kurban Said. The novel describes the love of the dashing young Azeri Muslim Ali for the enchanting Georgian maiden Nino; and the action takes place in the war-torn Caucasus in the years following the Russian Revolution and the end of the First World War. Tellingly, the villain of the piece is an Armenian, the older, wealthy Nakhararyan in his sinister black limousine (Reiss 2005). Perhaps Charents was not just a fellow poet, then, to Kusikov, but also a fellow Armenian in whom he could confide, at a time when it was a shame, a disadvantage, and sometimes a danger to be identified as an Armenian or a Jew.

To return to the Imaginists, they followed Ezra Pound and the Imagists in seeing in the verbal picture that the poet shapes, the image of a thing or idea, the heart of his art. Esenin divided these images, the essential features of the poem, into *заставки*, static “rubrics”, and *корабельные*, “caravel-like”, dynamic ships of images (McVay 1976: 112). Running horses,

flying bird, and now sailing ships cresting the waves: in Esenin's distinction is there not the enduring sense of the Animal Style with its playful lightness and kinetic energy? In a return to the asserted power of the verbal image, and in the encounter of Russian and Armenian artists, we have not, perhaps, come full circle, but we have certainly come full spiral, into a new appreciation of an archaic and powerful mode of artistic creation, on the northern tier of Eurasia. The Animal Style is not, then, a primitive curiosity of the remote past, but an enduring way of seeing that has enriched and shaped human imagination down to our time. And as people turn to a renewed appreciation and concern for the natural world all life shares, it may yet infuse our arts and minds again with its lightness and joy.

ENVOI

Thus, in a very few strokes, in a very preliminary way, I have tried here to join words to images and to make concrete what is actually a rather elusive idea. What is lightness? How does motion endure in the stasis of a carved object, how can a poem inherit a style and save the sense of words that might once have been sung; and how then can all this infuse and bring to life, in the work of one man perceiving a crucial feature of a very long and versatile tradition, a modern literature? Perhaps such audacity were better left to living conversation, over a glass of wine or vodka, with *les artistes chez eux*, as Nina Georgievna used to say after the academic heavyweights had left her famous annual Easter party and she and her students crowded happily, late at night, into her little study on East 79th Street in Manhattan. I met her first when I was seventeen. The first time she showed a slide of Persepolis in class at Columbia and my jaw dropped, she gave me a conspiratorial smile. Her pioneering study on the Arsacid elements in Armenian culture helped determine the course of my future studies. It has been a long road: I will soon be sixty, but she has not aged. Her mind and her laugh are the same. Nina's family escaped from revolutionary Moscow and left France as Hitler threatened: the experience of a harsh century tuned her political and personal morality to perfect pitch. One day she cautioned me never to give my loyalty to an institution. I never have, and never will, but my beloved teacher is my Marseillaise and I give my undivided loyalty to her.

But now I must start my motorcycle and ride off after that rabbit, and who knows what adventures yet await us.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bakunc', A. (tr.) (1935), Vardan Aygekc'i, *Alvesagirk'*, Erevan.
- Besharov, Justinia (1956), *Imagery of the Igor' Tale: In the Light of Byzantino-Slavic Poetic Theory*, Leiden.
- Bihaji-Merin, O./ A. Benac (n.d.), *Bogomil Sculpture*, New York.
- Č'arenc', E. (1963), *Erkeri žolovacu*, h. II, Erevan.
- Davies, J. G. (1991), *Medieval Armenian Art and Architecture: The Church of the Holy Cross, Aght'amar*, London.
- Der Nersessian, S. (1965), *Aght'amar: Church of the Holy Cross*, Cambridge, MA.
- Dmitriev, L. A./ D. S. Lixačev (eds.) (1969), *Izbornik: Sbornik proizvedenij literatury drevnej Rusi*, Moskva.
- Drozdov, V. A. (ed.) (2005), *Russkij imažinizm: istoriya, teoriya, praktika*, Moskva.
- Gevorgyan, A. (1978), *Arhestnurn u kenc'alā haykakan manrankarnerum*, Erevan.
- Henry, F. (1964), *Croix sculptées irlandaises*, Dublin.
- Jacobson, E. (1995), *The Art of the Scythians: The Interpretation of Cultures at the Edge of the Hellenic World*, Handbuch der Orientalistik 8.2, Leiden.
- Kazarinova, V. (1959), *Dmitrievskij sobor vo Vladimire*, Moskva.
- Manasyan, A. et al. (eds.) (1972), *Sovetakan Hayastanā 50 tarum*, Erevan.
- Mandel'stam, O. (1990), *Kamen'*, Leningrad.
- Maranci, Ch. (2014), *Vigilant Powers: Three Churches of Early Mediaeval Armenia*, Turnhout.
- McVay, G. (1976), *Esenin: A Life*, Ann Arbor, MI.
- Mnac'akanyan, A. Š. (1955), *Haykakan zardarvest*, Erevan.
- Nabokov, Vl. (tr.) (1960), *The Song of Igor's Campaign: An Epic of the Twelfth Century*, NY.
- Puškin, A. S. (2012), *Liričeskie cikly*, Sankt-Peterburg.
- Reiss, T. (2005), *The Orientalist: Solving the Mystery of a Strange and Dangerous Life*, NY.
- Rempel', L. I. (1987), *Cep' vremen, Vekovye obrazy i brodyācie syužety v tradicionnom iskusstve Srednej Azii*, Tashkent.
- Richards, D. J./ C. R. S. Cockerell (eds.) (1976), *Russian Views of Pushkin*, Oxford.
- Rostovtzeff, M. (1973), *The Animal Style in South Russia and China*, New York.
- Russell, J. R. (1993), "The Mother of All Heresies: A Late Mediaeval Armenian Text on the *Yuškaparik*", *REArm* 24: 273-293.
- (1997), "The Four Elements and the Cross in Armenian Spirituality, with an Excursus on the Descent in Merkavah Mysticism", *Jewish Studies Quarterly*, Tübingen, vol. 4.4: 357-79.
- (2001), "God is Good: Tobit and Iran", *Iran and the Caucasus* 5: 1-6.

- (2001a), "The Scepter of Tiridates", *Le Muséon* 114.1-2: 187-215.
- (2004), "Sasanian Yarns: The Problem of the Centaurs Reconsidered", *Atti dei Convegni Lincei*, 201, *La Persia e Bisanzio*, Roma: 411-438.
- (2005), "Solov'i, solov'i", *St. Nersess Theological Review* 10: 77-139.
- (2007), "The Shrine Beneath the Waves", *RES* 51, Cambridge, MA, Spring: 136-156.
- (2012), "The Curving Shore of Space and Time: Notes on the Prologue to Pushkin's *Ruslan and Ludmila*", Steven Fine; Shai Secunda (eds.), *Shoshannat Yaakov: Jewish and Iranian Studies in Honor of Yaakov Elman*, Leiden: 318-365.
- (in publication), "Languages of Men, Languages of Demons", *Festschrift Michael Stone*, Theo Van Lint (ed.) [2013].
- Santrot, J. (ed.) (1996), *Arménie: Trésors de l'Arménie ancienne, des origines au IVe siècle*, Paris.
- Scheller, R. W. (1995), *Exemplum: Model-Book Drawings and the Practice of Artistic Transmission in the Middle Ages (ca. 900-ca. 1470)*, Amsterdam.
- Terc, A. (1989), *Progulki s Puškinym*, Paris.
- Vernadsky, G./ M. Karpovich (1959), *A History of Russia*, vol. II: Kievan Russia, New Haven.
- Waddell, H. (1977), *The Desert Fathers*, London.

PLATES



1. Scythian, band of running animals, Rostovtzeff 1929, Pl. XIV.



2. Scythian, hunt in foliage and animals fighting, Rostovtzeff 1929, Pl. XVI.



3. Scythian, wrestling scene, Rostovtzeff 1929, Pl. XXIX.



Pl. 26. Kells (Munster), cross de la Tour, côté Est

4. Cross at Kells, Ireland, Henry 1964.



5. Alt'amar, South façade, Simurgh-*Sīramarg*/višap.



6. Alt'amar, Siren-*yuškaripik*.



7. Alt'amar, North façade, bear eating grapes, lion attacking bull.



8. Alt'amar, South façade, wrestlers.



9. Alt'amar, East façade, Adam.



10. Alt'amar, Dome, animals running and severed heads.



11. The Siren, Rempel' 1987.



12. The Simurgh, Rempel' 1987.



13. Yur'ev-Pol'skii, Simurgh-*Simargl*.



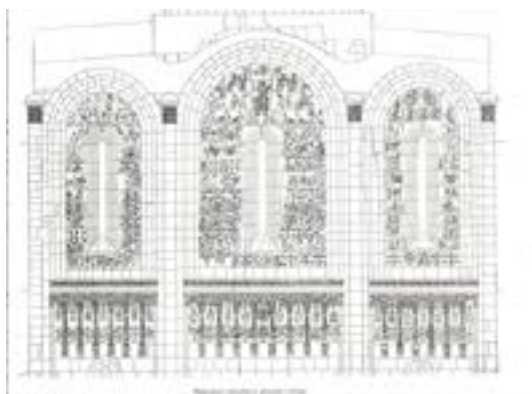
14. Yur'ev-Pol'skii, vulpine creature.



15. Yur'ev-Pol'skii, Centaur (*Kitovras*) with hare.



16. St. Demetrius, Vladimir, West façade.



17. St. Demetrius, Vladimir, West façade.



18. St. Demetrius, Vladimir, *Div*-bird (?) on tree.



19. Pushkin and his nanny Arina Rodionovna, painting by V. Kuznetsov, 1949.



20. Alexander Kusikov, *V Nikuda*, library of J. R. Russell.



21. Signature of Charents in *V Nikuda*, library of J. R. Russell.

8

ON THE IMAGE OF ZOROASTER

James R. Russell

Although the records of Iranian and Classical antiquity abound in references to Zarathustra, there is no indigenous or foreign visual image of the Prophet labelled with his name, or certain to be an intended depiction of him, that is known before the Italian Renaissance. That is not because we lack for visual imagery and iconography in the Zoroastrian tradition in antiquity. The recent discoveries of Sogdian Zoroastrian religious art, ranging from ceramic ossuaries found in Central Asia to monumental nephrite bas-reliefs on Chinese-style tomb-couches and ossuaries unearthed at the terminus of the Silk Road at the ancient Han capital of Chang'an (modern Xi'an), have enriched the iconographic record considerably, but they have not yielded an identifiable image of the Prophet. It was already long known, before these momentous discoveries, that Armenia had shrines called *bagink'*— this loaned term was shared with various Iranian lands— containing images of the *yazatas* (in the round, one supposes, rather than in mere relief). Anthropomorphic sculptures in the Arsacid era were influenced in style by Greco-Roman art, as was, indeed, the *Buddharupa* in India. The cyclopean platforms and statues in the round of king Antiochus of Commagene and the Iranian gods at the *hierotherion*¹ 'sacred funerary depository', on the summit of Nemrut Dagħ from the first century BCE, in south-eastern Anatolia, afford a sense of both the artistic style and scale of the Zoroastrian monuments that existed in the Arsacid period before the Christianization of the Armenians and of neighbouring religiously Iranized peoples such as the Cappadocians. There are also bas-reliefs, at Nemrut Dagħ and at nearby Arsameia on the Nymphaios, where the king or a royal ancestor (Antiochus claimed descent from both the Achaemenids and the Macedonians) is shown shaking hands with a god, for instance, Mithra, or receiving from him a large ring, sometimes adorned with trailing ribbons. The statues in the round, on their great pedestal or throne, that face the ceremonial space with its fire altar at the far end on the levelled summit of Nemrut Dagħ are gigantic; the reliefs that flank the processional ways of the sanctified space are on a much more human scale. It will be seen presently that Zoroastrians have used the standard image of Mithra to represent the Prophet Zarathustra (Figs 6, 7, 8 and 9).

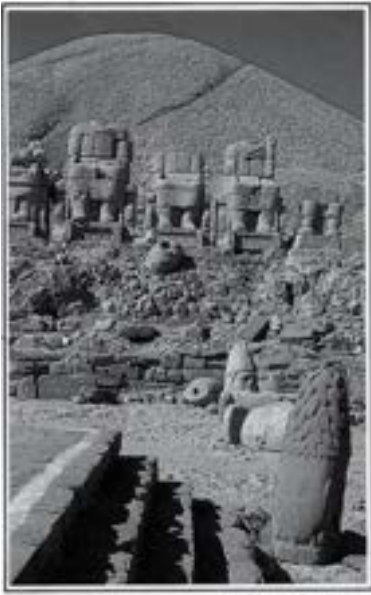


Figure 6 The East terrace of Nemrut Dag, Commagene



Figure 7 Nemrut Dag, Commagene: *Syndexiosis* of Mithras and Antiochus. J. R. Russell provides scale



Figure 8 Nemrut Dag, Commagene: *Syndexiosis* of Mithras and Antiochus, without author



Figure 9 Mithra, Arsameia on the Nymphaeas, Commagene

The ring or diadem that the god holds out to kings on the Commagenian and Iranian reliefs is thought to be the sun-like divine glory, Av. *xvarənah* (Phl. *xwarr*, Arm. *l-w p'ārk'*, etc.)— a mark of heavenly sanction and favour that is bestowed on just and rightful rulers and taken away from wicked ones. Sometimes it is envisioned, both in a Pahlavi text and on a Greco-Bactrian coin, as a bird or ram. The symbol of a winged disk surmounted by a man (actually, a man rising from a ring that girdles him) was borrowed by the Achaemenians from Urartu and Assyria and ultimately was a symbol of the Egyptian Sun-god. It ceased to be employed in pre-Islamic Iranian art after Alexander, but it is noteworthy that it has come back as a popular national symbol in modern Iran and as a religious emblem of Zoroastrians everywhere. Individual components of this symbol, such as a disembodied pair of wings, or the ring, remained in use and there can be little doubt they signified holiness and dominion, for why else would art of an official and propagandistic purpose employ them? In the absence of a written contemporary explanation, however, their exact meaning remains disputable. They are visible symbols but they embody abstractions, qualities not naturally found on earth in physical form. For Zoroastrians they are representations of realities believed to belong to the *mēnōg*, 'spiritual' world, in the forms of *gētīg*, 'worldly' objects that have some analogous function here. The ring might then, perhaps simultaneously, have been intended to be symbolic of an object on a mundane and visible level as well, the diadem (Middle Persian *didēm* or *pusag*, Sogdian *ʾs'k* /pronounced *əfsēl*, Armenian loan-word *psak*). This was very much part of royal adornment in the material world; so in art it need not be just a symbolic representation, but a depiction also from life. The diadem was tied around the crown at the time of coronation: I shall adduce medieval Armenian evidence presently that suggests that this was how the object seems to have been understood more than a millennium later, in the context of a fairly similar religion, within the orbit of the Iranian world and by artists strikingly close in other ways to the ancient Iranian sculptors. At the ceremony of investiture the king was not fully enthroned until this tying on of the diadem was completed. In the Arsacid era, where key positions were parcelled out to the noble clans, a noble house held in hereditary perpetuity the office of coronant. In Parthian Iran proper the Sūrēn clan, masters of the Saka province Sagastān (modern Seistan), were 'crown-bestowers' (Persian *tājboxš*). This is one of a number of epithets of Rostam, himself a *sagzi*, Saka, in the *Shāhnāme*h of Ferdowsi. The Armenian historian Movsēs Xorenac'i, who lived centuries before the Persian epic poet, knew him and his steed by older forms of their names; and by the older form, *sagčik*, of his ethnic designation. But a form for his title is unfortunately not attested. In Armenia only a Bagratuni *naxarar*² might be *t'agadir* 'coronant'. On the reliefs, the divinity hands the ring to the king, and does not slip it over his crowned head. So if it is an investiture scene, it is a symbolic one, and one in which Ahura Mazdā, 'a spirit *even* among spirits' as Zoroastrian texts stress, is visible. So the scene is a metaphor, or an event in the *mēnōg* world parallel

to our own in life, as heaven celebrates the coronation as it proceeds on earth, much as the great *fravaši* spirits do battle over earthly armies, or following it, in death. Staying in Commagene for a moment, it is noteworthy that Mithra appears there, several times, with the same tell-tale radiate nimbus behind his head, just as he does over a century before and at the other end of the Iranian world, in Bactria, and just as he will do on a Sasanian relief at Tāq-e Bostān near Kermanshah, in western Iran. It is a mark that makes it certain that an image represents this divinity embodying many aspects, the light of the Sun being among them. This does not mean that Zoroastrian iconography was thoroughly systematic and stable over time and space; but some of it clearly was. This is important to remember for what will come later.

Another relevant consideration has to do with the overt setting of all the scenes I have mentioned, except perhaps for the Sasanian one: they are *funerary*. The king meets and greets the divinities, and is seated with them, in the next world. That is reasonable: all Zoroastrians are to encounter a triumvirate of judges of their earthly deeds, Mithra, Rašnu and Sraoša at the time of judgment three days after earthly death; and the blessed then sup with them, too – the *Haðōxt nask*, which is the Avestan foundation of the famous book of the righteous Virāz, describes the scene. Sasanian coins name the monarch as one *ke čīhr az yazdān*, ‘whose seed is from the gods’; and Ammianus Marcellinus has the long-lived, mighty Sapor (Shapur II) introduce himself vaingloriously as ‘Partner of the Stars, Brother of the Sun and Moon’ (*particeps siderum, frater solis ac lunae*). So perhaps the kings might have been thought to see the gods, to whose number they belonged, not only after death but while they were still alive. In Rome a similar belief is manipulated as a device employed ironically to ridicule a particularly hubristic emperor: at the full moon, in accordance with his claim to be on equal footing with the gods, Caligula used to invite Luna to his bed. ‘Did you not see her?’ he demanded once of Aulus Vitellius (himself later to become emperor). ‘No,’ replied the latter tactfully, ‘only you gods can see one another.’

The Sasanian relief at Tāq-e Bostān near Kermanshah with its portrayal of Mithra, to be considered presently, is always called an investiture, like a similar, earlier one of Ardašīr I at Naqš-e Rostam. Ten out of the 28 known Sasanian rock reliefs are, or are presumed to be, investiture scenes. The ancient Iranians and Armenians were sticklers for form – there was a *darandarzbed*, Arm. *handerjapet* – and as his title suggests, he was in charge of matters of protocol at court that included vestments. So, as I suggested above, the scene of a god handing the ring of glory or diadem of legitimacy (or whatever it was) to the king might have been a symbolic representation, or even a parallel ceremony in the *mēnōg* or spiritual world, of what was going on down in the *gētīg*, or material one, at coronation time. As was just mentioned, in Armenia the only way an Arsacid became king was for the *t’agadīr*, ‘coronant’ – this was a hereditary office of the Bagratuni clan and nobody else could do it – to tie the diadem around the crown. Sasanian ceremony may have differed, even

considerably; but to be certain we deal in fact with the royal investiture it might be helpful to see features of the ceremony like a throne, a coronant, and so on. But we do not: the newly minted monarch meets the god Ahura Mazda, and both are on foot or horseback. Ardašir's steed tramples the fallen Ardavān; Ohrmazd's, a humanoid with gorgon locks generally taken to be Ahreman, who the *Bundahišn* tells us is in abasement in hell (which must be very far down) (Fig. 10). And if the god and king are in a room at the top, why are they mounted? One supposes a king could ride his horse anywhere he pleased (and one remembers, again, Caligula's mount, who became a Senator). In Armenian epic the magic horse of the heroes stands in a smallish cave at Van for eternity with Little Mithra on his back; and water trickling down the rock is believed to be the animal's urine. But would the Sasanians risk having the king's horse relieve itself in the grand, carpeted throne room? The visual shorthand of an enemy trodden upon, with its roots in Assyrian art, became standard for Sasanian triumphal propaganda. Armenian preserves an ekphrastic epithet, a word crystallized in amber from Parthian days, as it were, for the particular humiliation to which these defeated foes are subjected: *smbakakox*, 'trampled underfoot by hooves'. Could this not have been intended as a scene of the just king's welcome into the next world, rather than as a rite of investiture? (One is reminded that to this day, funerary monuments and dirges depict and describe Kurdish heroes riding their horses into the Otherworld.) That is another point to keep in mind, as we explore the subsequent artistic record.

So far, then, we have portrayals in Iranian art of both men and gods, and at least one of the latter, Mithra, looks much the same wherever we find him, suggesting that the viewer was expected to recognize him without the help of



Figure 10 Naqš-e Rostam, Sasanian relief of Ohrmazd and Ardašir I

an inscribed caption (such as the multi-lingual one identifying Ohrmazd at Naqš-e Rostam, for instance). The iconoclast Sasanians seem to have removed from the *bagin*-temples and destroyed statues in the round of *yazatas*, replacing these with fire altars, in the course of their reforms after coming to power. They felt no hesitation in portraying divine and supernatural beings – Ohrmazd, the goddess Anāhitā, the *daēnā* (the embodiment of one's spiritual virtue, whom one meets on the bridge into heaven after death or in a vision of the afterlife) – on bas-reliefs, since nobody worshipped the latter. But nobody labelled as Zoroaster is identifiably portrayed anywhere; and indeed no Achaemenian, Parthian Arsacid, or Sasanian official inscription mentions the Prophet by name. That is not because they were not Zoroastrians (they said they were) or because they had any compunction about mentioning the Prophet (the legends about whom multiplied in the period). The most we can surmise from silence is that the context simply did not call for his mention. Though the reciter of the Zoroastrian credo, the *Frāvarānē*, identifies himself in Avestan as *zaraθuštriš*, and the Prophet's name is attested in pre-Islamic Iran in widely varying local forms – Sogdian *zrušc*, for instance – that may attest to local *zands* as well, the name given to the Good Religion in inscriptions is 'Mazdā-worship' (*dēn ī mazdēšn*). Fifth-century Armenian sources likewise call it *deni mazdezn*, using an older, Arsacid pronunciation of the designation. This is not surprising or disturbing: Christ in both name and image pervades Christendom – and the religion founded by his followers came to bear his name within two short decades after his death. But that is because he is God and his life is divine epiphany. (And for all that, Christians in the Iranian world were called just as often Nazarenes, since Christ's family hailed from Nazareth in Galilee, or *tarsagān* '(God)-fearers'.) The founders of the Abrahamic faiths were all men, not divinities, and canonical images of them are not *de rigueur*. Muslims do not call themselves Mohammedans; some Jews toyed once with being euphemistically Mosaic (*musavī* in the Near East) since the various forms of *yahūdī* were used derisively by anti-Semites. It did not stick; though the polite *kalimī* survives in Persian. Zarathustra brought the Good Religion: he was *patgāmbār* 'messenger', *waxšwar* 'bearer of the sacred word', and even 'enlightener' (finite verb *rōšnēnīd*), the latter title appropriated by the cult of the patron saint of Armenia, Gregory *lusaworič* 'the Illuminator'. But he was not a divine being or an immortal like Christ; nor was he even a political and military leader like Moses or Mohammed. He was a priest, a visionary, and the perfect man.

Still, there is one ancient portrait painting, more precisely, one of a pair, which, in the opinion of some scholars, was intended to depict Zoroaster, although there is no inscription identifying the figure and the suggestion remains purely a hypothesis that, indeed, several generations have deprecated. But it is a suggestion, it may be argued, that is not altogether unfounded or audacious. Indeed it is less so than much of the speculation that passes for scholarship in the Iranian field. The fresco was found in the Mithraeum of Dura-Europos (it was fortunately removed from Syria and is safe in the art



Figure 11 Twin portraits, Dura Mithraeum, colour restoration

museum of Yale University) and dates to the early third century AD – that is, to a time shortly before the destruction of the city by the forces of Shapur I (Figs 11 and 12) Dura (this is its old Aramaic name, just meaning a fort; Europos was a Macedonian add-on) was a walled fortress-city on the Euphrates frontier of the Roman Empire with the Parthians and, later, the Sasanians. The population was heterogeneous: Jews, Christians, Greco-Roman pagans, worshippers of sundry local Syrian gods, polyglot speakers of Parthian, Persian, Aramaic, Arabic, Greek and Latin. The Mithraeum was dedicated, obviously, to an Iranian deity, in a region steeped in Iranian Zoroastrian culture and tradition on two sides, not-yet-Christian Arsacid Armenia to the north (where Mithra was so important that he survives as the apocalyptic folk hero Mher, mentioned above)³ and Parthian Iran to the east; so it makes sense that there is a much stronger religiously Iranian flavour to the art there than one finds in Mithraic temples in Rome, or in the City of London or in the recesses of Hadrian's Wall for that matter. For instance, there is a fresco decoration on the arch over the portraits and cult niche, and contemporary with the portraits, of alternating fire altars and cypresses that we do not find anywhere else in Mithraic art



Figure 12 One of the latter without restoration

(Fig. 13). The permanently blazing fire particularly sacred to the Parthians and to their Arsacid kings (hence its designation in Greek as *Asaak*, that is, **Aršak*, by Isidore of Charax in his *Stathmoi Parthikoi*, 'Parthian Stages'), that of *Burzēn Mihr* 'Mithra the Lofty', was enthroned in Khorasan, near the famous cypress of *Kišmar* that was believed to have been planted by Zoroaster himself. (It was cut down on the orders of the Arab caliph Mutawwakil in AD 861: but by the time the trunk of the poor murdered tree was conveyed to Baghdad, the Muslim tyrant was dead.) So the repetition of the two juxtaposed images in the shrine of a god adopted from the Iranians, across the river from Parthia, seems more than a fortuitous pairing of generic 'Oriental' images of the time. Dura's Mithraeum went through stages of repair and enlargement as with Mithraea elsewhere, except that, unlike the builders working on the Londinium temple at the Walbrook near the present-day Bank of England, the Mithraists of Dura did not have to deal with rising damp. The edifice began as the modest wing of a house, was enlarged, and finally took the form of a basilica rather than the standard *spelaeum* ('cave'; cf. our Armenian Mher on horseback again). The founder was a local Syrian legionary, that is, a soldier of Rome: 'Ethpeni the *strategos*, son of Zabde'a the chief of the archers of Dura.' But it is quite certain the rich frescoes were not painted by soldiers but by professional artists. The style of the Mithraeum is the same as that of the Synagogue of the town; for all we know, the same contractors were hired to decorate the sanctuaries.

Large portraits of two men in white sacerdotal garb flank the cult niche with its carven tauroctony scene and dedications. They stare straight ahead, hold slender ebony staffs, and are seated on fine carven armchairs. Franz Cumont,



Figure 13 Fire altars and cypresses, Dura Mithraeum

the pioneer of Mithraic studies, wrote confidently in the excavation report co-authored with Mikhail Rostovtzeff, pioneer of the study of Parthian art,

There is no doubt [...] that the persons represented in the paintings of Dura must be regarded as the *magi*, or prophets, those who were the authors or the interpreters of the several books (*logoi hieroi*) of Mithraism. Since Zoroaster was regarded as the originator of the Mithraic mysteries and Osthanes was his most famous pupil, we may speculate that the two *magi* of Dura are to be identified with those two great Iranian prophets.⁴

Recent scholarship has tended to dismiss this hypothesis and more cautiously to propose that the portraits are not of Zoroaster and another Iranian magus at all, but of prominent donors to the temple in the garb of the local Palmyrene pagan clergy,⁵ so we may be looking at Ethpeni, the fairly remote founder, dressed up for lodge night, or one of his wealthy successors, but not Zoroaster. One might counter that Palmyrene, Hatrene and Edessene pagan priests all looked a lot like Parthian ones, since Iran set the fashion for sacerdotal garb in Syria. (It has been argued that even the *mikhnasayim* 'trousers' worn by the *kohanim* of the Temple of Jerusalem were an innovation from Persia.) One might object also that a relief in the temple depicts donors quite differently accoutred, looking like the Roman soldiers they were, and names them as Zenobios, Iariboles and Barnaadath – Syrians all. And if the men in the two frescoes were brethren, so to speak, of the Mithraic lodge, then why not name them in captions, with the usual epithets *nama*, *renatus*, and so on? It has been said of modern American Jews that we have an edifice complex (*sic!*), which involves not just building more synagogues than necessary but affixing a plaque naming a donor to every pew, water fountain and doorknob in them. The Mithraists seem to have suffered from an earlier form of the same malady, though one grants the average Mithraic congregation was quite small and its members were more likely to know the others mentioned in inscriptions. But the portraits gaze fixed at us in their frontal Parthian way, noble, uncaptioned.

Between the third century and the end of the First World War, when Dura was rediscovered, the Armenians were baptized, invented an alphabet that exists unchanged to this day, and created a unique Christian civilization. In 1915 Turkey, which occupies nine tenths of historical Armenia, tried to put an end to that by systematically exterminating its Armenian population in the first genocide carried out by a modern state on its own citizens. The word 'genocide' was coined years later to describe that event, which at the time the Turks called simply *jihad*. Turkey's ally, Germany, both helped and learned, and was to put its experience to use scarcely a generation later, in the Holocaust. The terminus of the Armenian death marches, where the survivors were left to starve in the desert void, or were burnt in caves, was Deir ez-Zor. Officers of the liberating French Army in Syria discovered Dura just nearby, on the banks of the Euphrates, and France sponsored the subsequent digs. So a photograph of 1932 (Fig. 14) shows two latter-day sages, Franz Cumont and Mikhail



Figure 14 Cumont and Rostovtzeff at the Dura Mithraeum

Ivanovich, at the site in the hieratic garb of the European savant, in front of the newly excavated frescoes and cult niche. (The Dura Synagogue frescoes went to the National Museum at Damascus, then safe under French control; the deal was that Rostovtzeff got the Mithraeum for Yale.) One might compare either of the Dura figures to a portrait, probably taken from life or very nearly so, in the scene of the Adoration of the Magi in the Armenian manuscript called the Echmiadzin Gospel (Erevan Matenadaran 2374) (Fig. 15). The miniature was done most likely in the Sasanian period, and was later bound into the manuscript. The latter is dated to AD 989, when Zoroastrians were still very visible in Iran and surrounding lands in any case and an Armenian viewer would still have no trouble identifying their Magi. The magus of the Armenian manuscript has richly coloured clothes; but he is a traveller, a wealthy and powerful guest showering riches on the Son of God. The similarly attired priest from Dura is in white – but he, like an officiating *mobed* or *dastur* in gleaming white vestments in an *agiari*, is in a temple after all, not on a diplomatic mission.

Let us suppose the two figures were intended to be magi. What are their ebony canes for? ‘Median diviners also divine with rods,’ declare the *Scholia in Nicandri Theriaca* (613, with reference to Dino); and Albert de Jong, commenting on the Classical sources, notes that these staffs might have been confused at time with the long, thin bundle of the *barsom* – the ritual *fascēs* held by a magus on a gold plaque from the Oxus treasure, and wielded by



Figure 15 Adoration of the Magi, Echmiadzin Gospel

Ohrmazd and Mithra on the Sasanian rock reliefs. The Dura figures grasp tightly furled scrolls, too, in their left hands. Mani, a contemporary of the paintings and nominally a Parthian, who modestly advertised himself as the seal of the prophecies of Christ, the Buddha and Zoroaster, *in manu validissimum baculum tenebat ex ligno ebenino, Babylonii vero librum portabat sub ala sinistra*, according to the *Acta Archelai* – that is, ‘he held a stout ebony staff in

his right hand and had a Babylonian book tucked under his left arm'. His book might have been a fashionably novel codex, but the iconographic shorthand for 'book' was still a scroll (we still use the Latin word *volumen*, too). In the Classical world Zoroaster, thanks to the resemblance of part of his name to Greek *astēr*, 'star', was regarded in the main as the inventor of astrology and the author of many books, voluminous ones, on the subject. This accorded with the general association of the Magi with divinatory and other occult sciences. They gave their name to our word 'magic' after all. But Zoroaster had another, more venerable image, and one that would have justified depicting him with a scroll. The Zathraustes, that is, Zoroaster, of Diodorus Siculus (1.94.2) was pre-eminently a *nomothetēs*, a lawgiver. He had received the laws from the *agathos daimōn* 'good spirit' (or *epitykhes noēma*, 'fortunate mind' of the *Greater Alcibiades* 1.122A), that is, the *Amāša Spānta* (Holy Immortal) Vohu Manah of the Zoroastrian pantheon. So it is proper that the putative magus at Dura hold a *volumen* as well as a staff – a book as well as a magician's wand.

As for the other figure, whom Cumont took to be Ostanēs, Diogenes Laertius, discussing the *Lydian History* of Xanthus, states that '... six thousand years passed from the time of Zoroaster up to the crossing of Xerxes, and that after him there had been many Magi in succession, Ostanēs, Astrampsychus, Gobryas and Pazatas, until the conquest of the Persians by Alexander'.⁶ (One should keep in mind that Lydia, in central Anatolia, had been a satrapal centre of the Achaemenid administration, with a large Zoroastrian population that remained long after the fall of the dynasty.) Ostanēs is elsewhere hailed as the greatest of the magi and discoverer of the proper invocations of the seven planetary divinities. He wrote mainly on magic and alchemy; Zoroaster, on astrology. Lactantius Placidus, a scholiast on the poet Statius, writes, 'Ostanēs reports that among the Persians the sun is called by the proper name Mithra', which is true, if not particularly esoteric, information; and various books are attributed to him, of which only one is named, by the pagan Phoenician scholar Philo of Byblos: the *Octateuch*, which deals with the qualities of the supreme deity.⁷ As for the name, Ferdinand Justi advances no etymology (s.v. Austanēs) but cites an Armenian Ostan: this would be the form closest to a hypothetical Iranian one. This is a weak link, though: the latter word, certainly an Iranian loan, means 'royal palace' and exists in Classical and later Armenian usage and toponymy, but is found as a proper name only once, in a colophon of the fifteenth century.⁸ There are no Iranian references to a person named *Ostan; so even if Zoroaster is depicted at Dura, and there is no real reason why he should not have been, Ostanēs is a figure who on present evidence existed in Classical sources, might or might not have belonged to Mithraic tradition (for which we have no books, only some inscriptions, Latin hexameters, and maybe one page of the ritual for the religion's fourth degree of initiation, that of Leo), and is unknown to Zoroastrian tradition.

Why should Zoroaster be depicted together with anybody else in the first place? He had a royal patron, Vištāspa, to whom he speaks directly in the

Gāthās; and the latter's sagely adviser at court, Jāmāspa, is a hero of the faith. Some Parsi devotional pictures show the Prophet and another person, generally identified as the Kayanian hero Lohrāsp, with a blazing fire on its altar between them. This scene may have been inspired by the obverse of Sasanian coins, though, where armed warriors flank a sacred fire, and was then reinterpreted in a ritual sense, in which case the Prophet would perhaps be the officiating priest of the *Yasna* ceremony, the *zōt* (who holds the *barsom*); and his counterpart, the *rāspī*. The Avestan *Ahuna Vairya* prayer, which, as we shall see presently, Zarathustra wielded with such great power, itself probably refers to his own pastoral and soteriological role and mission. It extols righteous holders of spiritual and temporal authority, the *ahu* and *ratu*; so a dual portrait, with its aesthetic symmetry, might also suggest this complementary balance of functions.

The paintings at the temple to Mithra at Dura, then, may or may not include a portrayal of the Iranian prophet as the devotees of the most iconographically stable and familiar of the *yazatas*, Mithra(s), imagined him. Their contemporaries in the Greco-Roman world thought of Zoroaster as an astrologer, but also as a great lawgiver. What about the people dwelling on the far side of the Euphrates frontier, in the lands where his faith was known and practised? Two centuries after the destruction of Dura-Europos, and about 125 years or so after the baptism of the Armenian Arsacids, the historian and clergyman Elišē (Elisaeus) *vardapet* mentions *mecn Zradeštn*, 'the great Zradeš' and the *awrēns zradaštakan*, 'Zoroastrian laws' (again the *nomothetēs*, 'lawgiver', with a book!), in his chronicle of the Armeno-Sasanian war of AD 449–51. This was the conflict, culminating in the Battle of Avarayr, in which forces under the commander-in-chief St Vardan Mamikonean resisted the attempt of the Sasanian Yazdagerd II and his prime minister Mihrnarseh to re-impose Zoroastrianism upon the recently Christianized Armenian nation. Though Prof. Robert W. Thomson wrote that Elišē most likely lived a century later, Prof. Nina Garsoian has argued convincingly on the basis of Sasanian epigraphic evidence that the Armenian historian was an eyewitness to these events. And although there is much rhetorical elaboration in the manner of the age, the text of his *History* is rich in contemporary information about Persian Zoroastrian beliefs and practices; and the letters and rescripts are paraphrases true to the style of the originals, maybe even translations of documents. And the vocabulary of the official formulae, the words that describe the Persian religion, most often do not even require translation, since Armenian was and is steeped in Middle Iranian loans, not least in the area of religion. Several MSS of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries offer fascinating marginal glosses of the name of the Iranian prophet, given also in the form *Zradešn*, as *karewor uxt* 'mighty (or, significant) covenant' or *bun bank* 'fundamental words'. It is impossible to tell how old these two explanations are, but three of the four terms used in them are, not unexpectedly, Iranian loans themselves, and *uxt*, 'covenant', literally 'something spoken' probably either interprets the element *dešn* as *dašn*,

an Iranian loan-word meaning ‘covenant’, or else echoes the Middle Iranian form Zarduxšt, whose intrusive *x* would suggest to a speaker of Parthian or Middle Persian such an interpretation. (The *dašn* word is still a household one in Armenian *Dašnak*, the colloquial designation for a member of one of the nation’s most notorious political party, the Armenian Revolutionary Federation, *Hay hetap’oxakan dašnak’ut’iwn*.) The first element of the name of Zoroaster, *Zra-*, might have been understood as deriving from *zawr*, ‘power’ (also an Iranian loan in Armenian). It is a theologically good, if philologically inaccurate, understanding of the Prophet’s name, which contains in fact *uštra-*, ‘camel’, just as the names of most of his family and contemporaries have to do with the domestic animals so valued by the pastoral, nomadic society of the most ancient Iranians.⁹

But the understanding of Zradešt, Zradešn, or Zarduxšt as ‘mighty covenant’ is consonant with native beliefs about the Prophet in a way animal names no longer were for an urbane, sophisticated Iranian world far removed from the life of the Prophet’s semi-nomadic, stone age people. For the structure and content of Zarathustra’s revelation was and is pre-eminently connected by classical Iranian tradition, not only to dime-store miracles such as healing the sick or raising the dead (the fourth-century Armenian P’awstos Buzand mentions an itinerant Christian holy man who raised the dead ‘and did still more wonderful things’ though we are not told what those tantalizing feats of thaumaturgy were), but to the radically new dualist doctrine he preached in his hymns, to the words themselves of those hymns, to their mental and physical power, and to their ethical and moral message. He was a priest and *maθran*, one who wove together and recited audible ritual formulas of power and truth, mantras – the Avesta is one entire holy mantra, one *maθra spənta*. The mountain where the Prophet’s colloquies with Ahura Mazdā took place is called after them the *spəntō frašnā*, ‘sacred questionings’. The Zoroastrian credo in *Yasna* 12 to which one referred above draws its authority from the doctrines and revelations given ‘in all the questionings, all the meetings at which Zarathustra and Ahura Mazdā conferred together’ (*vispaēšu frašnaēšu, vīspaēšu hanjamanaēsu, yāiš āpərəsaētəm Mazdāscā Zaraθuštrasčā*). The great Iranists of the twentieth century took up anew the study of Zarathustra’s hymns, in the decades after Henning had decried the disintegration of Avestic studies; and in the main their work has shown, through judicious use of the comparative method and relation of the *Gāthās* to Vedic, Hellenic and Celtic poetry, how these foundational texts of Zoroastrianism can be understood as very sophisticated religious poems. Prof. Martin Schwartz in particular has demonstrated in his groundbreaking studies how the *Gāthās* themselves are intricately composed words, vast symmetrical structures and encodings; and often, one might add, they are themselves about the spiritual, mental and physical power of words, poetry upon poetry. Schwartz’s insights in many respects are founded in those of Saussure’s studies of what the great French Swiss linguist called the hypograms of Latin poetry. These patterns are not

products of the fertile imagination of modern savants, but are the bones and sinews of ancient poetics.¹⁰ In Yasna 28.5 the Prophet declares he will by great pronouncement ward off harmful creatures. In Yasna 31.1 he pronounces 'speech never heard [hitherto]'. Prof. P. O. Skjærvø in his series of studies of the epic substructure of the Avesta (and of the transmission of this epic and mythological material into the subsequent Manichaean literature in various Middle Iranian languages) has justifiably compared to Homeric feats of brute strength the episode in the *Vidēvdāt* in which the Prophet casts two stones, each the size of the house, at the Destructive Spirit; and the structure, themes, and language of oral heroic epic indeed suffuse the Avestan corpus. The great Russian Iranist and scholar of the *Gāthās* Prof. Ivan Mikhailovich Steblin-Kamensky notes rightly, though, that the use of this image may be a metaphor: in *Yašt* 17.20, the Destructive Spirit complains that the Prophet is assaulting him with the *Ahuna Vairya* prayer, 'fighting as though with a stone the size of a house'.¹¹ The great spiritual war of Zoroastrian dualism is of course between cosmos and chaos, as in Greek conceptions of physics and cosmology; but *Aša* and *Druj* have a moral dimension and semantic distinction beyond this. They are Truth/Righteousness ('Order', favoured by some recent students of the religion, seems a peculiarly vapid misunderstanding of the great moral force that *Aša vahišta*, *Aša sraēšta*, 'O best Truth, O most beautiful Truth!' represents) and the Lie. It is by spirit and word, not by mere brute strength, that the Prophet fought evil; and his words were and are deeds.¹² If, then, an ancient Mithraic artist were to attempt to portray Zoroaster, he might well dress him in Persian priestly garb and place a staff in one hand and the scroll of the lawgiver, the prophet, the sage, in the other, as at Dura. He is the bringer of the powerful covenant.

We find a parallel to that Armenian gloss at the other end of the Zoroastrian world, in India – suggesting, perhaps, a common exegetical strand, or *zand*, in both regions. In her discussion of the depiction of Mithra on the bas-relief of Tāq-e Bostān, to which we will turn presently in greater detail, Martha Carter suggests that the great *yazata* is shown standing on a lotus flower because the symbol was used to signify a contemporary political connection of the Sasanians with the Kushans.¹³ Perhaps so, for in the sixteenth chapter of the *Bundahišn* it is rather the goddess of the waters Ābān who is associated with the lotus (Phl. *nīlōpal*), while Mihr presides over all *wiškōfagān* – 'blossoms' – generally. So the lotus is not his particular flower. The lotus is fairly common in Ancient Iranian art, and Achaemenid kings are depicted holding the flower in their left hands, perhaps to enjoy its fragrance. But the lotus was in the Indian Subcontinent and in regions influenced by its Buddhist iconography especially so potent and universally recognized a marker of sanctity that Christians in western China were to make of it the base of the Cross in images on bas-reliefs. The Armenians co-opted the Sasanian symbol of twin wings, to support the Holy Sign on their own early Christian monuments: a parallel co-optation of an earlier religious framing device to new purposes. So it is not beyond the realm of possibility that a lotus on a Sasanian relief might have had political overtones.

Carter discusses briefly, in conjunction with her theory, the famous *magavans* – Zoroastrians of the region of Sind. According to the *Bhaviṣya Purāṇa* (139.44) the *magas* were descended from a sage of the Mihira clan in Śakadvīpa, literally the Island of the Sakas/Scythians – that is, from an Iranian noble family such as the Mihrānids, from Sagastān/Sistān. The daughter of the sage, the legend continues, married the Sun god (this would be the Indian Sūrya). Their son, founder of the Maga sect, was named Jaraśabda, that is, Zarathustra. The association with the sun and light would accord with the Zoroastrian tradition, found in the seventh book of the *Dēnkard* and elsewhere, that the home of the parents of the Prophet blazed with light before his birth. Classical and Iranian traditions affirm that he laughed at birth, and the *Zardušt-nāme* brings together the two details: *be-khandīd chun shod ze mādar jodā;/ darrakhshān shod az khande-ye u sarā*, ‘He laughed as he left his mother’s womb/ And from his laughter shone the room.’ As to the Prophet’s name in this Puranic tradition, Jaraśabda, it seems an arbitrary, deliberate kind of form. One can render Zarathustra in various ways in Indic languages, Parsi Gujarati Jarthošt for example; so perhaps making Indic *śabda*, ‘word’, the second part of the Prophet’s name was translation from an Iranian form where the same was perceived, whether it contained something like *uxt* ‘speech’ or *dašn* ‘covenant’. That is what apparently produced the Armenian gloss. Given the importance of the identification of Zarathustra as a lawgiver, the parallel may not have been fortuitous, but reflected instead a widespread exegetical tradition. The manuscripts containing the Armenian gloss are very late, copied a full millennium after Elišē wrote his history of Vardan, but so indeed is the entire Zoroastrian manuscript tradition itself, and so is that of India. The conservatism of Armenian tradition and its long and intimate acquaintance with Iran and Zoroastrianism speak in favour of an authentically old exegetical line, yet coincidence and late invention are also possible.

So we may have a tradition in which Zoroaster was regarded mainly as the bringer of a powerful covenant, as a lawgiver. A furled scroll could have signified such a role to Zoroastrians of the late Parthian Arsacid period, to which the Zoroastrian Pahlavi books assign the first attempts to codify the Avestan corpus in writing. One sacerdotal figure in the Mithraeum of Dura-Europos, then, could be Zarathustra; the other, either the Ostanēs of Classical legend or perhaps even the sage Jamaspa of native Iranian tradition. One does not insist that Cumont and Rostovtzeff were right in their identification; but they were not necessarily wrong. Palmyrene priests? Donors? The things that you’re liable to read in the Bible (or Near East art historical writing), it ain’t necessarily so ...

Let us now consider the relief of Mithra at Tāq-e Bostān, from the late fourth century (Fig. 16). It belongs to a complex of reliefs on the cliff face and in rock-cut vaults near a spring emptying into a pool, in the Zagros highlands near Kermanshah, on the old Baghdad-Khorasan road. It would have been, thus, a pleasant rest stop and place of pilgrimage and veneration for travellers in antiquity. There is no problem of identification of Mithra himself, even



Figure 16 Mithra, Shapur II (?), and Ohrmazd, Tāq-e Bostan

though the scene as a whole lends itself to various interpretations. The basic iconography of the god, as we have already noted, is widespread and stable as that of no other in the pantheon; and he appears in Sasanian Iran too, on a coin of Hormizd I in the late third century, that is, about a hundred years before this rock relief. The *yazata* appears behind a king who is receiving the beribboned ring from Ahura Mazdā, and extends the *barsom*. Mithra stands on a lotus; the king and the supreme God, on the extended, prostrate corpse of a bearded Roman emperor. The latter can be none other than the fourth-century Julian the Apostate, whom Shapur II defeated; but there has been much debate about the identity of the king treading upon him. Some scholars¹⁴ identify him as Ardašir II, who reigned for four years after Shapur and could scarcely have killed poor Julian a second time, so if it is indeed he, then the victory over the powerful enemy is meant somehow to accrue to his benefit, as a good deed of his predecessor – probably also a close relative – whose merit he is meant to inherit. Carter would have the lotus signify the success of Sasanian policy in eastern regions. Poor dead, defeated Julian had gone on campaign proclaiming the protection of Sol-Mithras, so some interpreters of the scene have suggested that showing Mithra himself blessing the Sasanian who crushed



Figure 17 Modern Parsi depiction of Zarathustra

the audacious Roman aggressor was a propagandistic retort; and indeed this is the only ancient Iranian use of Mithra in a scene legitimating royal power.¹⁵ That argument seems far-fetched: when the Sasanians sacked Bethlehem, they left a fresco of the three Magi unharmed because the visitors to the newborn Christ looked so much like their own priests, quite understandably. One doubts the same Sasanians would have gone out of their way to disparage worshippers of one of their own gods and make the insult a key point of a major bas-relief, however different the Mithraic religion was from mainstream Zoroastrianism.

It is a striking sculpture, whatever its overtones; and it serves as the basis for most modern Parsi depictions of the Prophet Zarathustra¹⁶ (Fig. 17). There are 13 rays on the nimbus at Tāq-e Bostān; in Parsi depictions there are 11 or 12, perhaps because the Western Christian superstition about 13 as an unlucky number had entered Parsi consciousness. The Prophet holds the *barsom*, or a knob-stick, or a flaming torch, or a cow-headed mace, or is shown as an *imago*



Figure 18 Modern Parsi depiction of Zarathustra



Figure 19 Modern Parsi depiction of Zarathustra



Figure 20 Modern Parsi depiction of Zarathustra



Figure 21 Modern Parsi depiction of Zarathustra

clipeata 'portrait on a round shield' (Figs 18, 19, 20 and 21). A priest in the course of ordination sleeps with a mace under his pillow; and it hangs with a sword in the fire temple to signify the battle against evil. The Sasanian Mithra has a low-cut, heavily embroidered collar that shows off his powerful shoulders; the Parsi Zarathustra's white shirt comes up to his neck, like that of an officiating priest. There is an image of Zarathustra that was frequently used a century ago but is now rare, that portrays him holding a bow and standing in the open country before a fire altar (Fig. 22), while a stylized winged figure hovers in the sky facing him: this is taken from an early engraving of the tomb of Darius I. Other recent Parsi depictions of Zarathustra show him in simple, priestly garb, as on a medal to be worn by a believer (Fig. 23); and he is always, in all Zoroastrian art, bearded. (So is Mithra at Tāq-e Bostān and so are the figures in the frescoes of the Dura Mithraeum.) And there are portrayals of the Prophet, as noted earlier, with another figure (Fig. 24 and 25). The obvious questions are the ones one cannot confidently answer, though there may be documentation that one has simply been unable to find. Were the early Parsi artists fully aware that the figure that served as their model for Zarathustra was Mithra; and if so, why did they choose him? Mithra's very name means 'covenant'; and one tradition, possibly widespread, finds a word for the covenant in the Prophet's name. Zarathustra was the perfect man, the *teleios anthrōpos*; and Mithra is



Figure 23 Medal with Zarathustra, India, silver, early 20th cent. (?).
Collection of J.R. Russell



Figure 24 Zoroaster and 'Lohrasp'

the most human of the *yazatas* – a quality that figured, most likely, in the evolution of the soteriological religious fraternity of the Mithraists. Mithra is a *yazata* also associated very closely with the sun; and the Parsis in Gujarat adopted a local symbol of the Hindu sun god Sūrya – the sun rising (or, if one is in western India, setting) over the sea as an emblem of their own faith. So a picture recognized as that of Mithra might have been co-opted as an icon of Zarathustra.

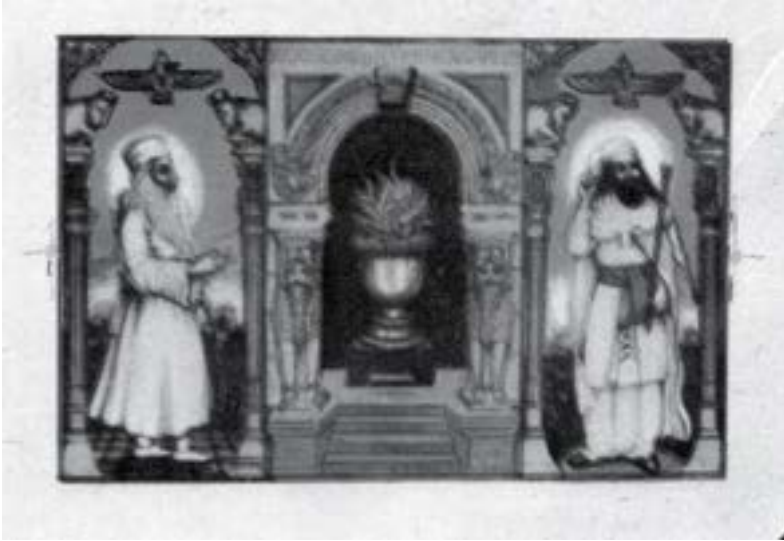


Figure 25 Zoroaster and 'Lohrasp'

We know at least that Zoroastrians in the early modern period, before any encounter with Western archaeological and philological research, preserved an image of Mithra that seems very much like the standard iconographical type: in the seventeenth century *Šabī* Dastur Anushirvan Marzban of Kerman beheld in a dream the *yazata* Mihr with a luminous face. The vision is described in Persian verse in a *rivāyat*, or religious responsum:

Dastur Nushirvan told me, "This is a secret hidden amongst the good and bad alike. Now, one night as I was deep in slumber, I beheld one whose face was like the Sun, from whom wafted the fragrance of musk and rose water; languorous was that ambergris perfume. I opened my mouth and spoke to him: Who are you? Tell me your name. He said: Know that I am the god Mithra, who by the gracious command of the Knower of the Hidden am the keeper of all covenants. I am the guide in the material and spiritual worlds. I shattered the works of Ahreman; I work enmity against the demons and Satan [...]"¹⁷

Between the Mithra of Sasanian and earlier ages, whose appearance seems to have been remembered in indigenous tradition, and the appropriation in modern Zoroastrian art of that image for the portrayal of the Prophet Zarathustra, lies the entire era of the growth of the Western tradition, in which Zoroaster was at first but dimly remembered. Gemistos Plethon revived the Classical image of the Persian astrologer-mage for the Italian Renaissance; and Raphael portrayed Zoroaster among the great philosophers of antiquity in his 'School of Athens,' painted in the Stanza della Segnatura of the Vatican for Pope Julius II (1503–1513). (Fig. 26) He is shown with Ptolemy and Euclid,



Figure 26 Raphael, 'The School of Athens'

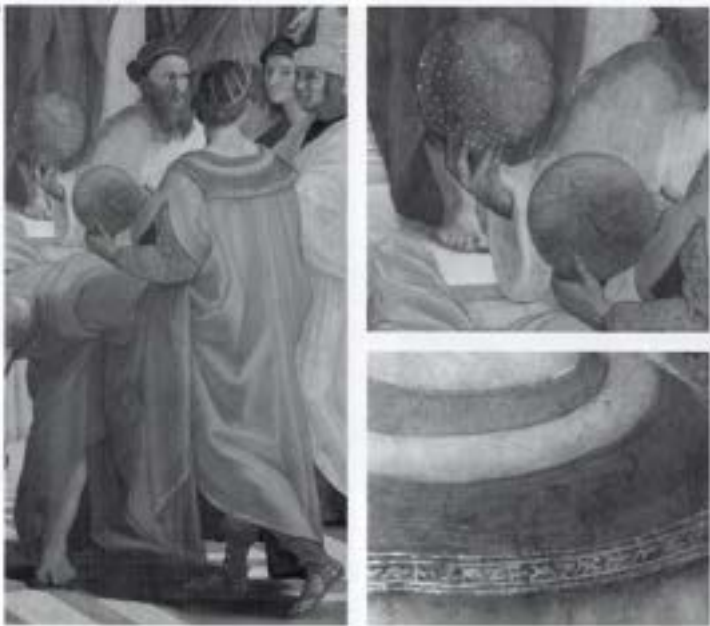


Figure 27 'The School of Athens', details



Figure 28 Giusto of Padua's Zoroaster, Ambrosian codex, fol. 3r

but opinion seems to be divided, though, about which figure represents him. Vasari identifies him as 'Zoroastre, Re de' Battriani', King of the Bactrians; so he may be the man in the radiate royal crown (not unlike Mithra's nimbus) with his back turned to us. This figure holds a terrestrial globe and there are tiny pseudo-Oriental characters on the hem of his golden mantle (Fig. 27). But if the star-studded globe represents Zoroaster's profession of astrology, then he is the sage in white facing the crowned figure and the viewer, with Raphael hovering nearby.¹⁸

Raphael had several precursors, the most prominent of whom was Giusto de Padova (d. c. 1397), who painted a fresco on the right wall of the Capella di Sant' Agostino of the Eremitani of the philosophers of antiquity seated beneath the figures embodying their particular arts and sciences. A German traveller a century later described the painting and it was also copied in a contemporary manuscript. The latter shows Zoroaster seated below a figure embodying Dialectic (*Dyalectica*), who holds a serpent in each hand (Fig. 28). Zoroaster's identification as a dialectician would have been based on the grounds of his dualistic philosophy. The other non-Christian prophet of such contemporary schemata of arts and virtues paired with their human proponents or opposites is Mohammed. But his dualism is of another sort: in the *Inferno* of Dante the Arab tears himself down the middle as punishment for having rent in twain the body of the Church; and he is the human antithesis of *Fides*, 'Faith'. Dialectic is lodged between the two other subjects of the medieval curriculum of studies called the *trivium*, *Gramatica* and *Retorica*. The Prophet's name is given in the rather garbled form *Cereastes*, and he is clothed in a rose-coloured hood, with yellow undergarments and a blue and red mantle. He is writing unintelligible characters on a page he holds at right angles to himself. Karl Dannenfeldt describes these as 'undoubtedly intended for oriental script'.¹⁹ Although most of the other philosophers in the scene are also scribbling away at books, I think this is still an argument for identifying the crowned figure with his back to us and a line of Oriental-style writing on his mantle in 'The School of Athens' as Zoroaster, even though the figure in Raphael's painting holds a terrestrial globe rather than the expected celestial one. At Padua it is Ptolemy, not 'Cereastes'/Zoroaster, who is the proponent of astrology; so Raphael a century later might have made the same identification, and we need not force upon Zoroaster the star-studded globe or the profession of astrology either.²⁰

In conclusion, one offers some final reflections on the question. Much is made of the need to protect the environment and to curb the diminution of species, whose diversity is an ecological necessity and whose destruction by human agency is a moral wrong. The same may be said of languages, which are disappearing at a rate proportional to the extinction of plants and animals. The Zoroastrians are a small people, defined not by land or language or even cultural unity, but by a common devotion to a unique conception of the cosmos and its meaning, radically and irreconcilably different from any other, that was in antiquity of extreme power and influence. This revelatory conception

belonged to a single man, whose elusive image one has pursued here, across millennia, monuments and texts. Surely the study of such an unusual heritage deserves to be continued: one taught it at Columbia, only to see the century-long history of Zoroastrian studies there come to an end. It is now at an end at Harvard as well, and at Berkeley. But the study of ancient Iran ought not to be eclipsed by subjects of greater topical practicality, whose value may prove to have been ephemeral. I come to this field, also, quite specifically and unapologetically as an Armenologist. I speak for the ancient and continuous testimony of a people that, unique among the non-Muslim peoples of the Near East, have never surrendered for any period of time any salient aspect of their identity, their sovereign right to be themselves, claiming their native land, pursuing their political aspirations, preserving their language and script, and defending their faith. The Armenian perspective, even in the consideration of so seemingly distant a topic as the image of Zoroaster, is valuable, and students of antiquity, particularly Iranists, ignore it to their own detriment. The river that flows through the Armenian capital, Erevan, is called the Hrazdan: it takes its name from Frāzdānu, the river on whose banks Zarathustra converted king Vishtaspa to his new religion. No other city, neither the one through which the Thames flows, nor the one above the mighty Hudson, can boast such a mark of hoary nobility. In an appendix I would then adduce some further Armenian evidence to approach questions concerning the iconography of the Sasanian reliefs that have come up in this discussion.

APPENDIX

A stone capital from K'asał of the fifth or sixth century shows the Armenian king Tiridates the Great, the first royal convert to Christianity, holding a staff in his right hand and a ring in his left; the ring ought to remind one of the one bestowed upon the Sasanian kings of the period, and its survival in early Christian Armenia suggests the durability of certain religious emblems of royalty (Fig. 29).²¹ It does not, however, bear an inscription. The medieval Armenian cemeteries of Julfa in Nakhichevan and of various sites in Arc'ax (Mountainous Karabagh) have numerous tombstones depicting in bas-relief the activities and pleasures of the noblemen who rest beneath them. They depict hunting and feasting and riding on horseback. No other mode of transport for a nobleman was imaginable, and one has already observed that the ancient belief that one's faithful mount bears one to the otherworld endures amongst the Iranians of modern Armenia – the Yezidi Kurds. So important was the equine image that such funerary monuments, which Armenians carved for themselves as well, are called in Armenian *jiak'ar*, 'horse stones'. The Armenian tombs have been compared sometimes to the massive grave monuments of Bogomil princes of the same period in Bosnia; and there is abundant evidence to suggest that Armenian sectarians of the Byzantine period, resettled in the Balkans, brought



Figure 29 Tiridates on a capital from K'asat

their beliefs and culture to enrich the homelands of the Southern Slavs. In the Kievan period, the Iranian-flavoured art of the bas-reliefs of the Armenian Church of the Holy Cross on Alt'amar Island, Lake Van, seems strongly to have influenced the bas-reliefs of the churches of Rus', at Vladimir and other sites.²² One Armenian tombstone from Gndevank bears this epitaph: *Ays ē hangist paron Avak'in, or karčawrawk'ēlav, ēar andarām psakn ... t'v. ԹՅԶ* 'This is the resting [place] of lord Awag, whose days were short; he took the unwithering diadem in (AD 1567).'²³ (Fig. 30) The relief depicts a man holding in his right hand the reins of a saddled horse; in his left, he has a round, ring-like object. To



Figure 30 Gndevank'tombstone

his left a hunter aims an arrow at a fleeing mountain goat. The reference to the diadem (Armenian loan-word *psak*; see above), though of course a standard Christian formula, still explains what the sculptor meant the ring-like object to be. No Sasanian bas-relief does this. But we do have both *pusag* and *didēm* in Parthian funerary hymns as the ring-wreaths the righteous will receive after death.²⁴ A funerary inscription of 1318 from Noravank reads, *Gelahrašn Pułtayin, or eritasard hasaki yet yolov k'aj mrc'manc'tigaxoc'eal zant'ařamn ankalaw zpsak* 'Of Pułtay of wondrous beauty, who at a young age after many brave tournaments was pierced through by a javelin and received the unwithering diadem.'²⁵ The tombstone of *melik*'Mirřan from Břnakot', AD 1551, shows a man standing on a prostrate figure: he holds the Cross in his right hand and a ring-like object in his left (Fig. 31).²⁶ Although a scholar who has discussed this image believes the fallen man to be a revered ancestor; and the ring, a wine cup viewed from above – it seems more likely that this funerary scene celebrates the nobleman's defeat of an enemy and his triumphant reception in Heaven with Cross and diadem; it would then be a remote echo of the Sasanian reliefs, such as the ones at Naqř-e Rostam and Tāq-e Bostān. A tombstone from řōř in Arc'ax (Fig. 32), possibly of the noble *melik*'řahnazarean clan and *circa* seventeenth century, depicts horsemen flourishing aloft rings that even trail ribbons behind them in pure Sasanian style, though their weapons are more up to date – a rifle is neatly carved nearby.²⁷ The rings are diadems, then; and the hard data of Armenian texts must be taken into account in any discussion of the Iranian monuments, despite their distance in time. These scenes take place,



Figure 31 Bīnakot'tombstone



Figure 32 Tombstone from Šoš, Arc'ax

not at court or here, but in the next world: one must consider the possibility that the scene at Naqš-e Rostam is not an 'investiture', but a vision of the first Sasanian king in the otherworldly House of Song, the *rōšn garōdmān* of Ahura Mazdā, the dead body of his enemy solid proof of his kirbag, his meritorious action – and a guarantee of salvation. Let us return to the Armenian relief.

There are amphorae of wine and a feast is about to begin. A seated *gusan* ('bard, minstrel', a well-known Parthian loan in Armenian that is discussed in far more detail in the Armenian texts than in any Iranian ones) indicates that their glorious, diademed entry into the *gerezman* is to be taken quite literally. For that Armenian word for the tomb (heaven is *draxt*, a forest of trees) derives from a Northwestern Middle Iranian descendant of the Avestan *garō dāmāna*, 'house of song', that designation of the otherworld of the righteous coined by Zarathustra himself. Zarathustra, the singer of the *Gāthās*, the bringer of the mighty covenant and the good law, not the pernicious 'Superman' of diseased modern fantasy but still the most godlike of men. Zarathustra, whose image seems to be settled once and for all amongst his followers as that of the Mithra, the most human of the gods, whose name in Persian, Mihr, has expanded from covenant or treaty and come to embrace friendship, love and the Sun's light. Mihr lives still in Armenia as a hero in a cave, Mher, the once and future king. But that story is for another time; and our present study is ended.

NOTES

1. The term seems to be Antiochus's invention.
2. Iranian **naxwadāra-*, 'holder of the prime (position)'; the form is attested in the Parthian period in Greek form as *nohodaes*.
3. See James R. Russell, 'The Epic of Sasun: Armenian apocalypse', in Sergio La Porta (ed.), *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition* (Leiden, 2014), pp. 41–77.
4. See F. Cumont and M. I. Rostovtzeff, 'The Mithraeum', in M. I. Rostovtzeff, P. E. Brown and C. B. Welles (eds), *The Excavations of Dura-Europos (Preliminary Report for 1933–34 and 1934–36)* (New Haven, 1939), pp. 62–134.
5. Mary Boyce, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 3 (Leiden, 1991), p. 489.
6. Albert de Jong, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Leiden, 1997), pp. 322, 392, 398–9.
7. Boyce, *History*, vol. 3, pp. 493, 555–8.
8. H. Ačaṙean, *Hayoc'anjanunneri baṭaran* ['Dictionary of Armenian proper names'] (Beirut, 1972), vol. 4, p. 193.
9. J. R. Russell, 'The Name of Zoroaster in Armenian', *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* ii (1985–1986), pp. 3–10, repr. in J. R. Russell, *Armenian and Iranian Studies* [=AIS] (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9) (Cambridge, MA, 2004), pp. 57–64.
10. Ancient Armenian poetry seems hypogrammetrically to encode the name of the Zoroastrian *yazata* Vahagn (Av. *Vərəθraγna*) into a hymn dedicated to him and into related mythological texts, for instance. See J. R. Russell, 'Magic mountains, milky seas, dragon slayers, and other Zoroastrian archetypes', *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* (N.S.) xxii (2008 [2012]), pp. 57–80. On these features of Saussure's poetics see most recently Daniel Heller-Roazen, *Dark Tongues: The Art of Rogues and Riddlers* (New York, 2013).
11. I. V. Steblin-Kamenskii, *Gaty Zaratushty* (St Petersburg, 2009). I am grateful to Dr Firuza Abdullaeva for her gift of her copy of this precious volume.
12. William Blake, an angry biblical exegete, insisted that words are deeds, and Christ's power was nothing to Caesar's if it is not so; W. H. Auden, in his elegy for Yeats, mused: 'For poetry makes nothing happen: it survives / In the valley of its making

where executives / Would never want to tamper / flows on ... / ... it survives, / A way of happening, a mouth.' Then Wm. S. Burroughs declared, 'The purpose of writing is to make it happen.'

13. Martha L. Carter, 'Mithra on the Lotus: A study of the imagery of the sun god in the Kushano-Sasanian era', *Monumentum Georg Morgenstierne*, vol. 1 (Acta Iranica 21) (Leiden, 1981), pp. 74–98.
14. For instance, K. Tanabe, 'Date and significance of the so-called investiture of Ardashir II', *Orient* xxi (1985), pp. 102–21. On the other monuments at the site, see Johanna Domela Movassat, *The Large Vault at Taq-i Bustan: A Study in Late Sasanian Royal Art* (Lewiston, 2005). She considers the scene with Mithra to represent the triumph of Shapur II over Julian.
15. See Dominique Hollard, 'Julien et Mithrā [sic!] sur le relief de Taq-i Bostān', *Sources for the History of Sasanian and post-Sasanian Iran, Res Orientales* xix (2010), pp. 147–63. The scene is discussed also by Barbara Kaim, 'Investiture or Mithra: Towards a new interpretation of so-called investiture scenes in Parthian and Sasanian art', *Iranica Antiqua* xlv (2009), pp. 403–15, who takes the image of the god to represent the covenant itself rather than the divine being. She suggests the ring being proffered to the king by the god on various reliefs be identified as a *dydymy*, 'diadem' (p. 406).
16. I am grateful to Dr Daniel J. Sheffield for his (unpublished) paper, 'Picturing prophethood: KRCOI Zarātushtnāma Manuscript HP 149 and the origins of Portraits of the Prophet Zarathustra', which deals in fascinating detail with the Parsi adoption of the Mithra figure from Taq-e Bostan.
17. A story which tells of the vision of Dastur Anushirvan Marzban of the god Mithra in a dream and of its truths, published in M. R. Unvala, *Darab Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, vol. 2 (Bombay, 1922), pp. 206–7, discussed by J. R. Russell, "'Sleep" and "Dreaming" in Armenian', in J. Greppin (ed.), *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Armenian Linguistics* (Delmar, 1992), pp. 155–6 (repr. in J. R. Russell, *Armenian and Iranian Studies* (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9) (Cambridge, MA, 2004), pp. 485–6).
18. See Marcia Hall (ed.), *Raphael's 'School of Athens'* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 53; and Arnold Nesselrath, *Raphael's School of Athens* (The Vatican, 1996), p. 17.
19. Karl H. Dannenfeldt, 'The pseudo-Zoroastrian oracles in the renaissance', *Studies in the Renaissance* iv (1957), pp. 20–1. I am greatly indebted for this reference to my colleague Christina Maranci, Professor of Art History at Tufts University, Medford, MA.
20. See Julius von Schlosser, 'Giusto's Fresken in Padua und die Vorläufer der Stanza della Segnatura', *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, vol. 17 (Vienna, 1896), p. 37 and esp. Tafel IV (of the Ambrasian codex, fol. 3r); on 'Mahumet', see p. 21. I express my deepest thanks to three Harvard colleagues for their help in finding this rare publication: Lukas Klic (Berenson Library, I Tatti), Kenneth Peterson (Widener Library), and Emily Weirich (Fine Arts Library).
21. See J. R. Russell, 'The Scepter of Tiridates', *Le Muséon* cxiv/1–2, 2001 (repr. in J. R. Russell, *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, op. cit.), pp. 187 and 212 plate 1.
22. See J. R. Russell, 'Iranians, Armenians, Prince Igor, and the lightness of Pushkin', *Iran and the Caucasus* (forthcoming).
23. Hamlet Petrosyan, "'Manuk" kerparə uš mijnadaryan hay tapanak'arayin k'andakum (XV–XVIII darer)' [The image of the 'lad' in late medieval Armenian funerary reliefs], S. B. Harut'unyan and A. A. K'alant'aryan (eds), *T'ux Manuk: nstašrjani nyut'er* ['The Dark Lad: conference papers'] (Erevan, 2001), p. 74 and plate 2.
24. For a full discussion of these see P. O. Skjærvø, 'Reflexes of Iranian oral traditions in Manichean literature', in D. Durkin-Meisterenst, C. Reck and D. Weber (eds),

- Literarische Stoffe und ihre Gestaltung in mittelliranischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 2009), esp. pp. 272f.
25. Petrosyan, “*Manuk*” *kerparə uš mijnadaryan hay tapanak’arayin k’andakum (XV–XVIII darer)*’, p. 45.
 26. Petrosyan, “*Manuk*” *kerparə uš mijnadaryan hay tapanak’arayin k’andakum (XV–XVIII darer)*’, p. 77 and p. 78 plate 3.
 27. Russell, ‘The Scepter of Tiridates’, op. cit., pp. 194–5 and p. 214 plate 3.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ačařean, H., *Hayoc’anjannunneri bařaran* [Dictionary of Armenian proper names] (Beirut, 1972), vol. 4.
- Boyce, Mary, *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. 3 (Leiden 1991).
- Carter, Martha L., ‘Mithra on the Lotus: A Study of the Imagery of the Sun God in the Kushano-Sasanian era’, *Monumentum Georg Morgenstierne i (Acta Iranica 21)* (1981), pp. 74–98.
- Cumont, F. and M. I. Rostovtzeff, *The Mithraeum*, in M. I. Rostovtzeff, P. E. Brown, and C. B. Welles (eds), *The Excavations of Dura-Europos (Preliminary Report for 1933–34 and 1934–36)* (New Haven, 1939), pp. 62–134.
- Dannenfeldt, Karl H., ‘The Pseudo-Zoroastrian Oracles in the Renaissance’, *Studies in the Renaissance*, iv (1957), pp. 20–1.
- Hall, Marcia (ed.), *Raphael’s ‘School of Athens’* (Cambridge, 1997).
- Heller-Roazen, Daniel, *Dark Tongues: The Art of Rogues and Riddlers* (New York, 2013).
- Hollard, Dominique, ‘Julien et Mithrā [sic!] sur le relief de Tāq-i Bostān’, *Sources for the History of Sasanian and post-Sasanian Iran, Res Orientales* xix (2010), pp. 147–63.
- Jong, Albert de, *Traditions of the Magi: Zoroastrianism in Greek and Latin Literature* (Leiden, 1997).
- Kaim, Barbara, ‘Investiture or Mithra: Towards a New Interpretation of So-called Investiture Scenes in Parthian and Sasanian Art’, *Iranica Antiqua* xlv (2009), pp. 403–15.
- Movassat, Johanna Domela, *The Large Vault at Taq-i Bustan: A Study in Late Sasanian Royal Art* (Lewiston, 2005).
- Nesselrath, Arnold, *Raphael’s School of Athens* (The Vatican, 1996).
- Petrosyan, Hamlet “*Manuk*” *kerparə uš mijnadaryan hay tapanak’arayin k’andakum (XV–XVIII darer)* [The image of the ‘lad’ in late medieval Armenian funerary reliefs], in S. B. Harut’yunyan and A. A. K’alant’aryan (eds), *T’ux Manuk: nstařjani nyut’er* [The Dark Lad: conference papers] (Erevan, 2001).
- Russell, J. R., ‘The Name of Zoroaster in Armenian’, *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* ii (1985–1986).
- Russell, J. R., “‘Sleep’ and ‘Dreaming’ in Armenian”, in J. Greppin (ed.),

- Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Armenian Linguistics* (Delmar, 1992).
- Russell, J. R., 'The Scepter of Tiridates', *Le Muséon* cxiv/1–2 (2001).
- Russell, J. R., *Armenian and Iranian Studies* (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9) (Cambridge, MA, 2004).
- Russell, J. R., 'Magic Mountains, Milky Seas, Dragon Slayers, and Other Zoroastrian Archetypes', *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* (N.S.) xxii (2008 [2012]).
- Russell, J. R., 'The epic of Sasun: Armenian apocalypse', in Sergio La Porta (ed.), *The Armenian Apocalyptic Tradition* (Leiden, 2014).
- Schlosser, Julius von, 'Giusto's Fresken in Padua und die Vorläufer der Stanza della Segnatura', *Jahrbuch der Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen des Allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses* xvii (1896).
- Skjærvø, P. O., 'Reflexes of Iranian Oral Traditions in Manichean Literature', in D. Durkin-Meisterenst, C. Reck and D. Weber (eds), *Literarische Stoffe und ihre Gestaltung in mittelliranischer Zeit* (Wiesbaden, 2009).
- Steblin-Kamenskii, I. V., *Gaty Zaratushty* (St Petersburg, 2009).
- Tanabe, K., 'Date and Significance of the So-called Investiture of Ardashir II', *Orient* xxi (Tokyo, 1985), pp. 102–21.
- Unvala, M. R., *Darab Hormazyār's Rivāyat*, 2 vols (Bombay, 1922).

THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM: DAWT‘AK THE RHETOR’S GIFT LIST.

By James R. Russell,
Harvard University.

Pil omer: Mah gadlu ma‘asekha Adonay, me‘od ‘amqu mahshevotekha “The elephant says, How great are thy works, O Lord; Thy thoughts are very deep (Ps. 92.6).” (*Pereq shirah*)¹

“At that time a certain man skilled in speaking happened to be passing through, who was well informed in skillful wisdom, called by the name Dawt‘ak, who was handy in the exercises of creative composition and advanced in the reading of poetry. He also played music splendidly, with artistry, drawing upon a generous abundance of words, having even as brave a public voice as he had a pen that swiftly wrote. He had come for a stay of many days and frequented the royal court. But when the dire murmurs (ššuk) concerning the sudden killing of the great commander were reaching these eastern parts, then he began to sing this lament, its first lines arranged alphabetically, over Juanšēr, a man deserving of much good.” That is the conclusion in the *History of the Realm of Ałuank‘* of 2.34, introducing Dawt‘ak *k‘ert‘ol*, the Rhetor. The following chapter, 2.35 is the lament over Prince Javanshir itself, the first long secular poem recorded in Armenian literature—and there is no further comment on it. Dawt‘ak, is not mentioned again, in the *History* or in

1 - The “Chapter of Song” is a medieval Hebrew text on the psalms the animals sing, based on Biblical verses. The introduction explains that David was once boasting about how many psalms he had composed. The frog interrupted, explaining it had sung more. When David made to disagree, God interposed Himself into the conversation and assured His anointed that the batrachian bard spoke truly. For an illustrated edition of the text, with commentary, see Slifkin 2009. For more on David, see *infra*. For more on frogs, see Aristophanes.

Armenian sources thereafter. And, with the possible exception of an earlier passage in the same *History*, the one to be considered here, no other work of his is known to exist.

So all that is known of him at present is this laudatory introduction and the Lament, with his name. That name Dawt'ak, "Little David", is almost as lonely. It is attested only once more, of the *chorespiskopos* of Arcn in 1048. There is an Armenian-in-Greek Tautoukas of 890, that is, *Dawt'uk, and a Dawt'ik of 1508—the scarcity of diminutives is striking, since Ačarean knows fully 254 Davids from the written sources, from the fourth century on. The name here may just have been the professional moniker of this praise singer, orator, and jack-of-all-verbal-trades, who frequented the court of this prince in the northeast and was maybe a wandering scholar, seeking employment with other minor dynasts in the course of his career. Was he christened simply David, Dawit'? The Biblical tag is apposite, at any rate, with or without a diminutive *-ak*, *-uk*, or *-ik*. King David was the eloquent Psalmist, the musician whose lyre (Hebrew *kinnōr*, Syr. *kinnāra*, Arm. l-w *k'nar*), Orpheus-like, had calmed king Saul in his bestial moods. The image of David in art has been inseparable from his musical instrument, since ancient days. David is perhaps the most densely complex, humanly vivid character in the Bible, the beautiful boy singer and handsome warrior, the fleeing poet begging the Lord's aid, the wayward sinner who lusted after Bathsheba, the faithful lover of Jonathan, the king of Israel who danced naked before the Lord, and (not least for Armenian Christians in later centuries) the royal ancestor of Jesus. The Bagratuni house, the "god-given ones" were after baptism to abandon their old genealogy from the divinity of stormy might, Tarhundas/Tork' Angeł, and claim descent from David. Perhaps Dawt'ak had been given the famous name, with its associations with eloquence and music, at birth—and grew into it. So the diminutive *-ak* might have been part of our poet's fortuitous given name; but again it, too, might just be a conscious mark of his trade. For the connection of diminutives to singers and poets, one has only to think only of the famous 16th-century *ashugh* of the Van region, Nahapet *K'uč'ak*, "Little Nahapet". (And for those of us who grew up with the blues and rock as our minstrelsy, I need only invoke Little Richard.)

Dawt'ak orated, on a permanent or part-time basis, at the up-country Ałuan court of a Sasanian prince (not king), Javānšēr—the Young Lion (in Armenian that would be Koriwn, from Hebrew, the name of the pupil and hagiographer of St. Mesrop Maštoc'). Javānšēr, appointed prince (*išxan*) of Ałuank' by Yazdagerd III Šahriyār, r. 632-652, the last Sasanian (and, in the Parsi Zoroastrian view, legitimate) ruler of Iran, was the second of the four sons of Varaz-Grigor, who was consecrated by Viroy, Catholicos of Ałuank', and was himself a member of the house of Artašir, that is, a Sasanian and a Persian. He would have been fluent in Middle Persian, schooled in some Greek, conversant in the local Ałuan patois, and probably capable of a little Arabic. But Dawt'ak's alphabetic Lament follows the order of the Armenian, not the Caucasian Albanian, alphabet devised by Maštoc'. Armenian was a language employed often at court and for much Christian learning in Caucasian Albania, whatever the native tongue of those employing it might have been, and Javānšēr most likely spoke and read it perfectly. Though the Ałuan language in its Mesropian script was used for epigraphy and the composition of one known

theological manuscript (presumably there were many more), we have far too little of it, and our knowledge of its use is too scanty, to paint a clear picture of its cultural and political status. It seems most reasonable to suppose that Dawt'ak was an Armenian by birth or by schooling, unless one suppose that Movsēs translated an abecedarian lament from Aḫuan, rendering it as an equivalent Armenian abecedarian poem of considerable sophistication—which seems absurd. Or did he invent the whole scene, poem and poet and all? That is most improbable as well.

The genre of the elegy and lament was well known generally; and in the pre-Islamic Iranian world the literary *locus classicus* is the lament over the fallen brother of Vištāspā, Zairivairi, in the Parthian-accented Pahlavi *Ayādgār ī Zarērān*, “The Memorial of Zarēr”. The episode of Vač'ē (i.e., Persian *bačče*, “the kid”, which is what he is) in the *Buzandaran* of P'awstos suggests a specific knowledge of the episode in which little Bastwar, Zarēr's son, tries to ride out to avenge his treacherously slain father. Great epic heroes often die by treachery: Clytemnestra and Aegisthus hack Agamemnon to death in his bath, and an Arab princess shoots David of Sasun in the back as he is bathing, too. Dawt'ak is conscious of the *topos*, and has one foot firmly planted in pagan antiquity. But the other stands on Christian ground, so, as is often the case in Armenian literature, we encounter a curious mixture of images from the two worlds. The poet thus presents Javānšīr's murderer, the ungrateful courtier Varazoy, in traditional epic colors while comparing him also to the Biblical Cain;² the 12th-century Armenian writer Matthew of Edessa, also, in a passage I have interpreted as an epic poem, likewise stigmatizes the low-born, cowardly killer of the champion Vasak Pahlawuni as Cain.³ Both poets call their own heroes lions.

One feels the same kind of unsettling strangeness, the sense of incongruity, even, of the encounter with old, local, pagan themes and images culled from the new Christian dispensation rubbing shoulders in the same lines, when one reads an epic text from the other edge of Christendom that emerged at about the same time as Dawt'ak's Lament. This is the *Beowulf* poem in Old English, where an ancient monster of Nordic lore is likened to Cain: *Waes se grimme goest Grendel hāten,/ maere mearc-stapa, sē þe mōras hēold,/ Fen ond faesten; fifel-cynnes eard/ won-saelī wer weardode hwīle,/ siþðan him Scyppend forscrifen haefde/ in Caines cynne...* “Grendel was the name of this grim demon/ haunting the marshes, marauding round the heath/ and the desolate fens;/ he had dwelt for a time/ in misery among the banished monsters,/ Cain's clan, whom the Creator had outlawed.”⁴ C.S. Lewis, the medievalist and philologist whose imaginative musings found relief in Christianizing science fiction, conveys this feeling of a dim, intermediate time between two ages—discrete ages, as perceived in remote hindsight, at least—in the character of Merlin in the novel *That Hideous Strength*. The old magician of Arthurian Celtic Britain, about to rise again, is imagined as a Christian with something of the old Druidic religion

2- Arak'elyan 1983, p. 227, line 22.

3- See Russell [2016].

4- Heaney 2000, pp. 8-9.

still clinging to his heart, speaking a likewise intermediate language, one akin to Welsh and spoken in the proximity of a late Latin vernacular that might sound a bit— Lewis' hero muses— like Spanish. Our prince Javānšēr is a Christian, but one who still enjoys the pagan entertainments of *gusank* ("minstrels") and celebrates the ancient Zoroastrian New Year's feast of Nawasard in the company of his band of bodyguard-intimates, the *name-sakan gund*. The protective shield of the Christian faith is sometimes but a thin veneer; for his assassin, a villain named Varazoy (the name contains the Iranian word for "wild boar", the totemic animal of Vərəθrağhna and of the Arsacids) who is "imbued with the sin of Cain" (instead of slaying his innocent brother, he is to kill his guileless liege-lord), tempts the prince to evil pleasures that the latter enjoys but that are, unfortunately, not enumerated.⁵ Javānšēr and Merlin both inhabit two worlds, cosmologies, cultures.

To return back briefly to the *Buzandaran*, that text reflects an awareness of the general themes of the much larger epic cycle to which "The Memorial of Zarēr", with its elegy, belonged.⁶ So Dawt'ak, who mentions in his lament for Javānšēr the troupes of professional women mourners, a local custom, might very likely have heard local forms of the laments they sang, as well as Biblical and Classical models— even though his own lament is a highly polished, written work that bristles with complex learned allusions. These *ḵaylk* "bands" of *eleramayrs*, "mothers of lamentation", were still common in the Armenia of St. Gregory of Narek, who mentions them late in the tenth century. Their ritual practices have an Iranian parallel also in the widespread Iranian *sūg-e Siyāvōš*, the lamentation over the young dying and rising hero-god Syāvaršan, which al-Bīrūnī and his contemporaries knew. The word for mourning in the rite comes into Armenian as the loan word *sug*; the name, as *Šawarš*; and the persecutor of the latter, king Afrasiyāb (Middle Persian Frasiyāg) indirectly attested from the toponym Hrasekaber, *Hraseak.⁷ So when it came to ritualized mourning, the mythological stories, the setting, the vocabulary, and the rite— all were known to Armenians. The word for these bands of wailers, incidentally, has been prone to be misunderstood as "ostriches": this was corrected by the late Prof. Charles J.F. Dowsett, one's thesis supervisor at Oxford and the learned predecessor of the subsequent great scholars enthroned on the Gulbenkian Chair there, my friends Robert Thomson and Theo Van Lint. It is to Prof. Dowsett that we owe the first and so far only major translation and study in English of the *Patmut'iw n aluanic' ašxarhi* of Movsēs Dasxuranc'i (or Kałankatuac'i), our sole source on the work and personality of Dawt'ak. But even if Dawt'ak did not sing of wandering gaggles of howling ostriches, it would seem he lovingly described other impressive, exotic animals, as we shall see presently.

For Dowsett suggests Dawt'ak might have been the author, not only of the Lament, but also of the eloquent and vivid description preceding it, in 2.28, of the gifts of the Arab

5- The rare term *namesakan*, variant *namisakan*, understood by Malxaseanc' as "close, near, noble" from context, may be Middle Iranian, perhaps from a compound like **nāma-yasa-* "attaining a name", cf. Parthian *nāmḡn* and the identical Sogdian *nāmḡn*, "famous".

6- See Russell 1996.

7- See Russell 1988.

Caliph, the “king of the south”, to prince Javānšēr:⁸ an elephant, a parrot, a gold-plated steel sword adorned with pearls, robes of silk and royal purple, and 52 horses.⁹ This is an interesting passage deserving of some close examination for its form, content, and setting in its own right. If indeed it may be the only other piece Dawt‘ak composed that we have, then its value is correspondingly greater still and one may further consider its connection to the securely-attributed Lament. My partial translation follows:

2.28 (pp. 196-201): THE SECOND JOURNEY OF JAVĀNŠĒR TO THE RULER OF THE SOUTH, AND HIS HELPING THE GREEKS WITH PRUDENT AID, AND HIS HAVING HIS TRIBUTE HALVED. The king of the south again summoned with an invitation, promising gifts, the famed Javānšēr, prince of the east, saying he would augment his previous honor with greater glory still, on account of the grandees of the city of Byzantium having come to undertake subjugation by of the sons of Hagar for tribute, because it was in the seventh year of the reign of Constantine that the eunuchs had planned by themselves to kill him; so there was a command from the king to the grandees to wait till the prince of the east might arrive. But the greatly lauded lord Javānšēr reached there without hesitation with the same company just like the first time; at which the king accorded him incomparably greater esteem and honors than he had done at first; for he ordered that the palace of his own brother be arranged for his rest, and he always had him sit next to him at the table at dinner. So he ordered him therefore propose words of peace to the honorable men who had come from the imperial city. The king was mightily amazed on account of his thoughtfully deep wisdom, and the gratitude of the emissaries of the Romans to him was no less, since he contrived to persuade the mind of the king in their favor in many matters.

And after this with the highly acclamatory honor due one who is about to take the crown, the king of the south according the ultimate glory of monarchs to the prince of the east, commanding that he be granted that superbly trained, greatly learned elephant of mighty form from the realm of India, by which the courts of kings, most mighty and casting a long shadow, are adorned. Till today nobody has ever heard of such a thing, how to the most junior such a thing was granted by reason of great esteem. After that, also the parrot, which also is more honorable than any other birds. In the remote past there was no way one might see it anywhere other than in the kingdom of the Romans.

8- Dowsett 1961, p. 129 n. 4.

9- Why exactly fifty-two horses? One to ride to the hunt each week of the year, I suppose. In the Pahlavi text *Xusrō ud rēdag-ē*, “Khosrow [Anushirvan] and one page boy,” the former asks the latter, who is applying for a job at court, what the best mount is. The one of the nocturnal chamber, replies the pert youth lewdly. In Rajasthan this writer was shown the harem of the former maharajah: it had 360 rooms, so that the ruler might enjoy a different concubine each day of the year. The exertions of venery come in various forms.

With the same he granted him yet more greatness: a steel saber, sheathed in gold, encrusted with pearls; and gold-embroidered cloths and silks, brocades and purples joyous to behold with whatever other noble colors all reckoned in their number together, that were and are now; and fifty two swift coursing horses that he, the king himself, used to ride.

And he commanded the queen of his ladies that she give to the lady of the east gifts of beautiful adornment splendid in their richness, gifts fit for queens: silken and gold-woven garments; and for those who came after him in his train he commanded that there be given to every one of them, about fifty men in all, brocades and woven headbands...

We saw the royal bird, whose form was desirable; for in its yellow feathers a little greenness was evenly mixed and shimmering, and here and there the reddish spotted color of its flanks was varied, roundabout its neck, like gold-tinged pearly dewdrops on a spring morning in the tilled fields tumbling about each other. So also the pupils of its eyes, and its heavy curving beak turned down over its mouth, where the tip of the round spike of its tongue, jutting out as teeth do, continuously rolled out the trilling of delicate sound of a voice like the speech of human nature. And just as at first it had been the praise-singer of a certain emperor Nero in his chambers, so latterly we saw it become the speaker of the blessings of our very fortunate prince. But however enchanting that amazement, it was not so much as what I am now about to relate, for just when he was minded to go outside to the hunt or to play at some other amusement, we beheld at the departure of the assemblage of the royal procession, outside the battlements at the entrance gate on the road, that animal— monstrous (*anari*), not good (*anbari*), grotesque (*anheded*), as if come to bow down to the person of the king— the elephant, tall as a boulder, whose legs were like roof beams raising up a mountain, and from its skull the trunk hung downwards like a reptile with evil poison. It dragged and turned it constantly as it shambled over the ground, or it would stand and raise it straight up, or sometimes nuzzling itself with it, it would snort powerfully, breathing in and out through its nostrils. In truth I say that there was a trembling of terrified awe that gripped a man's very nature at the behemoth-like motion of its head. We saw also steeds ridden, haughty, with splendid necks, walking, trotting, and galloping (*čemołk' čepołk' ew ews čaxraslac'k'*), that charged as lightly as if carried on the wind, with golden reins and saddles and decorated trappings. Now what shall I say, what thing shall I utter? For by divine providence even from birth he was created for glory and greatness; and to this day the Lord has opened the way wide for him to be the most glorious in every thing. On account of that we saw him lacking in nothing that kings have, full of everything, gold and much silver, noble purples and lovely clothes and noble gems and shining pearls, no less; everything full and replete.

Gift giving is one of basic social actions of humanity, of course; and Parthian, Sasanian, and later Near Eastern dynasties, down into the Islamic era, preserved in large part the forms of the ritual inherited from the Seleucids, whose own court etiquette combined older Greek forms with a strong Persian admixture. Rolf Strootman, in his recent study of Hellenistic courts and elites, a fundamental contribution to the field, sounds at times as though he could have been a witness to the interaction of Javānšēr, the king of the south, and Dawt'ak. Particularly lavish gifts, he notes, were a way of confirming the giver's superior status—the elephant, in the present case, is the prerogative of the king of the south to give but only barely the prince's right to receive (since he is not a full-fledged king himself, though at least he comes from the Sasanian royal line). This “king”, as Movsēs persistently calls him, is actually the Arab Caliph, Mu'āwiya (661-680 AD). Purple garments also enjoyed particular prestige as a gift, and Javānšēr is to stagger home from the capital of the Caliphate, Damascus, overloaded with them. Strootman cites the description by Phylarchus of an audience at the court of Alexander the Great, with various noblemen, bodyguards (cf. the Ałuan prince's *namesakan gund* “*intimate troop”), and armed soldiers teeming about the person of the emperor, resplendent in their shining armor and purple robes—with a circle of fully armed and caparisoned elephants (!) in a ring outside the royal pavilion. The scene at Damascus would have looked very similar. And Strootman further observes that patronage of the arts was vital to the function of the court, which was a “stage for the drama of kingship” and a “focus for competition with other dynasties”. Among the artists who received favored patronage were composers of panegyric poems, who were especially valued for the purposes of royal propaganda. That is what the panegyric, perhaps of Dawt'ak, does here. It is propaganda that makes explicit and broadcasts the value, importance, and meaning of the gifts Javānšēr received, verbally echoing the visual spectacle. Dawt'ak's eloquence and erudition, too, fit seamlessly into the ancient model. As Strootman writes, “The complexity and learnedness of court poetry, with its references to obscure versions of myths and ingenious literary allusions, give some idea of the level of sophistication that was required to take part in the table talk at court.”¹⁰

And table talk is quite the point here, too; for the setting is a feast, or a series of feasts, some diplomatic, some celebratory, interspersed with royal processions and amusements and—dear to every Armenian or Iranian nobleman—rides to the hunt. Strootman notes that it was common for a Hellenistic ruler to dispense precious tableware, cups, and plates to his guests at a banquet: again, the Sasanians perpetuated this practice. Prudence Harper in her landmark study of royal Sasanian silver vessels and other art uses the Armenian sources to place these objects in the living context of their actual use, and cites Movsēs Dasxuranc'i himself, who mentions that the fourth-century king Shapur II held a feast (čaş) for “all the grandees of noble birth of the ancient clans of the Persians” (*amenayn mecamecac' hnamenic' tohmic' azatatohmn parsic' naxararac'*) and “according to their precedence in honor in seating” (əst gahu naxapatiws) gave each a cup (*bažak*) and a

10- See Strootman 2014, pp. 155-157, 164, 175 and 191.

branch.¹¹ The mention of a branch recalls the leafy fronds that Agathangelos reports the Arsacids used to offer to the Zoroastrian *yazata* Anahit. Apparently it was acceptable protocol for the giver of a gift to call attention to it and to explain its significance on the spot himself. Harper in an epigraph quotes P'awstos (5.2), who describes how the same king gave Mušel Mamikonean, commander-in-chief (*sparapet*) of the Armenians, a cup decorated with the portrait of the latter's white (*čermak*, New Persian *čarmeh*, the white horse that Anglophone equestrians call a "grey") steed in token of gratitude for his noble service to the royal family, and at feasts would command him, Čermakajin gini arbč'ē "Let the rider of the grey drink!"¹² The word for "cup" here is *tašt*: that would have been a wide, flattish bowl with the image inside at its center. Traditional Zoroastrians in India of my acquaintance still drink water or tea out of such shallow bowls, usually made of smooth, unadorned silver, tipping the vessel to one's mouth without touching the lips. The wine of the Sasanians was dark, so the sculpted, repoussé image of the horse at the bottom would have emerged into view as the Armenian warrior was finishing his drink. It would be covered by liquid and obscured once more, for as we know from the Book of Esther, one drank at the Persian court by command, as much as the king wished. Shapur probably bade Mušel hoist more than a few cups before the banquet was over.

The giving of sumptuous gifts to barbarian rulers remained so important an aspect of diplomacy and court life for the eastern Roman Empire that Constantine Porphyrogenitus addresses advice on it to his son at the very start of his treatise, immediately after the preamble to *De Administrando Imperio*, in Book I, Chapter 1: "I conceive, then, that it is always greatly to the advantage of the emperor of the Romans to be minded to keep the peace with the nation of the Pechenegs and to conclude conventions and treaties of friendship with them and to send every year to them from our side a diplomatic agent with presents befitting and suitable to that nation (*meta xeniōn harmozontōn kai pros to ethnos epitēdeiōn*) and to take from their side sureties, that is, hostages and a diplomatic agent, who shall come, together with the competent minister, to this city protected of God, and shall enjoy all imperial benefits and gifts suitable for the emperor to bestow."¹³ By "suitable" gifts one supposes the author means things the foreign ruler might understand and recognize as valuable, invested with "cultural capital" within the context of his own culture. But one might dispatch a letter together with the gifts to explain their meaning and intent, and to underscore their value. That convention was sufficiently well known, already in antiquity, to be employed to sarcastic effect, too, with the added hint of a riddle: the last of the Achaemenid kings, Darius, sent the young Alexander of Macedon the gifts

11- Aṙak'elyan 1983, 2.1 (p. 106).

12- Harper 1978, p. 24. There are several inaccuracies: the horse is that of the commander Mušel, not of the Armenian king Aṙšak II; the passage is in 5.2 not 5.3; and Movsēs' surname might be Kalankatuisky if he were an expat from the Caucasus in Moscow today but in his time the ending was Armenian. Those are minor errors; Dr. Harper by engaging the Armenian material in a way very few Iranists trouble to do, rendered an inestimable service to the study of the culture of the period.

13- G. Moravcsik and R. Jenkins 1949, pp. 48-49.

of a leather strap, a ball, and a big chest of gold, with an accompanying letter explaining that the first was to discipline him as a mere boy; the second, a toy for him to play with together with other children; and the third, a pittance (in the haughty Persian's view) for the Greek and his fellow bandits out of the measureless treasures of the King of Kings.¹⁴ The story comes from Ps.-Callisthenes, whose work was well known in an early Classical Armenian translation that was much augmented over the centuries by prosimetric *qafiya* stanzas of various hands to be chanted to musical accompaniment during oral performances of the text, to amuse the audience and recapitulate the story. The irony in the episode of Darius inheres in the reader's foreknowledge of the hubristic monarch's impending downfall: nobody picked up the *Alexander Romance* of Pseudo-Callisthenes without knowing the ending. Suspense was not the strong point of the universally popular work.

The ceremonies and literary trappings of gift giving carried on into the age of Islam with a sumptuary vengeance. An Arabic work datable to the eleventh century, *The Book of Gifts and Rarities* of ibn-Zubayr (*Kitāb al-hadāyā wa al-tuḥaf*), contains numerous, long lists of numbingly extravagant royal gifts, with both explanatory letters from the donors and odes by poets praising the gifts in order. (There are also chapters on how much was paid for memorable parties and weddings, circumcision feasts, celebrations for proficiency in reading the Qur'ān, crowded festivities in general, etc.) So, for instance, al-Zāhir li I'zāz Dīn-Allāh sent to al-Mu'izz ibn Bādīs a gift of perfume, precious stones, clothes, wall hangings, banners, silver staffs, some Bactrian camels, palanquins encrusted with gems and plated with gold and silver, slave girls who could sing and dance, "plenty of handsome eunuchs with lovely faces, figures, and clothes", expensive thoroughbred horses, armor, chain mail, swords, a giraffe, and other things. Abū Muḥammad al-Ḥasan ibn Rashīq, "the (leading) poet of the Maghrib", wrote a *qaṣida* for ibn Bādīs on the gifts, starting with the most exotic item, the giraffe, whose neck bears her head like a pole beneath a haughty standard.¹⁵ A pity there was no elephant; but then the ode would have been even longer than the giraffe's neck and the pachyderm's trunk together.

So we may suppose the particular gifts received by the Aḷuan prince carry a symbolic weight of their own, further embellished by the rhetor's description and evaluation. We may begin with the parrot, who is the emblem in the East of sweet eloquence, not as in the West of the mindless, cackling repetition of silly phrases. Ctesias in his *Indica* (late fifth century BC) praises the parrot as having a human tongue and voice; later Armenian texts likewise note admiringly that a parrot (*papḳay*, the word used by Movsēs here) can be taught by people to speak; and the Armenian version of the *Alexander Romance*, already cited in connection with Darius' humiliating gift to Alexander, records a more munificent and sincere gift of two hundred parrots: *berēn k'ez ar i mēnḡ papḳay erkeriwr*, "they bring you from us two hundred parrots". Middle Armenian borrowed an Indian word via Iranian for the bird, *t'ut'ak*; Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i writes admiringly of his beloved, *Berand*

14- Wolohojian 1969, p. 58; for the Armenian text see Simonyan 1989, p. 143.

15- al-Qaddūmī 1996, pp. 105-108.

šak'rov i li, t'ut'ak lezu es, "Your mouth is full of sugar; you are parrot-tongued."¹⁶ The poet called himself a parrot, too, for the proficiency of his verbal art; and the Cilician Armenian poet Frik lamented the approach of death as the end of his sweet song, writing, *Im t'ut'ak lezu ku kapi*, "My parrot tongue is bound."¹⁷ So the association of the parrot with verbal eloquence is old and well established: perhaps one purpose of Dawt'ak's extravagant description of the bird, then, is delicately to remind his patron that a certain rhetor deserves a rich reward for his own art of beautiful and useful eloquence.

And then there is the elephant in the room. St. Vardan Mamikonean spurred his horse, leading the Christian soldiers of Armenia onward into valiant and unequal combat against the great elephants of the army of the pagan Yazdegerd II at the battle of Avarayr in 451. The Armenians were defeated, but in the long run they won a moral victory—the Sasanians relented from their campaign to reconvert the country from Christianity to Zoroastrianism. Elišē *vardapet* makes of Vardan and his martyred warrior-companions a band of latter-day Maccabees. Elephants figure in the historical legend of the latter, too. One recalls a famous incident during the battle of Bet Zakharia in 162 BC: the Jewish hero Eleazar Avaran, brother of Judah the Maccabee, attacked and killed a war elephant on which he mistakenly thought the pagan king Antiochus V was seated. The great animal collapsed on top of him, so although he had slain the monstrous creature, he still died a martyr's death there and then.¹⁸ The elephant was the ubiquitous emblem of the Seleucids, and the death of their war elephant is an obvious metaphor of the downfall of paganism and the victory of the true faith. After the rebirth in 1948 of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel, the artist Ze'ev Raban designed a Hanukkah menorah depicting Eleazar's valorous deed (Pl. 1). In his *History* of the war of Vardan, Elišē has the apostate villain Vasak *hide* among the elephants of the Sasanian army—an obvious and intentional *inversion* of the type of the Israelite heroes Samson and Eleazar.¹⁹ In Armenian manuscript illumination the elephant marks the pagan horde; the horse, the Armenian Christian host (Pl. 2).

The author of *Maccabees* overtly modeled Eleazar on the still earlier type of Samson. Back in the era of the Judges, in the mists of the second millennium BC, the blinded hero of the tribe of Dan brought down the temple of Dagon of the pagan Philistines upon them and himself at Gaza, ending their triumph and crowning his poor blinded, shaggy head with the wreath of martyrdom and victory. That hero is also admired in Armenian tradition: Samson and David (who is shown slaying another Philistine, Goliath) both appear on the walls of the tenth-century palace Church of the Holy Cross of the Arcrunids at Ałt'amar. And the types of these two Biblical heroes inform in part the characters of Mher the Lion-slayer and Davit' in the oral Epic of Sasun, whose many ancient components crystallized around the same time, with the Armenian uprisings against the Arab

16- See Greppin 1978, pp. 142-145.

17- See Russell 1987, p. 62. On Frik, see Russell 2009, pp. 256-264.

18- See Kosmin 2014, p. 2. I am grateful to Prof. Kosmin for his advice during the researching of this paper.

19- Tēr Minasean 1957, p. 121.

Caliphate. Armenian manuscripts that illustrate the battle of Avarayr generally identify the hostile Persian army by their elephants; the righteous Armenians, by their equine mounts. Thomson points out that the contrast of images endured: in the later revolt of 572, too, the elephant represented the Persians; the horse, the Armenians.²⁰

An elephant might be a safe, if high maintenance, gift for the proverbial man who has everything. But, given its traditional associations in Biblical and Armenian tradition with the might of pagan tyrants, was it quite the appropriate present for Mu'āwiya to offer an Armenian-speaking, Christian king in the seventh century? Perhaps it was, when one considers that the prince was after all of royal Persian lineage. The archetypal hero of Iranian epic, Rostam, was well known to Movsēs Xorenac'i and other Armenian writers of the classical era and there is an indigenous cycle of folk *dastans* about him as well that has become loosely connected to the Sasun epic.²¹ Rostam bears a number of standard epithets, among them *tāj-baxš*, "crown-bestower": he is the support of the kings of Iran but not a king himself, an ambiguity one might sense also in the social position of Javanshir, who is a mighty warrior like Rostam, and a sage diplomat, yet still only an *išxan*, a prince, not a king. Another very frequently encountered epithet of Rostam in the New Persian of the *Šāh-nāme* of Ferdousi is more apposite still here: *pīl-tan*, "elephant-bodied". There is every reason to think that epithet long predated the Islamic period; and the intention was wholly honorific, without any of the negative connotations of Judeo-Christian literature. In Sogdian, for instance, one finds the proper name *pyδmz*, interpreted as *Pīlmaz, "as big as an elephant".²² In later centuries, the swashbuckling companions of the folk hero Kōroğlu, the bandit who flourished in the tumultuous period of the Jelali uprisings, were to give themselves heroic, tough guy names in Turkish like Kara Sā'at "Black Hour" (when you meet him, that is, it's not your day) or Tanrı Tanımaz "He doesn't recognize any god". In an Armenian version of the Kōroğlu epic we meet Palt'an, whose name I understand as a probable variant of Pīl-tan. Here is a brief glimpse of the latter-day "Elephant-bodied one" in action. The heroic literature of the Armenian plateau has as much vitality in the seventeenth century as it did in the seventh:

Ayvaz the Boy observed from far off that they were folding their tents. He said, "Boys, I tell you truly, they've captured Koroghlu and are taking him away."

Baba K'anhan asked, "How could you know? There are a few thousand of the enemy." He replied, "Forty thousand." They assembled the braves and

20- Thomson 1982, p. 31. And the symbolic opposition of the two animals goes farther back into antiquity: on a decadrachm Alexander is shown on horseback charging the elephant upon which the Indian king Porus is seated. See Russell 2012, with discussion and illustrations.

21- See J.R. Russell, "The *Shah-nameh* in Armenian Oral Epic," International Ferdousi Conference, Centre for the Great Islamic Encyclopaedia, Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran, August 2000, printed in Russell 2004, pp. 1063-1072.

22- See Lurje 2010, p. 317 no. 974.

took counsel: “How many men of us should go in order to free Koroghlu?” They decided eight should go and the rest should remain and wait for the outcome.

Eight men were chosen: Big Whiskered Yusuf, Isa the Kid, Crazy Hasan, the Smith’s Son, Basil the Arab, Inje the Arab, Crazy Murt’uza, and Baba K’anhān. As they mounted up, a ninth, Crazy Palt’an, who had not been chosen, could not restrain himself and set out running, without horse or weapon. Coming down from the mountain, he saw a huge willow tree growing on the road: he shook it, uprooted it, slung it over his shoulder and went on. When he got to the camp he asked a soldier, “Who is your greatest *yuzbashi* [commander]?” The soldier said, “What do you mean, *yuzbashi*? Our commander is a Bek, a Pasha!” Crazy Palt’an said, “I don’t know from Pashas— whoever your greatest man is, just show me where he is.” They showed him the green tent. He went that way: when the troops saw him, they thought a giant forest was coming upon them and milled about in confusion, unable to believe their eyes. And that way, plowing through the army, he went on and arrived at Poli Bek’s tent. Planting his tree at the entrance, he went inside. At that moment Poli Bek was sipping a golden cup of coffee, amber pipe in hand. He dropped both when he beheld the frightful spectacle; and before Crazy Palt’an could open his mouth, the quaking Poli Bek stammered, “Who are you and wha, wha, what is it you want?” Crazy Palt’an began to speak. “Hah, *yuzbashi*, where do you get off coming here with all these men and going around trampling the places where Koroghlu’s dappled horse likes to graze? When he goes out to graze tomorrow, and Koroghlu hears of it, he’ll have my head cut off.” Terrified and amazed, Poli Bek asked, “What are you to Koroghlu?” “I’m the guard of his pastures.” “Uh-oh,” said Poli Bek. “If this is what the one who guards the pastures is like, what is the guardian of the flocks themselves?”

He called, “Ghajar Ali, let Koroghlu stay on the side for now. Come and give some answer to this ferocious beast.”

In the other tent, when Koroghlu heard the loud, ox-voiced bellow of Crazy Palt’an, he spoke to his two guards: “See, one of my braves has come. The rest, wherever they are, will be here soon and scatter your whole army. Untie my arms and I promise that in return for the favor I’ll see you aren’t harmed.” Frightened, they were persuaded and freed Koroghlu’s arms. He took the *saz* in his hands and began to sing...²³

Prof. Richard C. Steiner, the eminent Yeshiva University Semitist, has pointed out to me that there is a far more famous elephant that one great king gave to another, albeit later

23- My translation, from Mkrtič‘ Taleanc‘ (*Ašeg* [Ašul] Jamali), tr. from Tk. to Arm., *K’orollu hek’iat’ə gzir öllui ev poli beki het patahac anc’k’erə*, Part I, Tiflis: Tparan Movsēs Vardaneanc’i, 1897, repr. in Solomonyan 1992.

that the exchange of gifts here. It is the one named Abū 'l-'Abbās, that Harun al-Rashid gave Charlemagne. The name is that of the uncle of Mohammed; it is also the name of Harun's own Abbasid dynasty itself, and since the word *'abbās* means "stern in countenance" (like our elephant), it is one name given also to the lion in Arabic. The recipient in our text, one recalls, is Young Lion— but that would be an anachronistic play on names. Elephants remained, at least one can say, a gift of iconic opulence at Muslim royal courts.

In the epigraph to this paper I have cited a medieval Hebrew compilation of the Biblical verses the various creations are believed to sing in praise of God. The powerful elephant, the hugest of land animals, recites a line from the Psalms praising God's deeds as "great" or "big" (Hebrew *gādū*), and adds that the Creator's thoughts are correspondingly very profound (*mə'od 'āmqū*). Surely the elephant's enduring, widespread, and deserved reputation for wisdom inspired the anonymous author's choice of a Biblical verse. And this figure combining great size and power with wisdom may be echoed in an arcanelly learned stanza of the Lament that likewise connects the two qualities: *Nirhēr i marmin, ayl hogwoyn art 'nut'eamb/ Varēr zkaṛs zArēsi i mēj astelac'n, / K'ajut'eamb berelov zušimut'eancalikn*, "In body he would slumber, yet in wakefulness of the soul/ He drove the chariot of Mars through the stars,/ Bravely bringing back the flower of wisdom."²⁴ Armenian *uš-im* has the sense of both intelligence and conscious alertness, from Middle Iranian *hōš*, the conscious mind, so Dawt'ak might have intended the verse to suggest that both the soul and mind of the princely warrior were awake even when he slept. The chariot of Mars is a symbol of strength: the occultist scholar Giordano Bruno was later to provide a vivid word picture of it in Book Two, Chapter Five of his work *De imaginum, signorum, et idearum compositione* (1591): "A man strong in appearance rises up... sinewy, full-chested, strong armed, broad-shouldered." He carries a bronze shield on which is engraved the image of a dragon, and "with his right hand he brandishes a gleaming yellow sword that blinds the eye with fiery splendor. He stands in a four-wheeled chariot drawn by four wing-footed horses. His charioteer is a woman sentinel they call Bellona who drives the team with a snake whip." Bruno later adds the comment that the classical image reminds him of the contemporary "Turk... who is about to triumph over the nations, who is armed only with helmet, sword, and shield, while the rest of his body is not hampered, but remains very free for action."²⁵

So the mighty Javānšēr is both strong and wise, like an elephant; and he also controls his power. The image of the chariot itself suggests this: Plato famously employed the metaphor of the charioteer and his horses to explain how the mind should govern our bodily passions and energies, and Elišē, our Armenian *locus classicus* for the elephant, employs the figure of the chariot as well, since for him the dispute between Zoroastrian Iran and Christian Armenia is as much a moral and intellectual as a military one. He depicts the Persians as lustful, choleric, and intemperate; the Armenian Christians, as chaste,

24- Aṛak'elyan 1983, p. 229, lines 1-3.

25- C. Doria and D. Higgins 1991, pp. 155-161.

restrained, and thoughtful. *Bolor marmnoys hogi kendanut'wn, isk marmnoy ew hogwoy mitk' en karavar: ew orpēs ar mi mard, ayspēs ar bolor ašxarhs. T'agaworn oč' ziwrn miayn tac'ē partis, ayl ew oroc' elew patčark' i korust* “The soul is that which animates the whole body; while the mind is charioteer of both body and soul. And as this is for one man, so it is for all realms. The king is not to render his own debts alone, but those of all for whom he became the cause of perdition.”²⁶ The prince of the Ałuans, then, is no less mighty than his Sasanian forefathers; but as a Christian he combines, in contrast to them, his power with wise governance of his passions. Both the oration enumerating and praising the gifts he has received, and the Lament over his treacherous murder make this explicit: his elephant, its reputation restored from Zoroastrian obloquy, combines might with sagacity; driving his chariot while spiritually awake even in corporeal slumber, Javānšēr skillfully reins in the tempestuous steeds of Ares. Dawt'ak by recalling the slumber (*nirh*) of the prince during his life and his imaginal heavenly ascent then, may thereby suggest also in the Lament that now, having entered into that deeper and longer sleep that is the death of the body, the prince's enfranchised soul has ascended once more, prepared by its spiritual *askēsis* in life for the joys of heaven, and perhaps the approach to another chariot—the one on which, according to the vision of Ezekiel, God is enthroned.

The poet describes these gifts in an extremely rich and recondite style, loading down with words objects and animals already supercharged with symbolic content. But it is a vivid style that is still free of rebarbative Hellenophilica, and there is only one Classical allusion to send an anxious banqueter scurrying to the boxes of volumes of his memory palace—the mention of Nero. There are also only two passages where an alliterative pattern is consciously stressed, and they seem overt and clear, and are intended, one thinks, to highlight what should by now be for us a familiar contrast: the heavy *anari*, *anbari*, *anheded* elephant dragging its trunk along the ground as it shambles, *versus* the capering horses, light as the wind, walking, trotting, and galloping (*čemołk' čepołk' ew ews čax-raslac'k'*). The alliteratively abusive epithets heaped upon the back of the poor elephant have further unsettling overtones in Armenian usage. The word *anari* can mean either unmanly (with Arm. *ayr*, “man”) or un-Iranian (from *an-arya-*) or both, that is, simply, monstrous; *anbari* “not-good” was employed memorably by Movsēs Xorenac'i in the figure *anbari barerarut'wn*, “beneficence that is not good” to describe the proto-communist, Mazdakite social experiments he attributes to the monster-tyrant Aždahak. But Javānšēr, the prince who receives a gift fit only for a king, will use his abundance of divine glory, it is hoped, to transform the creature, redeeming his new elephant as a wholly Christianized embodiment of the Lord's weighty thoughts, as he sets off home for the Caucasus.

One may offer a final observation. The composer of the passage describing all the gift giving, Dawt'ak perhaps, stresses that he saw it all, that he *heard* the thin, sweet syllables of the parrot and the stentorian heaving of the elephant. And in the passage setting the scene for the Lament, the sad tidings of the death of the prince are said to spread as a

26- Elišē, text p. 15; the translation is mine.

whisper or murmur across the land, and the onomatopoeic word *ššuk* /*šəšhúk*/ is used. The reader will recall how Movsēs Xorenac‘i foregrounds his snatches of ancient epics and lays: The singers of Golt‘n tell... The old women tell... But some say... The same singers express... We heard with our own ears how they sang this to the accompaniment of the *p‘andir̄n*... (I.30, I.31, II.61) Perhaps there is more to this than mere dramatic strategy. The Classicist Shane Butler, in a recent study,²⁷ suggests that ancient writers employed such strategies— alliteration, onomatopoeisis, etc.— not so much to embellish their compositions or to argue their veracity, as to make the reader, who was most often reciting out loud, or having the book read to him, hear and reproduce the sounds of the scene being described. As though the *volumen* or codex were an ancient phonograph. The dismembered corpse of Orpheus course down the river and Ovid sings, *Flebile nescioquid queritur lyra, flebile lingua murmurat exanimis, respondent flebile ripae* (Metamorphoses 11.50-53), “Crying, the lyre something is keening; crying, the tongue murmurs, inanimate; crying the riverbanks respond.” Lyre, tongue, and nature all give voice and the words are shaped by the poet in such a way, Butler argues, as to engage our imaginative capacity not merely to know about, but to hear those unified voices, the ink of the scribe’s pen being, as it were, the groove of a vinyl record. “Any writing system,” he argues, “that corresponds to fairly stable conventions of speech can capture such phonetic figures (i.e., one hears them while reading), but alphabetic writing actually represents them (i.e., they are as visible as they are audible, at least to the extent to which its letters continue to match, one-to-one, the constitutive sounds of speech.” Koriwn, the lion cub, writes in the eleventh chapter of his *Life* of Maštoc‘, “At that time this realm of the Armenians was without doubt blessed and desirable, wondrous: in it suddenly the lawgiver Moses, with the ranks of the Prophets, and the forward-gazing Paul, with the whole troop of the Apostles, together with the Gospel of Christ that animates the world, came, arrived, all at once thanks to these two partners [Sahak and Mesrop] and were found to be Armenian by language, Armenian in speech (*hayabarbak‘ hayerēnaxawsk‘*).” It is not, perhaps, just rhetoric: the alliterative, repetitive figure at the breathless conclusion of the passage invites the reader to hear in his mind the sudden clamor of many voices. One may return to these key texts of the Armenian tradition with an aim to recover how they may be heard, how the miraculous phonograph of Maštoc‘ has recorded them with high fidelity (itself a phrase no longer often heard). But that is for another time. For now, at least, thanks to Little David’s recording pen, we can hear the speech of the parrot and the snort of the elephant that the young lion prince received, and, if we listen closely, the clinking of cups, the din and murmur and whisper of the feast, in a faraway kingdom, long, long ago.

27- Butler 2015, p. 15.

List of Plates.

1. Drawing for the front of a Hanukkah menorah by the Israeli artist Ze'ev Raban, ca. 1950, from Batsheva Goldman Ida, *Ze'ev Raban, A Hebrew Symbolist*, Tel Aviv Museum of Art and Yad Yitzhak Ben-Zvi, Jerusalem, Israel, 2001, p. 180 pl. 234.
2. The Battle of Avarayr, AD 451, from a Šarakan (Hymnal) of 1482, Erevan Matenadaran MS 1620, from L.A. Durnovo and R.G. Drambyan, *Haykakan manrankarē 'ut 'yun* [*Armenian Miniatures*], Erevan: Hayastan, 1969, pl. 71.

Bibliography

- Varag Arak'elyan, ed., Movsēs Kałankatuac'i, *Patmut'wn aluanic' ašxarhi*, Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1983.
- Shane Butler, *The Ancient Phonograph*, New York: Zone, 2015.
- C. Doria and D. Higgins, ed. and tr., Giordano Bruno, *On the Composition of Images, Signs and Ideas*, New York: Willis, Locker & Owens, 1991.
- C.J.F. Dowsett, *The History of the Caucasian Albanians by Movsēs Dasxuranc'i*, London: Oxford University Press, 1961.
- John Greppin, *Classical and Middle Armenian Bird Names*, Delmar, NY: Caravan, 1978.
- Prudence O. Harper, *The Royal Hunter: Art of the Sasanian Empire*, New York: The Asia Society, 1978.
- Seamus Heaney, tr., *Beowulf*, New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2000.
- Paul Kosmin, *The Land of the Elephant Kings: Space, Territory, and Ideology in the Seleucid Empire*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014.
- Pavel B. Lurje, *Personal Names in Sogdian Texts, Iranisches Personennamenbuch*, Vol. 2, *Mitteliranischen Personennamen*, Fasc. 8, Vienna: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2010.
- G. Moravcsik and R. Jenkins, ed. and tr., Constantine Porphyrogenitus, *De Administrando Imperio*, Budapest, 1949.
- Ghāda al-Hijjāwī al-Qaddūmī, tr., *Book of Gifts and Rarities (Kitāb al-hadāyā wa al-tuḥaf)*, Cambridge, MA: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University, 1996.
- J.R. Russell, *Yovhannēs T'lkuranc'i and the Mediaeval Armenian Lyric Tradition*, University of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies 7, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1987.
- J.R. Russell, "Two Armenian Toponyms," *Annual of Armenian Linguistics* 9, 1988, pp. 281-287.
- J.R. Russell, "A Parthian *Bhagavad Gita* and its Echoes," in J.-P. Mahé and R.W. Thomson, eds., *From Byzantium to Iran: In Honour of Prof. Nina Garsoian*, Atlanta, GA: Scholars Press, 1996, pp. 17-35.

- J.R. Russell, *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, Armenian Heritage Press and Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9, Cambridge, MA, 2004.
- J.R. Russell, "Frik: The Bridge of Poetry," in *Anathemata Heortika: Studies in Honor of Thomas F. Mathews*, ed. Joseph D. Alchermes, Mainz: Philipp Von Zabern, 2009.
- J.R. Russell, "*The Book of the Way (Girk' chanaparhi)* of Yeghishe Charents: An Illuminated Apocalyptic Gospel for Soviet Armenia," Armenian Studies Program Occasional Paper Series, University of California, Berkeley, Stephan Astourian, general ed., Spring 2012.
- J.R. Russell, "The Interrupted Feast," in publication in Basil Lurie, ed., *Karen Nikitich Yuzbashian Memorial Volume*, St. Petersburg, [2016].
- Hasmik Simonyan, ed., *Patmut' iwn Alek'sandri Makedonac' woy*, Erevan: Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1989.
- Rabbi Natan Slifkin, *Perek Shirah: Nature's Song*, Brooklyn, NY: Zoo Torah, 2nd ed. 2009.
- Ėazmik Solomonyan, ed., *Ašul Ėarib, K'yor-Ölli, Amrah ev Salvi, Alvan ev Ösan*, Erevan: Zart'onk'-90, 1992.
- Rolf Strootman, *Courts and Elites in the Hellenistic Empires: The Near East After the Achaemenids, c. 330 to 30 BCE*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014.
- E. Tēr Minasean, ed., Ėlišē, *Vasn Vardanay ew Hayoc' paterazmin*, Erevan, 1957.
- R.W. Thomson, tr., Ėlišē, *History of Vardan and the Armenian War*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- A.M. Wolohojian, tr. from Armenian, *The Romance of Alexander the Great by Pseudo-Callisthenes*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1969.

HERESIES: ON AN ARMENIAN PRAYER TO THE SUN

JAMES R. RUSSELL

According to Yovhan of Odzun, titled *imastaser* (“the Philosopher”, d. 728), a theologian who wrote a tract *Enddem Pawghikeants* “Against the Paulicians”,¹ the latter heretics *zaregahn aghach’el kamets’eal asen, arewik lusik* “when they wish to beseech the Sun, say ‘Little sun, little light’”. The *Oskip’orik* (a thirteenth-century miscellany containing texts of various periods) reports virtually the same text, though the “heretics” in question are designated differently: *Manik’ets’ik’ erdnun yaregahn, ew asen: lusik, arewik k’aghts’rik, li es tiezerok* “the Manichaeans swear by the sun and say ‘Little light, little Sun, little sweet one—you are full of the world.’”² The differences between the two testimonia are not great, but the latter gives us a just little more of the text and describes the formula as an *oath* (verb *erdnum*; noun *erdumn*, pl. *erdmunk*) rather than a prayer. If further verses followed, they are unfortunately not attested. But the one precious verse we have is tantalizing enough to warrant close analysis. After all, Armenian literature does not afford very many texts that are identified explicitly as native and non-Christian. As to the identity of its original reciters, one must keep in mind that medieval Armenian writers were generally clerics with a strongly held ideological position and social role; they tended to paint with a broad brush when depicting, generally in disparaging hues at that, what they considered heterodox beliefs. So their writings sometimes lump together indiscriminately Manichaeans, Christian dissident sects, and others. Most any of these could conceivably have addressed a prayer to the sun now and then, or sworn by it—the Manichaeans had a sun god in their bafflingly vast pantheon of mythical beings.

But one long ago proposed a more likely single source for the prayer: there were Armenians who preserved some of the Zoroastrian heritage of the pre-Christian era and called themselves *Arewardik*, or “Children of the Sun”. I will proceed from the assumption that this prayer to—or oath invoking—the sun was in fact theirs. It would have ample ancient precedent in the country. Movses Khorenats’i in his *History of the Armenians* mentions the custom of swearing by the sun twice, with reference to both pre- and early-Christian Armenia. In book 2.19 he writes that Hyrcanus asked for an oath from Barzap’ran, clan leader (*nahapet*) of the Armenian canton of Rshtunik. (This would be in the mid-first century BCE; the Rshtuni noble’s name in Iranian means “high glory” and may refer to the dynastic sacred fire of the Parthian Arsacid dynasty, *Adur Burzen Mihr*, the Fire of High Mithra. Mithra is “high, lofty” because of his place with the Sun-god in heaven.) The latter *erdnu nma yaregahn ew yamenayn pashtamuns iwreants’ ernkayins ew erkayins, ew yarew Artashezi ew Tigranay* “swears to him by the solar orb and by all things heavenly and earthly that they venerate, and by the sun of Artashez and Tigran.” And in 3.22, with reference to the events of the fourth century CE, in newly baptized

¹ See Norayr Pogharean (Bogharian), *Hay groghner* (Armenian Writers) (Jerusalem: St. James, 1970), 98–102.

² James R. Russell, *Zoroastrianism in Armenia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Iranian Series, 1987), 213, 524, and ch. 16 for a general discussion of the *Arewardik*.

Armenia, *Erdnoyr Vardan yarewn ark'ayi*, “Vardan swore by the sun of the king.”³ To this day in Armenian *arev* “sun” is a way of referring to a person’s life, soul, or fortune; so it is common to swear *arevid merrnem*, “may I die for your sun”. Light is another important, obvious, and related metaphor, so one common expression for “I bring you good news,” “Congratulations,” or the like is *ach'k'id luys*, lit. “light to your eyes.” Light, eyes, and sun form a pattern of homologies nigh universal to the human race (and probably to most terrestrial beings); but it may be argued that in Armenia, whose religious pre-Christian substratum is Zoroastrian, the particular emphasis on light in the language, and in religious culture in particular, may be a survival of the older religion, that placed (and still places) the symbolism of fire and the sun at its very center.

From what little is known of the Arewordik', they preserved a number of telltale Zoroastrian beliefs and observances; and the sun, which the little prayer addresses so reverently and lovingly, is fittingly part of the name by which the Christian sources designate them. (Their beliefs were probably related to those of the Shamsis in northern Syria, whose name contains Arabic *shams*, “sun”. But we still do not know what they called themselves.) The sun is the greatest of all fires for the Zoroastrians, for whom fire is the pre-eminent living symbol and focus (no pun intended) of the faith. It embodies the light, warmth, life, and power of the supreme divinity Ahura Mazda, the Lord Wisdom, Creator of heaven and earth. Zoroastrians invoke the sun, Middle Persian *Khwarshed*, and the closely associated *yazata* (spiritual being worthy of reverence) Mithra, *Mihr* in Middle Iranian, thrice daily in litanies (*niyayishn*) that are recited together. In Muslim Persian, *mehr* endures as a common noun, for the sun and for loving kindness; it is because of the latter meaning used as a proper name for girls;⁴ and tradition remembers the autumn feast *jashn-e Mehregan*. The old Armenian calendar has a month named Meheki, from *Mihrakan. Our Arewordi prayer does not mention Mihr (or as he was in medieval Armenian, Mher) by name, yet his presence loomed large in Armenian culture and lore, even long after the baptism of most of the nation early in the fourth century. Mithra is, as the guardian of covenants, the divinity most closely attached to human concerns; and he is in many ways the most human of the Zoroastrian *yazatas*, the only one whose portrayal as a human being in a fixed form—with a rayed nimbus—is stable and universal throughout the Iranian world over a millennium. One recalls that Mithra is the only Iranian divinity around whom an entire new faith took shape, the mystery religion of Mithraism in the Roman empire. It would even seem that the liberation struggle against the Arabs in the eighth and ninth centuries CE coalesced around a revival of the reverence for Mithra—two out of the four heroes of the great epic cycle of Sasun, the millennial folk composition that gave voice to that struggle, are named Mher, that is, Mithra. In a recent study I have placed the anti-Arab uprising and the heroic epic that crystallized around it beginning in the eighth century, to contemporary events in the Iranian world east of Armenia, where a Mithraic revival, as it were, also took place. The revival in that period of pre-Islamic and, it would seem, also pre-Christian national identity at precisely that time might also argue a “late” date for the *History of the Armenians* of Movses Khorenats'i, which is, in contrast to the earlier histories, such a treasure house of pre-Christian lore—lore that its compiler cherished, at that.

³ See also Vardan Hats'uni, *Erdmunk' hin Hayots' mej* (Oaths in Ancient Armenia) (Venice: S. Lazzaro, 1932), 52 et seq.

⁴ Such an association may be why the meticulous Herodotus misidentified Mithra as a goddess.

We know already *how* the epic evolved and what ancient features it brought together. Looking at the Sasun cycle in that context answers the other question: *Why?*⁵

This little invocation, or perhaps fragment of a longer one, if there was originally more—seems clearly to be a folk prayer, the vernacular composition of unlettered people, not a version of a pre-existing prayer, say, in Avestan—the Old Iranian sacred language of the Zoroastrian sacred books.⁶ Its Classical Armenian aspect, as we shall see presently, is ungrammatical, so it does not have the character of a literal or even slightly garbled citation of an old text from a book. Rather it seems a vernacular verse that bears the external influence of the high speech of Christian liturgy: it is *parole*, touched by *langue*. But that does not mean it is not poetically sophisticated in its way; and an examination of its structure will suggest, I think, that it is artful indeed. Let us try an analysis of the six words that constitute the longer version. They can be evenly divided into two hemistichs of three words each: seven syllables in the first; six in the second. The caesura feels naturally placed, as the first three words are a compact unit of two nouns (little light, little sun) and a noun or adjective (little sweet [one?]), with no verbs. All are diminutives, and all bear a stress on the final syllable: *-ik*, *-ik*, *-ik*. All are vocatives: little light, little sun, little sweet one. The second part of the verse could stand as an independent declarative statement: it has implicit subject with verb and thus is contrastively different. Its sound pattern underscores that contrast. The hemistich begins with two terse monosyllables: the first is *li*, “full”; the second of them, the enclitic verb *es* “thou art” with implied subject—so *li es*. These terse words are followed, balanced, by the final long drawn out word of the line, the four-syllable */tíyazerók’/* (inserting the onglide *-y-*: there is no hiatus between *i* and *e*). Its first syllable, *tí-*, “god, divine”, resonates alliteratively but also semantically with the first word of the hemistich, *li*, “full”—for divinity is a pleroma, a fullness. And the *k* of the final syllable *-ók’* recapitulates the three-fold *k* of the three substantives of the first part, indeed emphasizing it by its aspiration, while the vowel *o* marks a differentiation from the repeated *i* of *-ik* and *li*.

The addition of the diminutive (the Arm. suffix is *-ik*), so important to the structure of this brief verse, is common in affection and also in reverence in the Indo-European languages, cf. Rus. *царь батюшка* “Tsar Little Father”. The threefold invocation of a divinity that we see in this Armenian folk prayer is also an ancient and important Indo-European feature that likewise survives in the Russian honorific, not for what is above but for what is below—*Мать сыра земля* “Mother Damp Earth”. The latter indeed corresponds very closely to the threefold Zoroastrian honorific given the goddess of the waters and of female fecundity and purity in the Avesta: *aredvi sura anahita*, “damp powerful undefiled”. The final epithet of the triad became the goddess’ proper name, attested in Armenian as Anahit and as Nahid

⁵ See James R. Russell, “Mithra,” forthcoming in a special volume of *Iran and the Caucasus* dedicated to the proceedings of a conference held at the Collège de France, Paris, October 2015.

⁶ There is a fragment of a Sogdian Zoroastrian text containing a version of the Ashem Vohu prayer, somewhat changed in transmission over time, in either very old Avestan or another form of Old Iranian; see *The Everlasting Flame: Zoroastrianism in History and Imagination*, ed. Sarah Stewart (London: I.B. Tauris, 2013), 93-94 and pl. 27. This would be an attestation of local variants of the *manthra spenta*, the holy word, of the sort one might have hoped to find among Armenian Zoroastrians. But by the time Odznets’i was writing, these had perhaps already been forgotten, or else were not recited in the presence of Christians, who do not observe Zoroastrian laws of purity and whose physical presence might therefore have been believed to violate their sanctity. It is also possible that the believers in Aramazd/Ahura Mazda also did not wish to expose their cherished words to mockery and disrespect.

in modern Persian.⁷ One will have more to say about triads in their Christian context presently; and perhaps the most important expression of this idea in human religious culture is the Christian Holy Trinity itself. But with more specific reference to the Zoroastrians and the Armenian Children of the Sun, one notes that St. Nerses *Shnorhali* (“the Graceful”), who was concerned with the conversion of the Arewordik’ to Christianity, might have composed at least one strophe of his credal poem *Hawatov khostovanim*, “I confess in faith”, with a view to attracting them, since it seems to echo the Zoroastrian moral triad of good thoughts, words, and deeds (Av. *humata hukhta hvarshata*). The standard Zoroastrian prayer *Vispa humata*, which declares that the three virtues bring salvation, might suggest that recitation of the triad, with its rhythmic breathing of the initial *h-*, served as a *mantra* Zoroastrian priests used to help go into trance and overcome the terrors of the unconscious and the dangers of the road as they undertook shamanic journeys through the Otherworld. Today, many modern Zoroastrians consider the triad, whether in Avestan as above, as Middle-Persianized *humat, hukht, hvarshat*, or as Persian *pendar-e nik, goftar-e nik, kerdar-e nik*, to be the defining tenet of their religion as a whole.⁸

The sun stands in heaven, and one might have expected in the one verse of our possibly Arewordi prayer to encounter not *tiezerk’*, which means the universe or the world in its entirety, but the more common Arm. *erkink’*, “heaven”. The latter, as the standard term in Armenian,⁹ is paired with rhyming *erkir*, “earth”, in what is likely to be the most ancient poetical text preserved in writing in the language: the song of the birth of the god Vahagn (Avestan Verethraghna, Middle Iranian Bahram), preserved in the *History of the Armenians* of Movses Khorenats’i. It is encountered frequently and forever thereafter in most every imaginable poetic form. The alliterative and thematic association of the two words among native speakers is so strong that it exerts a kind of subconscious gravitational pull—the words for heaven and earth sound similar to each other, as a kind of pair, in a private language that an Armenian invented in the 18th century—this despite his obvious and deliberate effort to make his new tongue not sound like his native Armenian. In the language they are *rōšmēxe* (“earth”) and *rōčki* (“heaven”), with the initial un-trilled *r* that is extremely rare in Armenian words. He invented an alphabet based on the Armenian script, partly for his invented tongue and partly for the transcription of a number of magical spells and

⁷ For a discussion of this, see James R. Russell, “The Word *chragamah* and the Rites of the Armenian Goddess,” *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 5 (1990-1991): 157-72.

⁸ On St. Nerses’ credo, see James R. Russell, “A Credo for the Children of the Sun,” *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 4 (1988-1989): 157-60; on the possible use in the Sasanian period of *humata, hukhta, hvarshata* as a shamanistic mantra see James R. Russell, “An Armeniological Note on Kartir’s Vision,” in *Dasturji Dr. Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza Birth Centenary Memorial Volume* (Udvada: Dastur Kayoji Mirza Institute, 2010), 253-58.

⁹ The less common word for the sky, *anjrapet*, “ruler of the waterless”, seems to be a term for the airy region intermediate (cf. Skt. *antariksha*, “ruler of the in between”) between the solid earth and the upper waters that in Biblical cosmology were released during the Deluge but are now held back (see Genesis 1.7). Psalm 148.4 exults, *Halleluhu shemei ha-shamayim/ ve-ha-mayim asher me’al ha-shamayim* “Praise Him, heavens of the heavens/ And the waters that are above the heavens.” Cf. Ps. 104.3 *Ha-miqra va-mayim ‘alilotav/ Ha-sam ‘avim rekhuvo* “Who founds the beams of Your upper chambers in the waters./ Who makes the clouds His chariot.” In the Mishnaic tractate *Chagiga* the three travelers to heaven are warned not to say “Water, water!” when they see the marble (Heb. *shayish*) of the divine *hekhalot*, “mansions, halls”. The floor of the palace of Solomon, in legend, was made of plates of glass beneath which was water, to produce perhaps a similar effect. In Armenian mystical theology, the “final curtain” between this world and heaven is *loytsn matsuats*, “liquid made solid”—the marble, as solidified water, that Rabbi Akiva and his companions beheld, perhaps. See James R. Russell, “Liturgical Mysticism and the Narek,” *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes* 26 (1996-1997): 427-39.

stories of herbal lore. The script is pleasingly similar in appearance to Georgian cursive *mkhedruli*; and some of the sounds of his invented tongue, *rshtuni* (a word meaning here secret language, after the argot of Armenian traveling merchants hailing from the province of Rshtunik'), resemble those of Georgian. He lived most likely in Georgia, then the center of Armenian life in the Transcaucasus, and was thus acquainted with the local language, which, though rich in Iranian and Armenian loans, is decidedly not Indo-European.¹⁰

In the fragmentary prayer studied here, perhaps *tiezerk'* was used with honorific intent. The late Prof. Charles Dowsett suggested the word is to be analyzed as **ti-*, a root which he argues meant at first "divide, apportion", and *ezr*, "boundary", ending in *pluralis tantum* in *-k'*. It would have originally meant "boundary of a plot of land" and its meaning developed from there to "inhabited world", expanding thence to "universe". One may cite two common examples for the sense of honor and superiority that *ti-* confers. The first is the honorific *ter*, "lord", from **ti-ayr*; the second its heterosexual partner, *tikin* "lady". The former is to this day the appellation of an Armenian priest; and it carries on in American-Armenian surnames like Der Hovannessian, literally "son of Father John". The latter, *tikin*, is attested in Agathangelos' narrative of the conversion of the Armenians as a title or cult epithet of the goddess Anahit, evidently translating an Iranian term. Nowadays it just means "missus"; for "mister", we can thank the Crusaders for Armenian *baron*. The anachronistic Classical plural is used in formal address, so "Ladies and Gentlemen" becomes the *Dignayk' yev baronayk'* familiar to anyone who has sat through a public speech. (One transcribes the Western form since except for Iran, Eastern Armenian was communized and for some decades employed only *enkerner*, "comrades".)

By the Middle Ages the process of dialect variation in Armenian just alluded to, which had begun in ancient times and of course is still continuing—as tends to happen with many living languages—might have led to the mutual voicing and devoicing of the palatals *d* and *t* that one observes in the Western and Eastern forms of the modern language today. So perhaps after a time, in westerly cantons of the Armenian mountain fastnesses, the reciters of the Arewordi prayer might have heard in *tiezerk'*, pronounced by some */diyezerk'/*, also the pagan term for a divinity, Classical Arm. *di-k'*. We find it in the pre-Christian toponym *Dits'avan* ("Place of the gods"), and in *diwc'-azn* "gods' [noble] progeny", i.e., "hero" (for which the Greek loan *heros* is used interchangeably). Dowsett posed as a semantic parallel to **ti-k'*, "apportion(er?)" the Vedic *bhaga-*, "*idem*", which comes to mean "god" in Indian and Iranian. One may cite the Russian loan *Bor* and the immensely productive Iranian-in-Armenian *bag-* "god" of Bagawan "Place of the god(s)", an alternative name for *Dits'avan supra, bagin* "(pagan) shrine", Bag(a)rat "god-given [cf. Gk. Theodoros]", etc. In the Armenian version of the Bible, *tiezerk'* regularly translates the Greek *oikoumene* "world, universe" of the Septuagint; twice, in Psalms, it renders *ta perata tes ges*, "the ends/extremes of the earth". The word just might have been used for what its authors perceived as possible overtones of pre-Christian antiquity and non-Christian sanctity, though it has a respectable place in Christian usage as well.

¹⁰ James R. Russell, "Armenian Secret and Invented Languages and Argots," *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana* 8.3 (2012): 602-84; and Charles J.F. Dowsett, "Arm. *ter, tikin, tiezerk'*," *Mémorial du Cinquantenaire, 1914-1964* (Paris: École des langues orientales anciennes de l'Institut Catholique de Paris: 1964), 135-45.

Whatever the case with *tiezerk'*, the preceding phrase “you are full of” and the use of the Classical Armenian instrumental plural for “world” itself in our invocation leaves no room for doubt at all. It points, not to any Zoroastrian or other pre-Christian source, but to a patterning upon, and borrowing from, the Sanctus in the Anamnesis (*yishatakn*) of the Divine Liturgy (*patarag*) of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The passage is very famous and is well known, indeed, to adherents of most Christian confessions: *Surb, surb, surb ter zorut'eants' li en erkink' ew erkir p'arrok' k'o: orhnut'awn i bardzuns. Orhneald or ekir ew galots'd es anuamb Tearnn: Ovsanna i bardzuns.* “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, **the heavens and earth are full of your glory.** Blessed are you who came and are to come in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the heights.”¹¹ This passage derives from the throne vision of Isaiah 6.3, used in the Jewish “angelic” liturgy of the *Qedusha* [“Sanctification”] that is chanted during the repetition out loud of the silent *'Amida* (lit., “Standing”) prayer: *Qadosh, qadosh, qadosh Adonai tseva'ot melo kol ha-arets kevodo*, “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, all the earth is full of His glory.”¹² The Christian usage is different from the original Hebrew, and felicitously so for Armenian, since in that language is used the alliterative heaven and earth pair so cherished by the language. The Christian prayer has *li en* “they are full”; our strophe has *li es*. The re-use of the instrumental plural in *-ok'* (in *p'arrok'*, “glory”, a loan from Old Iranian *farnah-*) clearly patterns the Arewordi prayer on the Christian one. The Arewordi usage is perhaps ungrammatical, too, since one has to stretch the grammar to make the prayer mean what one thinks the Arewordik' might have intended it to mean: “O sun, the world is full of you” (not, “O sun, you are full of the world”). Space or the universe as we behold it in the daytime is filled with the light of the sun; the sun is not filled with it.¹³ The Arewordik', who most likely had no access to a high social position or to education, might not have understood Classical Armenian any better than other peasants did. There is some irony in this, since as preservers of a pre-Christian faith they were closer in their traditions and beliefs to its sources than the country's patron saint Gregory the Illuminator, the inventor of the alphabet St. Mesrop Mashtots', and the others who had co-opted their language to Christian usage. The latter is replete with densely meaningful Zoroastrian terms like *p'arrk'*. One must also consider the possibility that there is no grammatical error and they meant exactly what they are reported to have said. It would seem that after the Armenian Genocide there are no Children of the Sun around any longer to explain; but let us conjecture for a moment that *p'arrk'*, *farnah-*, Av. *khvarenah-*, was understood to mean, among other things, solar radiance, which is both spatial (radiance, after all, has to radiate) and supernal. Might *tiezerk'* then have been meant to stand in for it, perhaps so as to ameliorate somewhat the Christian content (even though the Christian text uses an Iranian word)? If we take the verse, then, as it is, rather than as containing a grammatical mistake, it might be rendered thus: “Beloved light! Beloved sun, sweet! Thou art replete with the vast divine spaces!” The

¹¹ Tiran Nersoyan, ed., *Pataragamatoys' Hayastaneayts' Arrak'elakan Ughghap'arr Ekeghets'woy* (Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church) (New York: Delphic Press, 1950), 66.

¹² This prayer is also commonly called that of the *Shemoneh 'esrei*, “Eighteen [Benedictions]” and is regarded as a substitute for the Temple sacrifice.

¹³ Armenian has various words for the sun, and in the poem on Vahagn's birth the god's eyes are *aregakunk'*, “solar orbs”. Another term, *arp'i*, probably related to the root *erew-* “appear”, may mean not just the sun itself but the sunlight that fills the daytime sky. So the heavens are full of the sun. Iranian miniature painters sometimes paint the sky gold to reflect this understanding of sunlight.

Zoroastrian texts speak of Ahura Mazda as reigning in *roshn anagan*, “unbounded radiance”, so the same brilliant vision might lend a reflection of its light to our verse.

Why is the Sanctus the particular prayer that seems to have left its mark on the Arewordi strophe? Its source is in a vision of angels, and in the song of Armenian rite, usually performed by a woman with a beautiful voice, one can sense the still solemn sweetness of their beating wings. The threefold repetition of the word “holy” (*surb*) would also have attracted common folk in whose language, folklore, and mental conceptions triads, as we have already observed, are a basic element and building block, a *topos*. This observation might explain also why it was that late medieval Armenians chose the Trisagion (Gk., “thrice holy”)—and in particular the version of the formula that is chanted the feasts of the Cross—*Surb Astuac, surb ew hzor, surb ew anmah, or khach 'ets 'ar vasn mer, oghormea mez* “Holy God, holy and powerful, holy and immortal, who was crucified for us, have mercy on us”¹⁴ as the pivotal prayer to translate into *mareren* (“Median”, i.e., Kurdish) in the 17th century. This was done perhaps in order to attract proselytes of Iranian speech.¹⁵ Threefold words and things have a familiar and pleasant resonance to the ear attuned to archetypal poetic forms, threefold invocations are like spells (cf. the Zoroastrian triad discussed above, and perhaps the three virtues in Hebrew *infra*), spells are believed to have power and thereby gain respect and attention, and power is attractive to anybody looking for a new religion. If his old faith still possessed the attraction of supernatural power and efficacy for him, why would he abandon it? This particular form of the Trisagion (for there are several, depending upon the occasion) also specifically mentions the Cross, the defining symbol of the faith. The others do not. In the Conversion of St. Cyprian, which in the Middle Ages became a very popular talismanic text in Armenian folk belief and remains so to this day as the *Kiprianos*, the sorcerer Cyprian of Antioch abandons his pagan beliefs after a spell fails and the demons explain to him the superior power of the Cross. He promptly converts to Christianity. The motivation for his action seems scarcely to have been altruistic; and indeed as one reads on, his acceptance of the new dispensation proved to be a shrewd career move for him—he went on, not to assume the crown of martyrdom (unlike his namesake, St. Cyprian of Carthage, with whom he is not infrequently confused) but the miter of a bishop.¹⁶ Still, the *historiola* illustrates the particular Armenian reverence for the Cross, which some Christian neighbors remarked upon as excessive. Turkish naturally acquired many Armenian loan words; but it is perhaps indicative of the Armenians’ stress on the sacred sign that it is the Armenian word for the Cross, *khach*’, rather than some transmitted form of Arabic *salib*, or Greek

¹⁴ Nersoyan, *Pataragamatoys*’, 40.

¹⁵ On the prayer, see James R. Russell, “On Armeno-Iranian Interaction in the Medieval Period,” in *Au carrefour des religions. Mélanges offerts à Philippe Gignoux*, ed. Rika Gyselen (Leuven: Peeters, 1995), 235-38. Conversion from Islam to Christianity in the Muslim world was and is fraught with extreme danger, and pressure to abjure one’s faith went in the other direction. But one may cite, for instance, the case of T’ukhman, a Kurdish youth of Diyarbakir who was baptized an Armenian Christian in the 18th century and suffered martyrdom for it. See James R. Russell, “The Armenian Shrines of the Black Youth (*t’ux manuk*),” *Le Muséon* 111.3-4 (1998): 319-43, esp. 322-24.

¹⁶ The cynical materialism of Cyprian’s conversion corresponds well to the practical concerns of a magician. It does not matter whether the rite is for good or ill, divine or demonic, so long as it works. His name is therefore associated with grimoires (manuals of black and white magic, from an old French word for grammar): in the 18th century a short text, the *Ciprianillo*, was popular in Spain; or one might employ the *Cypriani Clavis Inferni sive Magia Alba et Nigra approbata Metratona* to open (with the Kabbalistic archangel Metatron’s assistance) the gates of hell. See Owen Davies, *Grimoires: A History of Magic Books* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 32-33 and 114-25 with fig. 9.

stavros, that was borrowed into Turkish as *hach* and became the standard term for the symbol.¹⁷

What of the appellation *k'aghts'rik*, "little sweet one"? The Armenian word for "sweet" is cognate with the English and thus goes back to the earliest Indo-European stratum of the language; the modern synonym *anush*, from Classical *anoysh*, is a Middle Iranian loan meaning "immortal", hence ambrosia (lit., immortal [wine]), with the secondary sense of "sweet" emerging from there. But the source is neither proto-Indo-European nor Iranian, one thinks, but again the Armenian liturgy, in this case the Hymn of Praise before Communion. *Matik' arr Ter ew arrek' zloys. Aleluia./ Chashakets'ek' ew terek' zi k'aghts'r e Ter. Aleluia.* "Come near to the Lord and take the light. Halleluyah./ Taste and see that the Lord is sweet. Halleluyah."¹⁸ It is telling also that the Christian hymn juxtaposes light and sweetness, which are found together in the Arewordi text as well. Several Armenian folk prayers recited at sunrise do the same. From Vardenis/Chakherlu, *Bari lusi k'aghts'r K'ristos./ Du oghormanas, du gt'as./ Du p'orts'enk'nerats' azat enes./ Du anp'orts'ank' pahes, ter Astvats* "Sweet Christ of the good light./ Have mercy, have pity./ Free [us] from trials./ Keep us untried, Lord God." A longer prayer, from Mush/Bulanekh, begins *Orshnyal i Astvats./ Orshnyal i bari lusu k'aghts'rik K'ristos* "Blessed is God./ Blessed is sweet little Christ of the good light," with the same diminutive for "sweet" as in the Arewordi invocation. Another such prayer, from Van/Andzak, pairs light and sun as the Arewordi one does: *Luse lusats'av/ Arev parts'rats'av/ Tiroch' zorut'enov/ Trakhti trrner pats'van,/ Tzhokhk'i trrner kots'van./ Art'arner urkhets'an/ Meghavorner tanjvets'an* "The light lightened./ The sun rose high/ By the Lord's power/ The gates of paradise opened./ The gates of hell were closed./ The righteous rejoiced./ The sinners suffered torment." Another prayer, from Rshnunik, pairs sweetness and light: *Los losats'av./ Ter k'aghts'rats'av./ Baru drrner bats'av./ Oghermut'en shatats'av./ K'ristos, ch'e khamis k'u akh im srten:/*

¹⁷ See James R. Russell, "The Armenians, the Holy Cross, and Dionysius Bar Salibi," *St. Nersess Theological Review* 8 (2004): 1-12. The territory of historical Armenia was dotted with *khach'k'ars*, "Cross-stones", as ubiquitous as the gaunt colossi of the *moai* of Rapa Nui (Easter Island) and as defining of the culture of the land. They are named in lists on talismanic scrolls where the direction of the writing itself forms crosses (see James R. Russell, "The Armenian Magical Scroll and Outsider Art," *Iran and the Caucasus* 15.1-2 (2011): 5-47.) Armenians baptized crosses and there was a folk belief that they then came to life and possessed power. This is reflected in an oikotype of the "Boil, little pot, boil!" folktale, about a magical Cross that slays unbelievers: see James R. Russell, "Raiders of the Holy Cross: The Ballad of the *Karos Khach'* and the Nexus between Ecclesiastical Literature and Folk Tradition in Mediaeval Armenia," in *New Approaches to Medieval Armenian Language and Literature*, ed. Jos J.S. Weitenberg (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), 79-93. In 1997 I visited the village of Shushants' near Van. An ancestor of the Armenian-American playwright Herand Markarian had been the local priest; but when we came to the site of the church all that remained was a pit with a few stones at the bottom. A Kurd of the village told us that he had helped destroy the building in the early 1950s: he and other Muslims believed the cross to be an evil *isharet* ("sign, symbol") of great power: the Armenians and their symbols had to be eliminated lest they destroy the Muslims first. As one will observe presently, Christians tended to regard the Jews and the language and symbols of Judaism as likewise powerful in a malefic way, and went on to appropriate them to texts and rituals of magic.

¹⁸ Nersoyan, *Pataragamatoyts'*, 88. The Arm. *k'aghts'r* "sweet" translates Gk. *chrestos*, which has a range of meanings including "good, merciful, bountiful" of God and persons and "sweet" of fruits. The original Hebrew, of Ps. 34.9, has *ta'amu u-re'u ki tov Hashem* "Taste ye and see that the Lord is good." The further implication, relevant to Communion, that He is literally edible, is a Christian interpretation of the verb, which the Psalmist probably intended to mean "consider, try out," not "eat"—he is enjoining Israel to examine, ponder, and remember God's specific beneficences, not to devour Him. Rabbinic teachings point out that God begins the Ten Commandments not by introducing Himself to the assembled Children of Israel generally and theoretically as Creator of heaven and earth, but immediately and intimately as the liberator from Egyptian bondage.

K'u akh-amot'ov dzi shakhes, pakhes/ Ter, du es steghtse; ch'e koruses,/ Ter du es shine; ch'e kortsanes;/ K'u ardar chambkheneru veren/ Zi khangist makhem tas "The light lightened./ The Lord sweetened./ The gates of good opened./ Mercy abounded./ Christ, remove not your fear from my heart./ By fear of you and shame before you, care for and keep me./ Lord, you have created; do not cause perdition./ Lord, you have made; do not destroy./ [Let me walk] upon your righteous paths/ That you may grant a peaceful death."¹⁹

These examples can be multiplied, but the texts cited are sufficient to demonstrate an interesting point. The Arewordi prayer is distinguishable from the Christian ones cited mainly in the **absence** from it of explicitly Christian terms—of words such as *K'ristos*, "Christ", or *Astvats* "God". To be sure, there are other marked terms in these Christian prayers that are of Iranian origin and that Arewordik' might have used. *Drakht* "Paradise", an Iranian loan meaning "tree", and *dzhokhk'*, "Hell", a specifically Zoroastrian term meaning "worst existence", and even *orhn-em* "bless", from the Iranian *afri-*, are among innumerable other lexical items of religious import that were adapted from local Zoroastrianism to Christian use from the beginnings of written Armenian in the fifth century. At that time Armenia's powerful neighbor to the southeast was, of course, the militantly Zoroastrian Sasanian Empire. There was a numerous, strong, and generally tolerated Christian community in Iran and its possessions, then; and treaties with Constantinople guaranteed toleration of Zoroastrians in Byzantine lands. But it would seem Christians did not honor those agreements and Zoroastrians in Anatolia were reduced to an impoverished and clandestine existence. Presumably the Zoroastrian Armenians fared little better.

Although the Arewordik' preserved some Zoroastrian beliefs, there is no evidence of their having known Avestan prayers or the names of *yazatas*, unlike, for instance, the *magousaioi* of neighboring Cappadocia, who according to St. Basil knew a form of the name of Zurvan, the supernatural personification of time.²⁰ They had a kind of religious leader called a *hazerpet* ("chiliarch"), but little else of what makes up the material life of a religious community endured. The Arewordik' recited the prayers of their decimated, isolated faith, a religion that had lost its temples, sacred implements, vestments, liturgical language and holy books and was reduced, one might say, to the bare essentials, to the *declaration of what it was not*: their prayer invokes light, sweetness, sun in the manner of the folk prayers of other Armenians, and these prayers are strongly influenced by the usages of the Apostolic Church to whom those other Armenians belonged—but Christ is absent.

One is reminded here of Arthur A. Cohen's haunting short story, "The Last Jew on Earth: A Fable," published in *Commentary*, November 1972, in which all the world has accepted the Roman church, save for a single man, a Spanish *converso*. (We shall have more to say presently about real life conversos—Iberian Jews who were baptized, some of retained in secret what they might remember of Judaism, or a changed form of it.) His family has long since forgotten the Hebrew language; they possess only an old document in which they swear allegiance to their true faith. They read it once on year, on the Shabbat before Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. The man, Don Rafael, is discovered and brought before an astonished crowd: "The old priest limped to his side and spoke: 'The world awaits you. Speak the recantation and

¹⁹ Sargis Harut'yunyan, ed., *Hay hmayakan ev zhoghovrdakan aghot'k'ner* (Armenian Incantations and Folk Prayers) (Erevan: Erevan University Press, 2006), 191-95.

²⁰ See James R. Russell, "Two Roads Diverged: Ancient Cappadocia and Ancient Armenia," in *Armenian Kesaria/Kayseri and Cappadocia*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda, 2013), 33-42.

then hand the document to the Cardinal and kneel before him.' Don Rafael bowed his head in salutation to the Cardinal and moved toward the microphones. There was silence, but for the gentle patter of the rain. Don Rafael passed a hand lightly over his forehead and touched his eyes in a gesture of friendship toward himself. He paused and breathed deeply. He began. 'I believe in one God, Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth,' and he paused, 'and . . . and . . . that is what I believe, that is the only belief I share with you.' Cries. 'No, no!' 'And the rest that I believe is what I have learned from my father and my father's father and all those in the generations of fathers which stretch back in the history of time to Moses, my first master. . . . And so much more, if you would like to hear about it.' Don Rafael paused. He would have continued and told the history of the generations of Israel, but he was not allowed. The microphones went dead." Don Rafael's religion has been reduced, thus, to the subtraction of what he does believe from the Catholic credo.

The Arewordi community was, though evidently not subject to active persecution, still something of a Don Rafael. It was an isolate, a survivor in a nation that was itself for the most part, and for the long stretch of its recorded history, a Christian island in an often turbulent and perilous Muslim sea. For in the Arab Caliphate and later in Ottoman Turkey the Armenians constituted a *millet* ("nation"), that is, a community granted the degrading but tolerated status of *dhimmis* but also allowed semi-autonomous status in some spheres of life—marriage, family, burial, etc.—under the governance of their religious authorities, who were answerable to the Sultan. Armenian identity was thus socially and legally inseparable from Christian identity. This was so much the case than the very idea of a non-Christian Armenian identity was and generally still is well nigh unthinkable and incomprehensible: an Armenian convert to any other religion lost his language and identity within a generation.²¹ But the Arewordik were speakers of Armenian who lived on their ancestral land, an island within an island, a culturally impoverished people subsisting with no legal status or definition. The words and rites of the Christian faith had surrounded them for many centuries and they patterned what was evidently an important invocation (since, as we have seen, two sources report variants of it independently) on Christian liturgical usages. This influence or emulation was unwitting and subconscious, or, less likely, was accepted by design as a kind of camouflage. (If so, it was scarcely effective.) There is no evidence to suggest that the Children of the Sun were Christian converts on the surface who practiced their authentic rites privately and secretly held to their original beliefs. But a comparison may, with those caveats, be drawn nonetheless to another group.

In the centuries before and following the mass expulsion of their community from Spain in 1492, many Sephardic Jews converted to Catholicism rather than leave their homeland. Various scholars, notably the father of the present Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, have persuasively argued in recent years that Christian anti-Semitism was not always theological alone but often had a biological aspect as well, long before the Nazis. This dimension was perhaps present even *ab initio* in

²¹ Prof. Seta Dadoyan's groundbreaking research on the Fatimid Armenians demonstrates this well, *The Fatimid Armenians: Cultural and Political Interaction in the Near East* (Leiden: Brill, 1997). The only Armenian community that was converted to Islam but is known to have retained its language was that of the region of Hamshen in the mountains south of the Black Sea coast within Turkish territory. (Other Hamshen Armenians who refused conversion fled northwards to safety in Sukhumi, in Christian Georgia.) Elsewhere, an Armenian who became a Muslim became in time also a speaker *exclusively* of Kurdish, Turkish, or Arabic.

embryonic form—if one considers some of the vicious tirades of St. John Chrysostom against the Jews in the fourth century. In the medieval Iberian peninsula, at least, Jews were believed to have an inherently pernicious racial identity that did not change with baptism: the “New Christians” or *conversos* (also called, disparagingly, Marranos), lacked what was called the *limpieza de sangre* “purity of blood” of Old Christians. This meant that even converts who believed sincerely in their new religion and became successful in Spanish society still bore an ineradicable stigma. Such conversos often went on to deal creatively with their enforced marginal status, as innovative Christian believers, thinkers, and even explorers—among these luminaries are St. Theresa of Avila, San Juan de la Cruz, and companions of Christopher Columbus. They looked inward and stressed the inner and intangible aspects of faith and the person, rather than the external signs of ancestry and status; or, outwardly, they sailed forth to find new lands. In the case of Armenian sectarians such as T’ondrakets’is and Paulicians, one has found over the years that descendants of adherents of these “heretical” confessions have tended to move away from the Apostolic Church, embracing Protestantism and freethinking, or, in Russian Armenia, making common cause with exiled Russian sectarians—the Subbotniks and Molokans.²²

But to return to the example of the Inquisition, many other conversos, while presenting themselves as Catholics in public, held privately and inwardly to the tenets of their original faith: there is only one God, Jesus is not divine, the “Old” Testament is true and not the “New”, and Moses stands alone as the foremost of the prophets. They attempted to practice what they remembered of Jewish rites handed down to them, lighting Sabbath candles secretly in a cellar or inner room, or finding subtle ways symbolically to abstain from eating pork. Clandestine faith was more than a social necessity: to be discovered or denounced to the Inquisition meant certain arrest and torture, followed by imprisonment or death. And though they soon forgot the Hebrew language and had no access to Rabbinic texts, the conversos passed their beliefs on to their children for many generations: the Holy Office of the Inquisition itself was closed only in 1819, and it was well over a century after that before Judaism began again to be practiced openly in Spain.

It was inevitable that over time the secret Judaizing prayers of the Marranos acquired Catholic features of style and content: sometimes they might pray before a picture of Moses or another prophet, much as Catholics employed iconic images, though Judaism forbids the use of such representations. Their philosophical emphasis on salvation is also a Catholic feature, as Prof. Yirmiyahu Yovel has persuasively and illuminatingly argued. For normative Judaism stresses performance of the Commandments and loving adherence to God and the Covenant. The hope for salvation is important, but Jews do not accept the ideas of original sin and the prospect of damnation in the way Christians do; so salvation is generally seen as communal and national restoration of the Land of Israel, the Temple service, and the advent of Messianic kingship. Personal salvation is not the central concern of the religion in the way it is for Christians. The conversos, then, in expressing anxiety about salvation from sin and damnation as the centerpiece of some devotions, had absorbed aspects of the surrounding Catholic faith and the language and style of its

²² See James R. Russell, “The Last of the Paulicians,” *Hask hayagitakan taregirk’* 7-8 (1995-1996): 33-47. In the spring of 2009 I made the acquaintance of an Armenian-American from California named Josa who had settled in Mevasseret Tzion, a suburb of Jerusalem, Israel, with her husband, a Protestant archaeologist from Mississippi.

prayers into their beliefs and practices. The Armenian Children of the Sun seem to have done something similar in their prayer to the Sun on the liturgy of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Indeed it would be indistinguishable from a Christian folk prayer of the dawn but for what it does not have—any reference to Christ, the Hebrew Bible, or the Gospel.

A prayer of one community of crypto-Jews, I would suggest, seem to reflect a pagan view of the journey to the Otherworld after death that is extremely archaic and presumably had endured underground among Iberian gentiles. One clandestine group might thus have felt a kind of affinity and sympathy with another,²³ even as Armenian T'ondrakets'is and Russian Molokans found mutual affirmation, consolation, and the support that comes in numbers, in each other's company. Let us consider the Marrano prayer. Gitlitz reports that in early 20th-century Portugal, it was a custom of the *cristãos novos* to put a coin in the mouth of the deceased, or to pass it over his mouth (either way it is Charon's obol, and no currency of Judaism!)—and then give it to the poor. This would be a rationalization of the pagan custom, transforming it to *tsedāqa*, “charity”. The latter, with *teshūva* “repentance” and *tefilla* “prayer”, form the triad of virtues that *ma'avirin et ro'a gezera*, “turn away the evil decree” on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.²⁴ Then the mourners recited thrice: Ao Vale de Josafat irás/ um leão encontrarás:// Se te pedir carne, dá-lhe pão:// Se te pedir senha, dá-lhe dinheiro:// Se te procurar de que lei és./ Diz-lhe que és de Moisés.// Que te deixe passar/ livre e desembaraçado// Para onde Deus te deixar/ para onde Deus te mandar.// Se perguntar quem te compôs/ diz-lhe que foi uma hebreia// que neste mundo ficou./ que te fez o que sabia./ não te fez o que devia. “You'll go to the valley of Jehosephat/ and find a lion there.// If he asks you for meat, give him bread;/ if he asks you for a sign, give him money.// If he inquires which law is yours,/ tell him the law of Moses.// May he let you pass by/ freely and untrammelled// where God allows,/ where God orders.// If he asks you who made you,/ tell him it was a Jewish woman// who brought you into this world:/ may he do to you what he knows how// and not do to you what he should.”²⁵ The prayer is replete with explicitly Jewish symbolism. The valley of Jehosephat outside the walls of Jerusalem is where Jews believe the dead will be resurrected. The lion recalls the lion of Judah. Bread and meat may refer to the variant meanings in Hebrew of *lechem* “bread” and Arabic *lahm* “meat” and thus recall a time when both languages were known in the Iberian peninsula. Moses alone is named as a religious figure (not Jesus or any Christian saint), and the mother of the deceased is identified as a Jewish woman.

But these Jewish references still re-frame the entirely pagan theme—one utterly alien to normative Judaism—of a journey to the next world on which the imperiled soul must be equipped with the necessary directions, bribes, and passwords it needs to reach a place of bliss. The text that explains all these is recited as the soul departs from the body. The Tibetan *Bardo Thodol* gives a Buddhist cast to the same

²³ See David M. Gitlitz, *Secrecy and Deceit: The Religion of the Crypto-Jews* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1996); and Yirmiyahu Yovel, *The Other Within: The Marranos, Split Identity and Emerging Modernity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009).

²⁴ The words comprising triad have a poetic assonance, with stress on the penultimate syllable and a final -ah for all. They point to acts with salvific power: one is reminded of the Zoroastrian “good thoughts, good words, good deeds” discussed earlier. It is noteworthy that for both Jews and Zoroastrians, it is deeds (*hvarshita*, *tsedāqa*) that matter most—it is no use to repent in prayer on Yom Kippur the wrong done a person unless one has first sought his forgiveness!

²⁵ Gitlitz, *Secrecy and Deceit*, 285 and 307, n.48.

tradition, co-opting what was plainly a pre-Buddhist belief and ritual. The *locus classicus* for such texts is the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*. We find a similar itinerary in the famous ancient Greek Petelia tablet, which Jane Harrison discussed long ago:

ΕΥΡΗΣΕΙΣ Δ' ΑΙΔΑΟ ΔΟΜΩΝ ΕΠ' ΑΡΙΣΤΕΡΑ ΚΡΗΝΗΝ / ΠΑΡ Δ' ΑΥΤΗΙ
ΕΣΤΗΚΥΙΑΝ ΚΥΠΑΡΙΣΣΟΝ. / ΤΑΥΤΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΚΡΗΝΗΣ ΜΗΔΕ ΣΧΕΔΟΝ
ΕΜΠΕΛΑΣΕΙΑΣ. / ΕΥΡΗΣΕΙΣ Δ' ΕΤΕΡΑΝ ΤΗΣ ΜΝΗΜΟΣΥΝΗΣ ΑΠΟ ΛΙΜΝΗΣ /
ΨΥΧΡΟΝ ΥΔΩΡ ΠΡΟΡΕΟΝ, ΦΥΛΑΚΕΣ Δ' ΕΠΙΠΡΟΣΘΕΝ ΕΑΣΙΝ. / ΕΙΠΕΙΝ. ΓΗΣ
ΠΑΙΣ ΕΙΜΙ ΚΑΙ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ ΑΣΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΟΣ, / ΑΥΤΑΡ ΕΜΟΙ ΓΕΝΟΣ ΟΥΡΑΝΙΟΝ.
ΤΟΔΕ Δ' ΙΣΤΕ ΚΑΙ ΑΥΤΟΙ. / ΔΙΨΗΙ Δ' ΕΙΜΙ ΑΥΗ ΚΑΙ ΑΠΟΛΛΥΜΑΙ. ΑΛΛΑ ΔΟΤ'
ΑΙΨΑ / ΨΥΧΡΟΝ ΥΔΩΡ ΠΡΟΡΕΟΝ ΤΗΣ ΜΝΗΜΟΣΥΝΗΣ ΑΠ(Ο ΛΙΜΝ)ΗΣ/ ΚΑΙ
ΤΟΤ' ΕΙΠΕΙΤ' Α(ΛΛΟΙΣΙ ΜΕΘ') ΗΡΩΕΣΣΙΝ ΑΝΑΞΕΙΣ...

You will find to the left of the house of Hades a wellspring / and by the side of it a white cypress standing: / to this wellspring do not come near. / You will find though another by the lake of Memory, / cold water flowing forth, and guardians before it are. / Say: I am a son of Earth and of Heaven starry, / but my race is Heavenly. This you yourselves know. / I am parched with thirst and perish. But give quickly / cold water flowing forth from the lake of Memory. / And they will give you to drink from the divine lake/ and then with the other Heroes you will have lordship.²⁶

This text is not unique in the varieties of ancient Greek religion but citation of it is sufficient to prove the pagan and non-Jewish origin of the custom that underlay the Judaized prayer of the Portuguese New Christians.

As one might expect, the language of the prayers of adherents of secret and forbidden religions has points of similarity to the spells of magic. Christian folk magic used to beneficent ends—the arts of healers, for instance—lies oftentimes just within the bounds of social acceptance. Sorcery and black magic are beyond and thus practiced clandestinely. But these practices have a social role: love spells, or spells designed to thwart the designs of enemies, may be malefic in intent but are a sort of steam valve, useful in releasing tension. It is better to have a magician write a curse on a rival suitor than to go out and kill him; better to invoke the wrath of supernatural beings on the boss than to “go postal”, as Americans say of disgruntled mailmen who suddenly arrive at work one day, God forbid, with a gun. So in modern Erevan one can engage the services of magicians who will write a curse and put it in a tree trunk, or insert a counter-clockwise rendering in feathers of the Christian scythe-sun of eternity, in an enemy’s pillow. It is difficult to discern whether the people derided by the fifth-century Eznik of Koghbe as *heshmakapasht*, “worshippers of Wrath”,²⁷ practiced actual demonolatry. Does anybody deliberately worship a being whose purpose is to harm one? Nowadays there are such people: one can easily obtain a “Satanic Bible” or acquire the liturgy of a “Black Mass”. But those very terms illustrate well the dependence of the presumed devil-worshiper on the very beliefs and institutions that he is inverting. Magicians often use Jewish symbols

²⁶ Jane Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 659 and discussion, 572 *et seq.*

²⁷ Arm. **heshmak*, compare Geor. *heshmaki* “demon” and Pers. *khesm*, “wrath”, is the archdemon *Aeshma Daeva*, the Heb. Ashmedai and Eng. Asmodeus of the apocryphal Book of Tobit, a pleasantly quirky Persian-style romance (and an ancestor, one thinks, of Restoration comedy) set in Nineveh and Hamadan: see James R. Russell, “God is Good: Tobit and Iran,” *Iran and the Caucasus* 5 (2001): 1-6. On some Armenian spells and their folk associations see James R. Russell, “Languages of Men, Languages of Demons,” in publication, *Festschrift Michael Stone*, ed. Theo Van Lint.

and Hebrew letters and words, borrowing from another group on the margins; and Christian anti-Semites associate Jews with the symbols and images of satanism, such as upside-down pentacles and black men with the heads and feet of goats and of course long horns.

I mention all this simply because writing spells seems to have been a kind of sideline to bring in a little extra income for adherents of forbidden or marginal religions willing to bend their own morality and take advantage of the curious and the credulous. In Muslim lands, it was wine taverns that were the domain of *kafirs* as well—and a different sort of esoteric religious mystique formed around those.²⁸ From the mid-16th century Marranos settled in the region of the Bordeaux Parliament, contiguous to their ancestral land of Spain; and it is recorded that in the mid-18th century gentile Spaniards were still making trips to Bayonne hoping to learn magic from them.²⁹ These lessons were presumably not *gratis*, unlike the month-long introductory offer available from a pair of fallen angels and their cat in the Mountains of Darkness beyond the river Sambatyon.³⁰ So perhaps if one were in search of an Awordi in medieval Armenia, finding out where the local witch lived might be a good place to start, perhaps after a few drinks in the company of friendly Sufis at the local Magian bar.³¹

James Russell is Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies at Harvard University; Distinguished Visiting Professor at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem; and part-time Lecturer at California State University, Fresno

²⁸ In Muslim Iran, the Zoroastrians found another niche in a business that was also tolerated for its social function of release of tension but officially frowned upon: running a bar. Persian poetry abounds with esoteric treatments of the *maykadeh*, “temple of wine”, *pir-e moghan* “Magian elder” (the bartender), and the latter’s son—the handsome young *mogh bachche* “Magian boy” who served as *saqi* “cupbearer”. The boy becomes the metaphor for God, the Beloved; passionate love (*‘eshq*) and drunkenness (*masti*), the ecstatic state of the mystic worshipper. On the subject generally, see Ehsan Yarshater, “The theme of wine-drinking and the concept of the beloved in early Persian poetry,” *Studia Islamica* 13 (1960): 43-53.

²⁹ Owen Davies, *Grimoires*, *op. cit.*, pp. 112-113.

³⁰ See James R. Russell, “Hārūt and Mārūt: The Armenian Zoroastrian Demonic Twins in the *Qur’ān* Who Invented Fiction,” in *Commentationes Iranicae: Sbornik statei k 90-letiju V.A. Livshitsa*, ed. Sergius Tokhtasev and Paulus Luria (St. Petersburg: Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences and Nestor-Historia, 2013), 469-80.

³¹ In Constantinople at the turn of the century one might visit a hashish den instead and witness the modern permutation of a pagan ritual, of the sort we have discussed, right there. For it was the custom for the musicians to throw three grains of hashish in the fire and sing in modern Greek, *Ya sou Khare! Na kharis to mavro sou skotadhi*. “Greetings, Charon—may you enjoy your black darkness!” There is a play on the name of the ferryman of Hades, Charon, and *kharo*, “enjoy”. Prof. Martin Schwartz, the prominent Iranist and ethnomusicologist, and a friend and teacher, showed this to me (and played it on one of his precious antique gramophone recordings) about thirty years ago at his home in Berkeley.

Odysseus and a Phoenician Tale¹

Russell J. R.

Harvard University, Massachusetts Hall, Cambridge, MA 02138

For citation: Russell J. R. Odysseus and a Phoenician Tale. *Vestnik of Saint Petersburg University. Philosophy and Conflict Studies*, 2018, vol. 34, issue 2, pp. 00–00. <https://doi.org/>

The question of the authorship of the two Homeric epics — whether there was one Homer, or two — has vexed scholars since the inception of critical literary study. The more bellicose, less inner and mysterious Iliad was by far the more popular poem in antiquity. And although the later Aeneid of Virgil tendentiously fuses together war and *nostos* (homecoming), it is of arms and a man, not a man of many ways and wiles, that the Roman poet sings. Odysseus is likened, invidiously, to a Canaanite (Phoenician) traveling merchant in his flexibility and adaptability — he, the “rootless cosmopolitan” of his remote age, resonates with the predicament of alienation of modern man and with the psychological depth of the modern literary sensibility, then bellicose, candid, limited Achilles and Aeneas. It is proposed in the article that the Odyssey employs the topos of a man traveling in search of lost members of his family, with a happy resolution, that seems indeed to have been peculiarly popular over many centuries with Phoenicians and Carthaginians. The author suggests indeed that Menaechmus, the name of a character in a play based on this topos with a Punic setting that might even have been performed, in a Northwest Semitic translation in Qart Hadašt (Newtown, i.e., Carthage) itself, is merely the very common Hebrew name Menachem. And it is noted that the topos recurs, employed in aid of religious propaganda of the Jewish Christians, in the setting of the Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions.

Keywords: literature, tale, culture, man, topos, Christianity, paganism.

“It’s about family, stupid!”

The Lost Boys 2: The Tribe (Thunder Road Pictures, Hollywood, California, 2008)

1. Two books and two Homers?

What is the canonization of a sacred text?

Homeros hebraïzōn? Kyrie eleëson! Homer acting like a Jew? Lord have mercy! Not again. The search for affinities between Homer and the Bible, between the ancient civilizations of Greece and Israel, between Athens and Jerusalem (*pace* Tertullian) seems to be old news: in 1658 Zachary Bogan in his *Homerus Hebraizon* compared words and phrases in the Hebrew Bible and Greek Epic. And the vexed question of the authorship of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is very much older, going back to Hellenistic literary criticism, though in this instance the question at issue resolves into a simple opposition: some believe Homer (or somebody else who was or wasn’t named Homer) composed both heroic epics; others,

¹ For my Mother, Charlotte Sananes Russell (Rachel bat Yosef), and in memory of our ancestors from Salonica, Greece — the Jerusalem of the Aegean.

the *khorizontes* (lit. “separators”), that the authors were different (two poets who were not Homer but whom posterity named Homer, two different Homers, or a Homer and someone else who wasn’t, etc.). Assigning an approximate date to the poems poses a further problem, though it is generally accepted that the *Iliad* was the earlier composition. The plot of the whole narrative is the simplest support for this supposition — first there was the Trojan War, then Odysseus got home from it — but there are other factors as well: the archaic elements of the *Iliad* are strong, while much of the setting of the *Odyssey* is that of roughly the eighth century BCE. Neither of the two poems reflects fully or accurately the Mycenaean age in which the war is set; and some of the inherited detail that the poet does know is so remote to his own time that he misunderstands it.

There seem to have been two different books from the start, however one may resolve, or fail to resolve, the question of authorship. The parties of dividers and unifiers have, thankfully, to do with authors, and not with whether an original, single book was split in two. The evidence of the proportion of surviving manuscript fragments shows, incontrovertibly, that the *Iliad* was read by itself and was by far the more popular of the two epics in antiquity — there are about ten times as many surviving fragments as there are of the *Odyssey*. It is generally accepted that ancient Hellenic scholars established a canonical text, the edition of Athens in the golden age of Peisistratus. This is over half a millennium before the books of the Hebrew Bible were canonized as the Masoretic (“traditional, handed down”) text of the “written Torah” with the accompanying “oral Torah” of the *Mishnah* (lit. “repetition”, a code of laws compiled by the Tannaim around the 2nd century CE not directly based upon the Pentateuch but intended to elucidate it) and the *Gemara* (lit. “completion”, the oceanic commentaries, narratives, and discussions of the Amora'im of the Land of Israel and Parthian and Sasanian Mesopotamia, anchored on the *Mishnah*). *Mishnah* and *Gemara* together constitute the *Talmud*, or “teaching”. There were schools of different sages — those of Hillel and Shammai are the most prominent — that offered different interpretations and judgments, and debated each other. The *Talmud* records these, often without concluding who was right. The sacred books of the Zoroastrians were codified around the 5th century CE by the Sasanian priesthood and its academies as the *Avesta* with its accompanying translation and commentary, the *Zand*. Very little of the 21 great divisions of the Sasanian *Avesta* survives, compared to the *Talmud* (which also has many subsidiary texts, also of great antiquity). But the Iranians, too, had schools following sages with differing interpretations. Even though Zoroastrians privilege orality over writing, which would suggest there were fewer written copies of the *Avesta* than there were of the *Talmud*, perhaps there was still a vast manuscript heritage that has now been irretrievably lost².

² Zoroastrian texts in Middle Persian lament the destruction of sacred manuscripts, and the murder of Magi — the living books of the faith — by Alexander; and they record, too, the synods convened by Parthian and later Sasanian monarchs to codify the *Avesta*. Because of their predominantly oral tradition the Zoroastrians, like the Hindus and Buddhists in India, did not gain unambiguous recognition and protection under Islam as an Abrahamic “people of the Book”, and were subject to sporadic persecutions that became increasingly severe down to early modern times. Christian states accorded Jews a protected but degraded status as an object lesson: this is what happens to Christ’s people when they do not accept Him. The *Talmud*, which contains some anti-Christian remarks, was often censored or burnt. But its real fault is that it is the brilliant representative a living, spiritually and intellectually vibrant faith that neither has nor needs any reference or relationship to Christianity at all.

In the Greek case there never seems to have been a system of sacerdotal academies devoted to commenting upon and arguing about a Homeric scripture, for all the immense importance accorded these foundational texts of Greco-Roman civilization. Neither *Iliad* nor *Odyssey* pretends to offer the two categories of authoritative, revelatory teaching that Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians have come to expect holy scripture to offer: first, an explanation of how and why the physical universe we inhabit came into being (cosmology); and, second, normative precepts about what we human beings are supposed to do while we are in the universe, and, indeed, why it is that we are here at all (ethics). It is not the Word of one God. Yet pagan tradition assigned sacred status to both poems, the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, without these desiderata. Despite the misgivings of some literary critics, the consensus of the ancients was that the two poems had a common author, Homer, a blind bard from the island of Chios, just off the Ionian coast from Smyrna. The subsidiary Homeric hymns, composed after his time, became attached gradually to the venerated literary corpus. These expand upon or flesh out the events and personages of the poems. This formal process is analogous, *mutatis mutandis*, to the treatment in Jewish tradition, alluded to above, of the texts that have come to constitute the Hebrew Bible. The five books of Moses — the Pentateuch — at its core were taken to have been set down by a single hand, despite their obvious differences of period and authorship; and as the Masoretic canon was established, subsidiary texts were included or rejected, sometimes for reasons that are far from clear today. It takes special pleading to justify the inclusion of *Ecclesiastes*, whose dismal theology is on the face of it incompatible with the rugged, ethnocentric covenantal cheer of Rabbinic Judaism. And the erotic *Song of Songs* can be justified only if the interpretation of the whole as a spiritual metaphor is forced upon the text. The evidence of an Egyptian precursor surely argues the artificiality of such an undertaking. In the Greek case there is a similar oddity, a kind of parody in heroic verse of the Trojan War called the *Batrachomyomachia*, “The War of the Frogs and the Mice”, in which the little creatures, with Homeric names, squeak their speeches and battle nobly for possession of a swamp³. Perhaps the ancients, in Athens and Jerusalem alike, did not take themselves too seriously, allowing room even in a pious conception of the world for humor, sarcasm, and eroticism.

The Homeric epic, consisting of two poems, 24 books in length each, is a linear narrative about the Trojan War and the return of the hero Odysseus from it. If one were to combine the two poems into a single book, a good title might be *War and Peace*, had not a later writer already used it. It at least presents a unity of subject, theme, genre, and character to which the Hebrew Bible, the *Tanakh*, cannot aspire unless one sum up the latter in the most general way as a grand narrative of the Creator’s covenantal bond with His people Israel. The journey of the Torah would then include many stops along the road to survey the way, take in the view, and examine the smallest details: to specify laws, sing praises, recount the deeds of kings, and issue prophetic warnings. This approach requires a base line of irrational faith (or supra-rational faith, depending on one’s point of view) requiring that one accept the canonical text in its entirety, with all its obvious textual and

³ This strange poem can be related to the larger and more familiar genre of Aesopian animal allegories. The late 17th-century Armenian poet and artist Naghash Hovnat’an (Jonathan the Painter) employed the venerable allegory of cat and mouse (cf. Art Spiegelman’s graphic novel of the Holocaust, *Maus*, in recent years) in such a composition: the little Armenian mice think the tyrannical cat, presumably a Muslim Shah or Sultan, is dead. They rejoice, and prepare to bake a funeral loaf. But the cat rises suddenly and, loading himself with heroic epithets appropriate to the exploits of felines, boasts that he will chase them from Karabagh in the Persian east to Marsovan in the Turkish west and eat them all — see [1, p. 41–42].

other contradictions to be accounted for as emanating from beyond time and space — that one profess the Torah as the Word of God from Sinai, that being unifying factor enough (which privately as a believer, this writer freely admits that he does, though the mundane realm of philological scholarship presents quite other parameters and demands). *Credo quia absurdum est*. For a clear-eyed Athenian thinker, of course, there is a fair measure of the absurd in Homer's semi-divine personages, talking horses, animate rivers, and indecorously squabbling gods: fair game for euhemeristic and metaphorical interpretation, but dangerous ground for the disbeliever, too, if one regards the trial of Socrates, with its accusation of atheism, as an expression of genuine outrage at blasphemy rather than just a trap set by his political enemies.

Part of the problem that arises when one attempts to draw a comparison between the revealed texts of the Abrahamic and pre-Islamic Iranian faiths and the sanctified Homeric corpus is the tacit presupposition that they fall under the same rubric of something one can define as “religion”. This is misleading: Greco-Roman paganism evades the Judeo-Christian understanding of religion. It is not a tidy matter of a single dogma, with a more or less canonized set of customs and liturgical rites, but rather a mass of local beliefs and diverse practices sanctified by time and custom, of corresponding loyalties steeped in emotion and blended with the supernatural, all of it bound together by the sense of a larger, shared history and way of life. This complex or web of mythologies, local shrines and gods, and varied rituals was susceptible to be sure to the interpretations and speculations of philosophers, but in practice it was still to be maintained in all its manifold forms, a kaleidoscope with the sense of one light shining through but with no less a devotion to the myriad patterns and colors. The Homeric poems are not, then, *normative*: there are no Ten Commandments there. But they are *formative*: they present society with a shared vocabulary, a corpus of cultural *Gemeingedanken*. And they are *exemplary*: they display models for imitation on various levels of art, of action, and of thinking⁴. Out of the Homeric sea flow the intricate rivulets of the *Odes* of Pindar, the turbulent streams of Greek tragic drama, the rich eddies of mythography. But what do these poems, of such extraordinary importance, say?

2. The story

And even before the story they actually tell, where did it begin? — as Roberto Calasso is wont to ask in his long meditations on classical Greece and Vedic India. It is a wry question, since there is nearly an infinite regress till we get to the beginning of the story, and in any case Homer does not tell us the beginning (his brief is not *Genesis*). This is partly

⁴ For a discussion of these three categories in the context of a canon of sacred scripture, see [2, p. 3]. The clearest case of the Homeric corpus as exemplary scripture is that of the Aeneid of Virgil, which takes up the Homeric narrative at the fall of Troy and then presents a sort of Homer-in-reverse: The Trojan exiles, led by Aeneas, journey outward to the war for the conquest of Italy that closes the epic. But Italy is obscurely their original home; so the journey is actually a *nostos* to a divinely promised land. It is likely here that the Roman poet appropriated both the Biblical Exodus and the idea of the Chosen People to his tendentiously propagandistic celebration of the Augustan imperial project. The shield of Achilles, evoked by Homer, is a charming, poignant cosmogram of the dance of life, but that of Aeneas is a carefully plotted political map, its message of universal Roman dominance as gravid as the metal of its manufacture. The first line clangs as dismally a gladiator's sword: *Arma virumque cano*, “I sing of arms and a man.” Pious Aeneas is the consummate *paterfamilias*, but the Roman poet still reserves his derision for Odysseus, for reasons we will presently propose.

because in his dramatic and narrative brilliance he prefers to plunge *in medias res*, to stress a point, rather than cover a whole tale; and partly too because he can be confident that his listeners (or readers) already know at least the outlines of the Trojan War, and probably many details. The point is not merely to retell it, but to relive it. But here is how it began: Agamemnon, king of Mycenae in the Peloponnesus, summoned the Greeks — called Achaeans or Danaans (the later Greeks — the latter is a Roman term — called themselves Hellenes) — and raised an armada to invade Troy (or Ilium, as it is also called) because its prince, Paris (or Alexander, as he is also called, not to be confused with the later Macedonian world-conqueror), had run off with Helen, the wife of Agamemnon's brother Menelaus. It is a matter of honor and shame: it is not her beautiful face that launched a thousand ships (*pace* Christopher Marlowe), but the embarrassing fact that she is stolen property. And the ill-fated seduction goes back to a choice of three apples, and the golden, treacherous goddess of love, Aphrodite. One recalls a much earlier epic, that of Gilgamesh, and the ruin that followed his refusal of the love of the goddess Ishtar⁵. Such, we are meant to feel, is the human condition: as some American men still say of women (when there are no women present), you can't live with them but you can't live without them. How much more is it true of these vindictive, fickle goddesses⁶. Helen's elopement will end with the destruction of Troy: Menelaus returns with her to Argos, to a tense and embittered married life in middle age made tolerable only by her spiking her husband's drinks with a drug that brings on oblivion. It is worse still for Agamemnon, who sacrificed his daughter Iphigeneia (whose name means "engendered violently") to get of the gods fair winds for the invading fleet. He is to return to his wife Clytemnestra, who detests him for his cruel deed and his selfish, callous pomposity. She and her lover Aegisthus will kill him while Cassandra howls her worthless prophecies before her own throat is cut. And because of that, the slain king's son Orestes will take revenge for his father, killing his mother. And for that, his mother's vengeful spirits, the *Erinyes* or Furies, will pursue him.

When Orestes reaches Athens, its patron goddess and its primordial king will grant him sanctuary, and establish law and justice in the place of the sanguinary chain of vengeance. None of that will save the House of Atreus, though: Agamemnon led the Achaean armies and fought a ten-year war, all for his family to vanish utterly. All this we have thanks to retrospective storytelling in the *Odyssey* and to the dramatic expansion of the narrative in the *Oresteia* trilogy of Aeschylus, who modestly averred that his plays, written for the annual festival of Dionysus on the slopes of the Athenian acropolis, were mere scraps from Homer's feast. So there are stories that come before, and others still of what came after, into which the narrative of the war itself is sandwiched. And this seems to be

⁵ The ancient Mesopotamian epic is recognized as one remote ancestor of the Homeric corpus, and it is fascinating to trace both the changes and the lines of continuity from Mesopotamia to Greece. The character of Gilgamesh seems to bifurcate: as the grand and lustful king, who leaves none of the girls and boys of Uruk in peace, he prefigures Agamemnon, with the latter's fatal lack of self-control. As the brave companion and lover of Enkidu, Gilgamesh foreshadows Achilles, with his *therapon* ("caretaker") Patroclus.

⁶ And there is no escape. The poor adolescent Hippolytus (his name means "destroyed by horses"), afraid of his own nascent sexuality and repelled by the advances of his stepmother Phaedra, sublimated his desire into hunting and racing his horse-drawn chariot. Esteeming Artemis, he succeeded only in enraging Aphrodite: a bull rose from the sea, spooking his quadriga, and he fell and was trampled and mangled — destroyed by his own horses indeed. So for the Greeks the archetype of the dying and rising god — Anatolian Cybele and Attis, Hebraic and Islamic Zuleikha and Joseph, Iranian Sudابه and Siyavakhsh (which means "black stallion"; cf. Hippolytus) — was not a basis for a cult but the occasion intricate psychological investigation of the paradoxes of sexuality.

a large lesson of the first Homeric poem: humans being what they are, at a remove from other natural beings on the one hand (as Homer insists in his long similes, trees burst into leaf anew every spring, but we live once, then die forever), and from the gods on the other⁷, it is inevitable that we will go to war, and it is a foregone conclusion besides, that however necessary a war may be, in the end it will cause tremendous destruction without solving anything of our predicament, at most serving as the turning point where one epoch ends and another begins. In epic, the war generally marks the end of the heroic age and the inception of the one in which we lesser mortals live now⁸.

The action that drives the *Iliad*, which begins in the ninth year of the ten-year-long war, is a kind of abduction of Helen in miniature. Agamemnon has taken a concubine, Chryseis, from a priest of Apollo, who calls down a plague upon the Achaean camp. To lift it, the king returns the girl — but then takes another, the concubine Briseis of his champion fighter, Achilles. If Achilles were truly subordinate the problem might have ended there; but as Prof. Nagy pointed out in his seminal work, both king and warrior are called the best of the Achaeans, and the problem of such a superlative is that it cannot be plural. Achilles refuses to do the one thing he is good at, fighting, and the tide of battle begins to turn against the Greeks. The hero, brooding in his tent, muses vaguely about returning to his wife and son and aged father in “fertile Phthia”, but it would have been a dim life, lived out in meaningless obscurity. The only possibility for him is to acquire *klewos aphthiton*, “imperishable fame” by fighting — and dying young. Achilles arrives at a kind of apotheosis towards the end of the *Iliad*, when he finally goes to war, slaughtering so many Trojans that Hades screams aloud; and the poem will end soon thereafter with the walls of Troy still not breached, but with its champion Hector (who name means “defender”) dead, his wife Andromache widowed, his son Astyanax orphaned, and his father — king Priam — bereft and undone.

3. Enter the hero

So the *Iliad* deals mainly with men. Women figure as pieces on the chess board of politics (Helen), or as objects of men’s animal lust and acquisitive pride (Chryseis, Briseis, Cassandra). And the Achaean host spend their time in the company of other men, en-

⁷ Not that being a god would help very much: the members of the Greco-Roman pantheon are seldom worth emulation and are best offered due reverence, at a safe distance. Athena, patroness of both Odysseus and Telemachus, would seem to be the shining exception. The poetess Sappho observed that we know death is a bad thing because were it otherwise, the gods would have taken it, too, away from us. The fleeting joys of life are the best we can do; and perhaps the immortal glory of some brave deed may outlive us. But the soul flees at death to the mournful shadows of Hades. If you were a hero in this life, there will be fields of asphodel and horses to ride, which sounds as though it might be nice.

⁸ Thus, the apocalyptic war between the Pandava and Kaurava clans of the vast Indian epic *Mahābhārata* is to usher in the basest of the epochs of history, the one we are living in now, Kaliyuga. The *Bhagavad Gītā* (literally “Divine Song”), coming at exactly the midpoint of the Sanskrit text, is a teaching of the *avatar* (incarnate god) Krishna to his friend, the warrior Arjuna: since the latter’s cause is just he must fight without regard to the long-term consequences of his actions, reposing his faith instead in God. This doctrine of *yoga* (“yoking”, cf. the Jewish concept of the faithful believer assuming the *‘ol haš-šamayim*, “yoke of Heaven”) and *bhakti* (“devotion”, cf. perhaps the Hasidic concept of *deveqūt*, “clinging” to God) makes of the *Gītā* an overtly religious treatise, possibly a later interpolation into an otherwise less religiously oriented epic text. The Indian epic has an ancient Iranian analogue: see [3, p. 17–35].

gaged in the single art of fighting, then feasting and boasting after each round. The family life of the warriors is either irrelevant to who they are, or a dysfunctional mess. Hector, a happy family man, is compelled to fight because of his lazy, voluptuous brother Paris' unrestrained lust — and Hector's family are all doomed. There is one hero in the *Iliad* for whom war is a distraction from life, who is there only because he has to be, and who just wants to get the whole damned thing over with so he can go home. This is Odysseus, who does not shrink from covert warfare, from a nocturnal commando raid in which a prisoner, Dolon, is captured, promised safety, interrogated, and then executed on the spot. This is not the honorable mode of fighting of a warrior for whom killing is a profession wrapped in traditional manners, but the way of a man who wants to win as soon as possible, by any expedient means. It is Odysseus who with the same motive — winning, destroying Troy, and leaving — acts as an adept politician and deal-maker, fixing the rift between Achilles and Agamemnon so that the Greeks can end the stalemate and fight effectively.

Odysseus is a family man who can relate easily to women, including witches (Circe) and goddesses (Athena): he misses his wife Penelope and his son Telemachus, and wants to get home to them, to Ithaca. The return voyage (Greek *nostos*) will take ten years and 24 books, also starting in the ninth year of the ten — a kind of parallel, chiasmic complement to the war itself. For the first poem is an outward campaign of a mass of soldiers with the goal of invading and destroying an entire city; while the second, a single man's journey back home to restore a little kingdom and reunite a sundered family, is in more than one sense a reversal of the first.

The disparity between the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* is thus profound, for all their many stylistic and other points of similarity. This difference has encouraged *khorizontes* to the present day, but one thinks it a weak point of argument, whatever the others. For it can be argued with equal persuasive force that the very inverse symmetry of the two narratives is evidence of a literary strategy most likely to have been conceived, and achieved, by a single ingenious author. And where the two poems differ greatly, surely that has to do in large part with their very different settings, and concerns — and a *good* writer can and does compose different books, not rewrite the same one. (In Western Armenian one would say of such a *bad* writer, *Meg lari vra gē khagha*, “He plays on one string.”) The authoritative Homeric scholar Prof. Gregory Nagy has deftly defined a key difference, in terms of the focal characters, between the two poems. Achilles, the best of the Achaeans (a wry definition, also achieved by Nagy, to be approached again presently), the central figure of the *Iliad*, is a man characterized by *biē* — of strength and violence; while the defining term for Odysseus is *mētis* — reasoning and thought⁹. The first line of the *Iliad* asks the goddess to sing the *mēnis*, “anger”, of Achilles; in contrast, the opening verse of the *Odyssey* asks the Muse to tell of a man “of many ways” (*polytropos*) — elsewhere Odysseus receives the epithet *polymēnis*. As a corollary to this, one might focus on the family: for Odysseus it is everything, worth a journey of return (Greek *nostos*, “homecoming”, cf. the loan in English, nostalgia) and of recognition of one's genuine identity that will take many years. For Achilles family means nothing, it would take but a few days to go home, and identity is bound up with fame achieved on the battlefield among fellow soldiers. He is a man with one *tropos*, one skill (*tekhnē*) and one sphere of excellence (*aretē*) only: he is a warrior. And we have already seen that even though Menelaus and Agamemnon do get home, the ends

⁹ Cited by [4, p. 622].

of their *nostoi* are meaningless: long and unbearably miserable for the former, and short and hideously violent for the latter.

Odysseus, by contrast, can try on different identities, thrive in different environments, practice many trades, and transcend his class, his station, even his gender — at one point he cries like a woman. He is a fine, careful carpenter, seemingly more at home with tools than with weapons, though he can use both well¹⁰. He has to adapt, to dissemble, so often that the reality of his very name seems to dim and waver, after he declares himself to the cyclops Polyphemus as *Outis*, “Nobody”, in order to avoid pursuit. His homeward voyage is one of **recognition**, a theme whose dramatic importance we shall discuss presently. And at one point Odysseus is told, not kindly, that “you seem to be a skipper of a merchant crew rather than a trained athlete” (see *Odyssey* 8.145–164). A cosmopolitan, a trader — these are well-known anti-Semitic stereotypes and it is no wonder that James Joyce called his novel about the peregrinations through Dublin of Leopold Bloom, a Jew, *Ulysses* (the Latin form of Odysseus, from a western Greek Oulixēs). But there was another people, close cousins of the Israelites, who were renowned as seafaring traders. And it is a possible affinity of the *Odyssey* to their culture that we shall now explore.

4. The Phoenicians

Homer calls the Phoenicians “Sidonians”, after one of their two principal home ports in the Lebanon; the other, Tyre, overtook Sidon in importance during the reign of Hiram I (969 BCE). The Greek word *phoinix* can mean purple (the famed Tyrian export), or date palm (a Phoenician national symbol), or a mythical bird that is immolated in fire and rises. But they always called themselves Canaanites: *knʾn* is of unknown origin but came to be associated in Biblical Hebrew with the meaning of “merchant” since that was the calling *par excellence* of the Phoenicians. The Semitic root *mkr* is found in the Akkadian designation of the upper class *tamkāru*-traders, Phoenician clients. Later, Carthaginian traders were known as *mkr* and *šhr*; commercial agents, as *mhsbm* [6, p. 107, 229]¹¹. There was extensive contact between Hellenes and Phoenicians from the Mycenaean age on (from the 14th century BCE), and Linear B has some Semitic loans that may be Phoenician (a Northwest Semitic language so similar to Hebrew that the two are mutually intelligible most of the time): *kurusu* for “gold”, cf. Hebrew *ḥārūš*; *kito* “robe” (Classical Greek *khitōn*), cf. Hebrew *kitōnet*. Phoenicians colonized Cyprus in the late 10th century BCE; a bronze bowl of the 9th century of Phoenician manufacture was found at the Kerameikos, Athens. Major Phoenician expansion into the western Mediterranean began in the 8th century; and descriptions in the *Odyssey* of Phoenician objects relate to this period as well, and not the Bronze Age¹².

¹⁰ Odysseus returned home in the hope of a peaceful life, but had to massacre the suitors of Penelope and some of the serving-women of the palace— their collaborators— in order to regain control of his own household. This part of the narrative has specific parallels in other epics in Indo-European languages, at the point in the story where a king must assert his right to his wife’s bed: see [5] on the case in the Armenian Artaxiad cycle and the Ossetian (Alan) *Narts*.

¹¹ Punic (Carthaginian) inscriptions mention “sellers” (*mkr*; cf. Hebrew *mōker*) of iron objects (*brzl*), gold objects (*hḥrṣ*), broad beans (*hpl*), and flax or linen (*hpšt*); two Punic inscriptions mention *šhr*, “merchants” (cf. Hebrew *sōḥar*). See [7, p. 281–282; 341–342].

¹² See [8, esp. p. 46–51].

In around 814 BCE the Tyrian princess Elissa or Dido (the name means “wanderer”, sister of Pygmalion and husband of Acherbas (Zakarba‘al, meaning “the Lord remembered him”), high priest of the temple of the “Tyrian Heracles” Melqart (the god’s name means “king of the city” in Phoenician), founded the city of Carthage (*Qart Ḥadašt*, “New Town”) on the Tunisian coast, directly south — as the frightened Romans always reckoned its position — of the mouth of the Tiber. It was to outgrow and outlive the home of its founders, as the capital of a naval and commercial empire, till its conquest and destruction by the Romans in 146 BCE. In the *Aeneid*, Dido seduces Aeneas when his band visit the new town on their way to Italy, and would have him stay on with her. But the hero, true to his mission, abandons the lustful queen, who combines the dangers of Circe and Calypso and the voluptuous blandishments of the dangerous, deceitful Orient with a political challenge — if Rome is to thrive, then Carthage cannot. As the Trojans set sail, Dido swears eternal enmity, has a pyre built on the acropolis of Carthage, the Byrsa, with her bed on top, and immolates herself. Hell hath no fury, perhaps, like a woman scorned; and although Virgil doubtless makes an invidious contrast between the manly self-control of Roman Aeneas and the violent, effeminate hysteria of the Carthaginian monarch, her act was historically consonant with Phoenician religious practice¹³. For the Romans henceforth, whatever was Phoenician was Carthaginian, and the term for the Phoenician language became Punic.

There are but two references in the *Iliad* to the Sidonians: Paris brings an embroidered garment from Sidon to Troy, and there is a silver *kratēr* (mixing bowl for wine) made by the *sidones polydaidaloi* “skilled Sidonians” [4, p. 598]. They do not figure, that is, except as producers of the sumptuary objects enjoyed by royalty. But in the *Odyssey* the Phoenicians are mentioned more often, and generally in a negative way — not as admirably *polydaidaloi* but as deplorably (though alliterative) *polypaipaloi*, “devious” [4, p. 621]. Odysseus, ever the master of creative cover stories, tells Eumaeus, the “glorious swineherd” who welcomes him and keeps Telemachus and him well hidden from the suitors on Ithaca as they plot their coup d’état, that he was tricked by a Sidonian sea captain hungry for profit who took long voyages. Eumaeus has his own tale of woe and abduction by those polypaipalous people, whose ships are slightly dismissed as crammed with *athyr-mata*, cheap trinkets (*Ody.* 15.459). (The Phoenicians in fact excelled at producing and selling mass-market knock-offs of Egyptian art. But they also transported other goods, often quality items, back home from the places they sailed to: Ezekiel 27 mentions Tyrian ships with goods from Yavan, i.e., Ionia, Greece.) Athena Herself on a visit to Telemachus pretends to be the Taphian merchant Mentès, and thus also a Phoenician, if Prof. Irene Winter’s suggestion that Taphian is a portmanteau name for a fictional place, combining Cypriot Tamassos and Paphos, is correct [4, p. 613, n. 13].

Perhaps the reason the *Iliad* scarcely mentions the Phoenicians, if only as the source of luxury goods, is that they are best known as traders and travelers and are thus not relevant to the epic’s setting or characters, as the poem focuses on the aristocratic way of life of a landed royal and warrior elite. In the *Odyssey*, however, Phoenicians are mentioned more often, and precisely as voyagers and merchants with sea voyages that were, like Odysseus’, very long, lasting as much as three years [4, p. 605]. One thinks that this might be

¹³ Elissa actually committed self-immolation, an act alien to the Classical world but commonplace among the Canaanites, in order to remain faithful to Acherbas and refuse the hand of the Libyan chieftain Hiarbas. See [6, p. 215–216].

because they can thereby serve as a kind of foil for Odysseus' predicament and the anxiety caused over the loss of his own status and identity over time. He is different from, but in character and predicament also uncomfortably close to, these Sidonians and this juxtaposition of the hero with the near other contributes to narrative tension¹⁴. When he finally does arrive home, will all this traveling, and negotiating, and role-playing, have changed his identity into that of a Sidonian? Thomas Wolfe wrote, *You can't go home again*; for, as his contemporary George Seferis, the Modern Greek poet, sighed, partly with Odysseus in mind, *Ma den teleiōnan ta taxeidia*, "But the journeys never ended."

If the structure and story-line of the *Odyssey* differ in so many ways from those of the *Iliad*, and the latter, rooted in archetypal and familiar epic themes, was the poem Greco-Roman posterity preferred, then we might search for the origin of the story of the *Odyssey* outside Hellenic, even Indo-European sources. I will presently propose here such a source. It is Phoenician and is attested at least thrice to my knowledge, albeit after the time of Homer. But the fact that it was told over and over, and used for different purposes, suggests it was both traditional and popular, and might therefore have been very old, too, perhaps current when Phoenician power was at its zenith and Greeks and Sidonians lived and worked in close proximity. The first issue to be considered is the evidence for the existence of a Phoenician literature in the first place. Though literature can thrive in oral form without most of it being set down in writing (pre-Islamic Arabic is a good example for the otherwise hyper-literate Semitic world), ancient Phoenicia lay between the two great ancient cradles of written civilization — Egyptian and Mesopotamian — and papyrus came from Phoenician Byblos (hence Greek *biblion*, "book", and the "Bible"). So did the alphabetic script used by most of the human race today. Even though very little of Phoenician literature has survived, it is likely there was once a very substantial body of writing in the language.

Speakers of a Northwest Semitic language modified Egyptian phonetic characters to create the first alphabetic script, in the 2nd millennium BCE. Subsequently the Phoenicians reduced and reshaped the alphabetic Ugaritic cuneiform signs, employing forms of the earlier Semitic alphabetic script, to fashion the 22-letter alphabet that is still used, though with altered forms of the characters, by its sister language, Hebrew. It is the source of almost all other alphabets, and Homer's time corresponds to the period of its widespread adoption and modification by the Greeks for their language — between 800 and 700 BCE. There was a considerable corpus of historiography, though most has been lost: the main surviving work is the epitome by Philo of Byblos in Greek of the cosmology and history of Sanchuniathon (ca. 10th century BCE) [6, p. 28]¹⁵. We have the *Periplus*, the dramatic narrative by a Carthaginian admiral, Hanno, of his exploratory sea voyage around Africa, but only in Greek translation. There are numerous inscriptions of all periods, many bilingual, in the 22-letter alphabet, reflecting the status for several centuries of Phoenician as a *lingua franca* of Western Asia and the eastern Mediterranean. Finally, Prof. Charles

¹⁴ By the near other I mean a person whose culture and identity are markedly different from one's own, but who does not live faraway and is thus also familiar, the familiarity and proximity often generating unease and hostility. For Europeans this was the Jew; for the Greeks of Constantinople and the later Turks, the Armenian (see [9]); and for the Hellenes of Homer's time, I suggest, the Phoenician. I. Winter suggests that the Phoenicians of the historical Homer's time (that is, the mid-8th century BCE) might even have served as the model for an emerging urban and mercantile society in Greece, though they were still the "other" to the aristocratic ideal of the epic [4, p. 633].

¹⁵ For an edition and detailed study of Philo of Byblos see [10].

Krahmalkov has identified a late Punic praise poem whose parallelisms make it akin to the Hebrew poetry of over a millennium earlier¹⁶. This would argue, in favor of the case I am about to make, for the conservatism of Phoenician writing, and the long memory of particulars of literary plot and style.

There seems to have been some imaginative romantic and adventure literature, if indeed one can claim a native source for the Hellenistic novella *Phoenicica* of Lollianus: Graham Anderson has adduced ancient Near Eastern parallels, that he argues were in some instances sources, for such Greek exotica. Parts of the *Phoenicica* survive as papyrus fragments from the second century CE; and a long, complete version, “The Tale of the Jewish Doctor”, is found in the Arabic *A Thousand Nights and a Night*, indicating wide popularity over a period of a millennium. It is not a particularly edifying tale, with plenty of steamy sex, and at one point the villains murder a child as a sacrifice and eat cooked bits of it [12, p. 152–159]¹⁷. This may perhaps be an authentic echo, bent to narrative purposes, of the ubiquitous *molk* rite, a unique and enduring feature of Canaanite religion that horrified other peoples,¹⁸ though Anderson does not suggest it. And the ancient Greek novels are as sanguinary as they are erotic. But if the murder of a boy in Lollianus’ *sesterce*-dreadful is a genuine Punic touch, then perhaps there was an earlier Phoenician text.

5. A Phoenician tale

Let us now turn to three texts whose plots have much in common with that of the *Odyssey* of Homer: a man travels over the seas for many years to reunite his sundered family, with scenes of recognition and of restoration of name and identity. I do not mean to suggest that these motifs, and others related to them, were peculiar to Phoenicia or originated there¹⁹; but as we have seen, the Phoenicians were the foreign people closest to Homer

¹⁶ See [11].

¹⁷ The surviving Greek fragments of the *Phoenicica* were translated into English, with notes and bibliography, by G. N. Sandy in [13, p. 809–812].

¹⁸ The Phoenician and Carthaginian nobility offered their own infants to be immolated in sacrifice (the *molk*, which has come into English as *Moloch*) and buried in urns, with commemorative steles. The place where all this was done, is known from the Hebrew (of the Prophets who execrated it) as the *tophet*. There are *tophets* everywhere the Phoenicians settled; but the largest is the Precinct of Tanit at Salammbô in Carthage, where some 20 000 funerary urns have been found [6, p. 245]. The Romans outlawed the practice but it persisted down to at least the 2nd century CE (see [14]). Queen Jezebel introduced the Tyrian form of the rite in the valley (Hebrew *ge*) of Hinnom of evil fame near Jerusalem (thus subsequent *Gehenna*), but it has precursors in Israelite religion: the *Aqedah* (“Binding of Isaac”) in Genesis and Jephthah’s sacrifice of his own daughter. The sacrifice of God’s only Son, whose followers drink His blood and eat His body for their salvation, might be skeptically regarded as in a way the last and greatest *molk* of Northwest Semitic religion, though the faith with this rite at its historical core is so universal as not to occasion surprise, much less revulsion. In medieval and later literary Hebrew, *tophet* even becomes a term for hell, even as Eden is used for the paradise of the world to come (see [15, p. 96, 106]). But it is interesting to observe that the baseless Christian blood libels against the Jews — according to which Christian children are kidnapped and their blood used to bake Passover matzah — may be the projection of an underlying anxiety about the strangeness of human sacrifice onto Christ’s own people, where such practices were attested but rarely and in the archaic era, and were shunned many centuries before the Nativity. The latest court cases of the blood libel were of Mendel Beilis (acquitted of all charges in court at Kiev, on the eve of the First World War) and Leo Frank (arrested, tried, and lynched by a mob in Atlanta, Georgia, USA in 1915). The anti-Semitic blood libel is still broadcast as truth on television shows in Syria, Egypt, and other Islamic countries.

¹⁹ S. Thompson [16], for instance, notes motifs encountered in the folk-lore of diverse peoples of the quest for a lost or kidnapped family or particular relatives (H 1385), of families accidentally reunited after a wife is, for instance, kidnapped by a sea captain, with tests of identity [cf. Penelope and the bed] and scenes

and his Odysseus, and as merchants and seafarers theirs was the culture most relevant to the main themes of Odysseus' life story. From the pen of earliest of the Roman dramatists, Plautus (b. ca. 254 BCE), comes the play *Menaechmi* ("The Two Menaechmuses"): A Sicilian (Sicily was heavily colonized by Phoenicians) has twin sons. He dies of grief after one is kidnapped; and the boys' maternal grandfather who raises the other, named Menaechmus, gives the name of the abducted boy, also Menaechmus, to the one still at home, whose original name was Sosicles. This Sosicles sets out to look everywhere for his twin, and sails for six years. The play starts at the end of that time: he casts anchor in the port of Epidamnus, where as it happens his kidnapped brother has been raised. This Epidamnian Menaechmus has prospered and has a hanger-on (*parasitus*) named Peniculus. The name of the latter means "little brush", one who sweeps up crumbs — which is what a *parasitos* does (the Greek means one who exchanges flattery, conversation, etc. for bread). But it can have obscene overtones, since the word can be read also as "little penis". And it may have been heard as well as a kind of epi-pun, perhaps, on Poenulus, "little Phoenician" — the name of the second play of Plautus we are presently to consider. The visitor is taken for his brother, who has planned to meet his favorite whore, Erotium, for lunch, and through a Comedy of Errors (indeed, the name of Shakespeare's play based on Plautus!) the brothers are reunited. So the sexual power of woman, so sinister in the Odyssey, is here the occasion for the favorable conclusion. It is a good story, and Ben Edwin Perry suggested that it and the ancient novel *Apollonius, Prince of Tyre* (note the Phoenician setting) served as the likely sources for the composition of the Pseudo-Clementine Recognitions, which we will consider once we are done with Plautus.

Is there anything Phoenician about the *Menaechmi*? The name Menaechmus is elsewhere attested only once in Greek, as that of a mathematician, a pupil of Eudoxus and friend of Plato, ca. 350 BCE. There is no known etymology, but I would like to propose one here. The name *mnḥm*, vocalized *Menaḥēm* in Hebrew and hypothetically as *Meneḥem* in Phoenician, means "comforter". It is well attested: from Kition, 4th century BCE, we find it in an inscription of Ariš, grandson of one Meneḥem, *rb srsrm* "chief of the brokers" (a long line of ancestors with the same title is listed); from Tamassos, Cyprus, 363 BCE, a monument (*sml*) is erected by Meneḥem son of Ben Ḥadaš son of Meneḥem²⁰. The meaning of the name, "comforter", seems singularly appropriate for the characters of Plautus' play, who are tragically parted and happily reunited. By contrast, in *megillāt Eikhāh* (the scroll of *Lamentations*), a text mourning the loss of the first two Temples, *ēin menaḥēm lāh*, "there is no comforter for her" (i.e., Zion, Jerusalem) is a constant refrain. (But the Prophet Isaiah 40.1 also encourages us, *Naḥamū 'amī*, "Take consolation, O my nation!") As we can see from the Phoenician inscription from Tamassos, it was not unusual for the name to be used multiple times in a family over the generations, just as it is in Plautus' play. It is as extremely rare a name in Greek and Latin, as nominal derivatives of the root *nḥm* are common in Hebrew,

of recognition [cf. Eurycleia and Odysseus' scar] (N 730: from Buddhist texts to Boccaccio!), a man's return home in humble disguise [cf. Odysseus with Eumaeus] (K 1815.1), a guest in disguise under a false name [cf. Odysseus in Phaeacia] (P 322.2), etc. G. K. Gresseth [17] (for this reference I am indebted to Hannibal Taubes at the University of California, Berkeley). He also adduces a long parallel Indian tale to the Odyssey, embedded in a classical epic, that is close in both general structure and in some, though far from all, details. The relation between the two clearly cognate texts is impossible to define, but we may be fairly certain at least that India was not the source of the Homeric narrative, which displays, in Gresseth's view, some basic "non-Indo-European" traits.

²⁰ See [18, p. 70–71; 88–89] and [19, p. 141].

from Biblical times down to the present day: Menachem, Nahum, Nachman, and Nechama. The proposed etymology of Menaechmus forces one, if the meaning of the name is of significance to the play (as is often the case), to ask also whether Plautus' play might even had had a Punic precursor whose audience understood the name.

And this leads us to the consideration of Plautus' second play, whose name and content leave no room for doubt as to its connection with Phoenicia: *Poenulus* ("the little Phoenician boy"), parts of which are in Punic transcribed into Latin script²¹. A seven-year-old boy, Agorastocles, is kidnapped from Carthage. His father names a cousin, Hanno, his heir, and dies of grief. Hanno has two daughters. An old woman-hater, Antidamas (who as it turns out was a family friend) buys the boy, adopts him, and makes him his heir. Later the two girls are kidnapped also at Megara, a park outside Carthage, and one Lycus ("Wolf") purchases them. Our little Phoenician has grown into a strapping youth who falls in love with one of the two young ladies. Lycus torments him, but the frustrated swain manages to implicate the villain in an act of theft. Hanno the Carthaginian, who has been searching everywhere by sea and land for his lost daughters, finds the suitor to be his long lost nephew Agorastocles, and then recognizes the girl as well. The family are happily reunited, with a wedding as icing to the cake. Hanno is portrayed, not only as a dedicated family man ready to travel for years to find his lost relatives, but as a savvy cosmopolitan who "knows all languages, too, but dissembles what he knows — a total Carthaginian. Why say more?" (lines 104–113); *polytropos*, *polymētis*, polyglot — a complete Odysseus, too. The play is so similar to the *Menaechmi* that they seem to emanate from a single source, from the treasure house of stories and shared concerns of the same group of people. This play is known to be a translation of a lost Greek work, *Karkhēdonios*, "The Carthaginian", ca. 309–308 BCE, but we do not know whether the original had lines of Punic in it interspersed with the rest of the text, as here²². Krahmalkov²³ suggests, intriguingly, that Plautus had at his disposal a Punic version of the *Carchedonius* and interwove lines from it with the Latin of his translation from the Greek. That means the Carthaginians would not only have had a theatrical culture, but enjoyed performances of Greek plays translated into their own language — a language that was evidently rich and capable of many kinds of literary genres and voices. Perhaps there was an original Punic play about members of a sundered family all named "Comforter", who were comforted.

The third text to be considered is the Pseudo-Clementine *Recognitions* (Greek *Anagnōseis*)²⁴, for it, too, is novel of sea travel, of family members lost and found, and of Phoenicia — the genre has a convenient if ponderous generic brand name in German, *Wiedererkennungsmärchen*. Authorship was falsely attributed to Clement I, Bish-

²¹ For instance, *avo doni* "Live (long), sir!" (cf. Hebrew *hai* "live" and *adōnī* "my lord, mister"); *mu punim sucartim*, "Do you remember Punic?" (cf. Hebrew *zākhartā*, "you remembered"); and, poignantly, *makom*, literally "place", for "city" — the Jewish use of this word for Amsterdam became the slang name of the city in Dutch and is still used, even though some ninety percent of the Dutch Jews were murdered by the Nazis. As Hanno makes his entrance he prays (line 930) *Yth alonim ualonuth sicorathi symakom syth*, "Ye gods and goddesses that I call upon, of this place!" (Cf. Heb. *elyōn* "high [god]" and *qarā'ti* "I called").

²² On the face of it that would seem unlikely, given the deeply rooted Greek disdain for "barbarian" tongues. The early Romans were in a somewhat different position: many were at least bilingual to start with in Etruscan and the various Italic languages, and any man aspiring to even a smattering of culture had to learn Greek, which in any case was spoken all over southern Italy. And one had to know some Punic to travel do business in the western Mediterranean.

²³ See [20].

²⁴ See [21].

op of Rome (late 1st century CE; his Latin name means “calm, tranquil, gentle”); the work seems rather to be a document associated with the Ebionites or Nazoraeans. These were early Christians who accepted Jesus as a prophet or messiah but to varying degrees rejected the doctrines of the Pauline Christians whose version of the new faith was to become its self-proclaimed orthodoxy. Paul courted the gentiles and abandoned both the people of Israel and the laws of the Torah. One might go so far as to assert that Christian anti-Semitism was born with Paul’s Epistles. The Ebionites and Nazoraeans did not break away, though, from the mother faith: they kept the Sabbath, the dietary laws of *kashrut*, circumcision, and other commandments. They also maintained steadfast attachment to the Land of Israel and reverence for Jerusalem as the place of the house of God on earth, the holy Temple. So it is reasonable to suppose that a story whose structure and themes are readily identifiable as belonging to the traditions of the Phoenicians, a people closely kin to the Jews, would have struck an instant resonance with them. Here is the story: Clement, the son of Faustus (a common Latin name meaning “fortunate”), has two brothers who are twins, Faustinus and Faustinianus (cf. the Menaechmi!)²⁵. He lives in Rome with his parents and them, but one day the twins and their mother travel to Athens and mysteriously vanish. Clement later goes on a religious pilgrimage to see the Apostle Peter in the Land of Israel. They travel together to the isle of Arados (i.e., Arvad, off the Phoenician coast), where Peter meets a beggar woman. She tells him she left her home once with her twin sons to escape the lustful advances of her brother-in-law without bringing shame upon the family. She and her boys were parted in a shipwreck. Peter reunites Clement with his mother, and they proceed northwards along the coast, visiting the temple of Melqart at Tyre and eventually arriving at Antioch, where they meet Nicetas and Aquila — who are in fact Faustinus and Faustinianus. The two had been captured after the shipwreck that parted them from their mother, and were adopted and named by a kindly Jewish Christian, Justin, in Caesarea on the coast of Israel. Peter mentions several times in the text the mendacious doctrines of the bad man — Paul — so the story is used as a frame to propagate Jewish Christian teaching, and Peter and Justin, the righteous men of the piece, are made to be the instrument of the recognitions and reunions of the sundered family, mother, twins, and all. The name Clement to the ear of a Semitic speaker might well be understood as a Latin synonym of Menachem; but in any case we already have a play on names — twin boys and a dad all named “Lucky”, which indeed the lads turn out to be, as their names and identity are restored.

6. Conclusions, and a different future for Odysseus

To review the evidence: we have the *Odyssey* of Homer, ca. 750 BCE; two similar Greek plays, one of which is securely Phoenician in its characters and setting, the other likely to be so, ca. 350 BCE (later translated and reworked by Plautus); and a Jewish Chris-

²⁵ T. Hägg [22, p. 163], notes that the motif of the twins is entirely unexploited, which would suggest that the author “simply took over parts of a ready-made story” on which to erect the “superstructure” of his apologia for the Christian faith. I have argued that a propagandist of Manichaeism, probably around the same time (3rd-4th century CE), acted in much the same way— he appropriated the epic motifs of the heroic quest and *Drachenkampf*— battle with a dragon— and then cunningly altered aspects of them in order to attract, disorient, then teach a Syro-Armenian audience (see [23]). If one recalls the episode of initiation into the cult of Isis in the *Metamorphoses* of Apuleius of Madaura (2nd century CE) and considers Merkelbach’s persuasive argument that Iamblichus worked Mithraic allegory into his own Oriental Hellenistic romance, the *Babyloniaka*, then the religious subtext seems more the rule than the exception in these popular works.

tian novella clearly modeled on the same basic story of the two plays and set in the Land of Israel, Phoenicia, and up the Syrian coast, *ca.* 2nd century CE. The two plays and the novella would appear to flow from the same stream of Phoenician storytelling, in overall theme and in small details such as naming, but they are attested at a minimum of four centuries *after* Homer. Moreover, one might expect to encounter the common story line among peoples who sailed the Mediterranean, without the necessity of filiation; and the themes and elements of the story can be found as folk-lore motifs in many places and times. So one cannot offer a watertight case. This is a skiff whose caulking Odysseus would not approve. Fortunately, even as Melqart rides his sea horse over the waves, the hero of Ithaca, so like the Tyrian Heracles in his trials of strength, could mount the floating planks of a shattered vessel. But one's suggestion of a much older Phoenician tale behind the plays, the novel — and the epic — given the circumstances of culture and geography, is something more than a thought experiment if less than a concrete archaeological excavation. It is a suggestion that is not at all an unreasonable one. And if we give it a hearing, then perhaps our understanding of the complexity of Greek identity itself may be enhanced. Man is both a single being and a binary, forked creature; our thoughts perpetual thesis and antithesis. Thus, too, the foundational, sacral epic of Hellenic civilization itself. Half is aristocratic, martial, landed, rooted in the rules of honor and shame, and imperishable glory, Achaean, Indo-European, chanted by bards. And the other half is writ in the script of Cadmus (Semitic *qdm*, “eastern, ancient”), and is clever, mobile, and febrile, cosmopolitan and adaptable, curious and adventuring, Phoenician, Semitic. One adumbrates here not only the cross-cultural borrowings admirably explored by Michael Astour in his *Hellenosemitica*, but the very sense of what it is to be Greek. The truly admirable is always also inexplicable; yet perhaps it was this merging of two streams of eastern Mediterranean civilization that was in part responsible for that synthesis: the golden age of Athens, the city whose goddess was patroness of Odysseus and Telemachus, the city where the written recension of Homer was accomplished.

In his famous poem *Ithakē* the modern Greek poet Constantine Cavafy writes, “When you set out on the journey to Ithaca, / Pray that the road be long,” full of adventures, new sights, discoveries, and luxurious, exotic things to enjoy. A less well-known verse published in the *Mikra Kabaphika* entitled *Deutera Odysseia*, “A Second Odyssey”, with epigraphs from the 26th canto of the *Inferno* of Dante and Alfred, Lord Tennyson’s “Ulysses”, suggests (lines 27–29) ...*kai tēn eirēnēn kai anapausin tou oikou ebarynthē:/ K’ ephygen* “... and the peace and relaxation of home weighed upon him/ And he fled.” Dante has Ulysses and his men sail through the Pillars of Hercules (i.e., of Tyrian Melqart) and turn south to discover what lies in the regions of the Antipodes. Ulysses urges them on with a short, stirring oration that must be seen as the noble battle cry of the Renaissance at its moment of birth: *Considerate la vostra semenza:/ fatti non foste a viver come bruti, / ma per seguir virtute e canoscenza* “Think of the seed from which you were born! / You were not made to live as animals, / but to pursue virtue and knowledge.” But as the crew heave in sight of the mount of Purgatory, three great waves engulf them, punishing them for their hubristic audacity. Three waves, *trikymia*, is Greek for a storm at sea; and here the number must correspond to the Trinity as well. Tennyson’s poem presents Ulysses in the same way, urging on his men with eloquence of equal might and passion: “It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles, / And see the great Achilles, whom we knew. / Tho’ much is taken, much abides; and tho’ / We are not now that strength which in old days / Moved

earth and heaven, that which we are, we are;/ One equal temper of heroic hearts, / Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will/ To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.” Is there a man, young or old, with such a heart of stone as to be unmoved by these lines?

Yet all the prediction in the *Odyssey* actually says is that our hero is to travel again, to a place where men do not know oars, and that death will come to him from the sea in a normal way. There is no suggestion that he will become bored and want to leave Ithaca, and there is no sequel either that might recount the fate of Telemachus. Western humanistic tradition has projected the fate of Odysseus in a direction never explicitly defined, in a mighty and audacious feat of imagination²⁶. If the basic narrative frame, the armature, of the *Odyssey* is the Phoenician tale that I have proposed, then the later life and end of our hero can accordingly be imagined in another way than Dante and his successors envisioned it. His later life, following our model, would have been a time of domestic happi-

²⁶ Joseph Brodsky tried to imagine it. Either the worst has happened, and the journey has blurred the consciousness and identity of Odysseus, or it is years later, and he is old and about to go away. *Мой Телемак, / Троянская война окончена. Кто победил — не помню. / Должно быть, греки: столько мертвецов/ вне дома бросить могут только греки..., / И все-таки ведущая домой/ дорога оказалась слишком длинной, / как будто Посейдон, пока мы там/ теряли время, растянул пространство. / Мне неизвестно, где я нахожусь, / что предо мной. Какой-то грязный остров, / кусты, постройки, хрюканье свиней, / заросший сад, какая-то царица, / трава да камни... Милый Телемак, / все острова похожи друг на друга, / когда так долго странствуешь, и мозг / уже сбивается, считая волны, / глаз, засоренный горизонтом, плачет, / и водяное мясо застит слух. / Не помню я, чем кончилась война, / и сколько лет тебе сейчас, не помню. // Расти большой, мой Телемак, расти. / Лишь боги знают, свидимся ли снова. / Ты и сейчас уже не тот младенец, / перед которым я сдержал быков. / Когда б не Паламед, мы жили вместе. / Но, может быть, и прав он: без меня/ ты от страстей Эдиповых избавлен, и сны твои, мой Телемак, безгрешны.* “My Telemachus: / The Trojan war is over. Who won — I don't remember. / It must have been the Greeks: only Greeks / could toss so many corpses out the door... / But the road leading home even so/ seems to have been too long, / As though Poseidon, while there / we wasted time, stretched space. / I don't know now where I am / Or what's in front of me. Some dirty isle, / bushes, houses, snorting pigs, / a garden overgrown, some queen, / and grass and stones... My dear Telemachus, / all islands are similar to each other, / when you've been wandering this long, and the brain / loses track counting waves; / the eye tears, clogged by the horizon, / and the flesh of the brine dulls the ear. / I don't recall how the war ended, / don't remember how old you are now. // Grow big, my Telemachus, grow. / Only the gods know if we'll meet again. / You aren't the baby anymore / Before whom I held the oxen back. / If not for Palamedes, we'd have lived together. / But perhaps he's right: without me / You're relieved of Oedipal passions, and your dreams, my Telemachus, are harmless.” I sat a few feet from Brodsky as he recited this newly completed poem at a reading in the international studies building of Columbia University on a Spring afternoon in 1972, shortly after his expulsion from the Soviet Union. A freshman all of eighteen then, one did not yet know to ask him whether he meant that all islands are alike, like all Tolstoy's happy families; and had one known more then, one might have asked him, also, whether he intended his evocation of stretched space and wasted time in “Odysseus to Telemachus” to resonate in wan irony with the final verses of Mandelstam's poem of 1917 in *Tristia*, “The stream of honey golden from the bottle flowed”: *Помнишь, в греческом доме: любимая всеми жена, — / Не Елена — другая, — как долго она вышивала? / Золотое руно, где же ты, золотое руно? / Всю дорогу шумели морские тяжелые волны, / И, покинув корабль, натрудивший в морях полотно, / Одиссей возвратился, пространством и временем полный.* “Do you recall, in that Hellenic house, the wife beloved of all, / Not Helen, the other, how long she was weaving? / Golden fleece, where are you then, golden fleece? / All the way thundered the heavy sea breakers, / And abandoning his ship, working a canvas of the waves, / Odysseus returned, replete with time and space.” Brodsky was impatient with pedants in later years but he was still young then, and gentle with a boy: I approached him and asked whether he had read *The Icon and the Axe*; later, I gather, he and James Billington were friends. There is another Russian insight, cryptically brief but wonderfully pregnant with suggestion of the uncanny, into the character of Telemachus: in Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Bend Sinister* the hero, Professor Adam Krug, suggests that one read the “pruned” essence of the name *ТЕЛМАХ* (i.e., Telemachus) backwards: the result is Hamlet.

ness and tranquillity, not a daring voyage of heroic discovery (or, viewed more cynically, a deadbeat dad's road trip with his pals to relive his youth). It is a future with Penelope and the growing Telemachus to comfort (*nħm!*) him and be comforted by his gentle presence as he grew old, not one of arms and warriors. So at some point towards the end, the aged Odysseus, king of a little island, set out on a distant journey on business: those Sidonians of ours were sailing through the Pillars of Melqart all the time, not to storm Purgatory but to trade in Cadiz and pick up cargo at the tin mines of southern Britain. And perhaps on just such a commercial voyage in the dangerous Atlantic he met his end. But for long years he had enjoyed a happy life at home reunited with his beloved wife and son. It was the life of peace that he worked so hard and prayed so long for, over ten long years of hard fighting under the walls of Troy and ten more of harder sailing — peace that he deserved, and, with the aid of his friend, the grey-eyed goddess Athena, finally got. It's about family.

References

1. Russell J.R. "The Cat Who Played Dead" (translation of a poem by Naghash Hovnatan, with commentary). *Ararat Quarterly*, vol. 32, Summer 1992, no. 131.
2. Halbertal M *People of the Book: Canon, Meaning, and Authority*. Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1997. 208 p.
3. Russell J.R. A Parthian *Bhagavad Gita* and its Echoes. Eds J.-P. Mahé, R. W. Thomson. *From Byzantium to Iran: In Honour of Prof. Nina Garsoian*. Atlanta, Scholars Press, 1996, pp. 17–35.
4. Winter I.J. "Homer's Phoenicians: History, Ethnography, or Literary Trope? (A Perspective in Early Orientalism)", reprinted in her *On Art in the Ancient Near East, Vol. I: Of the First Millennium BCE*, Leiden, Brill, 2010, pp. 597–639.
5. Russell J.R. Argawan: The Indo-European Memory of the Caucasus. *Journal of Armenian Studies*, vol. III. 2, Fall 2006 [2007], pp. 110–147.
6. Aubet M. E. *The Phoenicians and the West: Politics, Colonies, and Trade*, 2nd ed. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2001. 432 p.
7. Krahmalkov C. R. *Phoenician-Punic Dictionary* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 90; Studia Phoenicia 15). Leuven, Peeters, 2000. 499 p.
8. Muhly J. D. Homer and the Phoenicians: The Relations between Greece and the Near East in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. *Berytus*, 1970, vol. 19, pp. 19–64.
9. Russell J.R. A Scholium on Coleridge and an Armenian Demon. *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, vol. 10 (1998, 1999 [2000]), pp. 63–71.
10. Baumgarten A. I. *The Phoenician History of Philo of Byblos: A Commentary*. Leiden, Brill, 1981. 284 p.
11. Krahmalkov C. R. 'When He Drove out Yirachan': A Phoenician (Punic) Poem, ca. A.D. 350. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*, no. 294 (May, 1994), pp. 69–82.
12. Anderson G. *Ancient Fiction: The Novel in the Greco-Roman World*. London, Croom Helm, 1984. 248 p.
13. Reardon B. P. *Collected Ancient Greek Novels*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1989. 827 p.
14. Brown S. *Late Carthaginian Child Sacrifice and Sacrificial Monuments in their Mediterranean Context* (JSOT/ASOR Monograph Series, vol. 3). Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1991. 335 p.
15. Roth C. *The Jews in the Renaissance*. Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society of America, 1959. 426 p.
16. Stith Thompson S. *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*, in 6 vols. Bloomington, IN, Indiana University Press, 1955–1958.
17. Gresseth G. K. "he *Odyssey* and the *Nalopākhyāna*. *Transactions of the American Philological Association*, 1979, vol. 109, pp. 63–85.
18. Rev. G. A. Cooke. *A Text-Book of North Semitic Inscriptions*. Oxford University Press, Oxford, UK.
19. Benz F. L. *Personal Names in the Phoenician and Punic Inscriptions*. Rome, Biblical Institute Press, 1972. 511 p.
20. Krahmalkov C. R. Observations on the Punic Monologues of Hanno in the 'Poenulus'. *Orientalia*, New Series, 1988, vol. 57, no. 1, pp. 55–66.

21. Irmscher J., Strecker G. The Pseudo-Clementines. Ed. by Wm. Schneemelcher. *New Testament Apocrypha*, vol. II. Louisville, KY, James Clarke & Co., Westminster, John Knox, 1992, pp. 483–530.

22. Hägg, T. *The Novel in Antiquity*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1983. 264 p.

23. Russell J. R. The Epic of the Pearl. *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes*, 2001–2002, vol. 28, pp. 29–100.

Received: 12.11.2017

Accepted: 08.02.2018

Author's information:

James R. Russell — PhD, Professor; russelldeep@gmail.com

Одиссей и финикийская сказка

Джеймс Р. Рассел

Гарвардский университет, Массачусетс Холл, Кембридж, МА 02138

Для цитирования: Рассел Д. Р. Одиссей и финикийская сказка // Вестник Санкт-Петербургского университета. Философия и конфликтология. 2018. Т. 34. Вып. 2. С. 00–00. <https://doi.org/>

Вопрос об авторстве двух гомеровских эпосов — принадлежит ли Гомеру только один из них, или оба — сделался трудным местом для ученых с момента начала их критического литературного исследования. Отличающаяся воинственным духом, но в меньшей степени психологизированная и таинственная Илиада безусловно была более популярной поэмой в древности. И хотя позднее в Энеиде Вергилий сумел тенденциозно объединить историю о воинской доблести с сюжетом возвращения на родину, перед читателем предстал воспетый римским поэтом воин — человек оружия, а не человек многих путей и уловок. Автор статьи утверждает, что Одиссея с его гибкостью и приспособляемостью к обстоятельствам можно сравнить с ханаанским (финикийским) купцом-путешественником. Одиссей — «бескорыстный космополит» своей бесконечно удаленной от нас эпохи, резонирует затруднительному положению отчуждения современного человека и психологической глубине современной литературной чувствительности гораздо больше, чем воинственный, откровенный, ограниченный Ахиллес или Эней. В статье выдвигается гипотеза о том, что Одиссея Гомера использует тоpos человека, странствующего в поисках потерянных членов своей семьи, причем, путешествие завершается счастливым концом. Этот тоpos, по-видимому, был особенно популярен на протяжении многих веков у финикийцев и карфагенян. Автор утверждает, что за именем Менехма — персонажа основанной на этом тоpose пьесы Плавта «Два Менехма», пуническая постановка которой могла быть осуществлена в Кварте Хадаште (в новом городе, т. е. в Карфагене) в северо-западном семитском переводе, с очевидностью просматривается очень распространенное еврейское имя Менахем. Опираясь на обширный сравнительно-лингвистический материал, автор отмечает повторяемость топов (общих мест) данного сюжета, использовавшихся в религиозной пропаганде иудео-христиан, в частности, в «Псевдо-Клементинах» — апокрифических текстах, в которых описывается морское путешествие обращенного язычника (предположительно св. Климента Римского) с ап. Петром.

Ключевые слова: литература, сказка, культура, человек, тоpos, Христианство, язычество.

Контактная информация:

Рассел Джеймс Р. — д-р филос., проф.; russelldeep@gmail.com

ИССЛЕДОВАНИЯ ПО ИСТОРИИ ЭТНОКУЛЬТУР И ДИАСПОР: ЕВРЕИ, ГРЕКИ, АРМЯНЕ

THE LYRE OF KING DAVID AND THE GREEKS

J. R. Russell

James R. Russell

Mashtots Professor of Armenian Studies

Harvard University, USA,

Distinguished Visiting Professor

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel,

Lecturer in Jewish Studies and Hebrew

California State University, Fresno, USA

E-mail: russelldeep@gmail.com

A Greek myth about the invention of the lyre, reflected also in a medieval Persian romance, suggests that while the natural harmony of the spheres is divine, human music can be demonic. A Talmudic story about King David, “the sweet singer of Israel”, may utilize the myth to demonstrate the superiority of Torah to the pagan culture with which Jews were in intimate contact.

Keywords: Hermes, Orpheus, Terpander, turtle, lyre, harp, *Vamiq u Adhra*, David, Psalter, Babylonian Talmud, *Odes of Solomon*, St. Ephrem, Paul Raboff, A. S. Pushkin

ЛИРА ЦАРЯ ДАВИДА И ГРЕКИ

Дж. Р. Расселл

Джеймс Р. Расселл

Профессор армянских исследований
Гарвардского университета, США,

Приглашенный профессор
Еврейского университета, Израиль,

Преподаватель Калифорнийского государственного
университета, США

E-mail: russelldeep@gmail.com

Греческий миф об изобретении лиры, отраженный и в средневековом персидском романе, предполагает, что естественная гармония сфер — божественная, а человеческая музыка зачастую сатанинская. Легенда в Талмуде о «сладком певце Израиля», царе Давиде, очевидно, использовала этот греческий источник с целью продемонстрировать превосходство Торы в отношении к языческой культуре, с которой, однако, евреи периода сочинения *Гемары* находились в тесном контакте.

Ключевые слова: Гермес, Орфей, Терпандр, черепаха, лира, арфа, *Вамик* и *Адхра*, Давид, Псалтырь, Вавилонский Талмуд, *Оды Соломона*, Св. Ефрем Сирин, А. С. Пушкин

*Thrown like a star in my vast sleep
I opened my eyes to take a peek
To find that I was by the sea
Gazing with tranquility:*

*'Twas then when the Hurdy Gurdy Man
Came singing songs of love.*

*Unenlightened shadows cast
Down through all eternity
The crying of humanity —*

*'Tis then when the Hurdy Gurdy Man
Comes singing songs of love.*

Donovan Leitch
(Scottish musician, 1968)

Greeks listened to, and learnt to play, live music, especially that of the lyre: it was central to their life and culture in a way that is rather unfamiliar to the everyday experience of a person in the present digitalized culture and consequent-

ly hard to appreciate, so to understand its importance requires special stress. The instrument figures prominently, given its ubiquity, in religious imagery and cosmological theory. The Greek lyre was loud enough in various ways to be heard across the Aegean as part of the Hellenic cultural and philosophical challenge that Israel encountered, pondered, and answered. In a story that was passed down to Hellenistic and later Persian romance — thus enjoying a very wide currency over considerably more than a millennium — Hermes heard the wind playing through the sinews of a dead tortoise and producing music; he enjoyed the tune of what we would now call an Aeolian harp, but was sad because he could not reproduce it. Later a mysterious old man he just happened to meet by the roadside (though nothing just happens in a folk tale or myth, least of all wise old men in the middle of nowhere; one of them, for example, gives the house of Sasun, the clan of the Armenian national epic, their name) helped him to fashion an instrument he could play by himself. The lyre was born.

In the Iranian version of the tale, the name of Hermes is given as Hurmuz, which just happens (though as we noted above, nothing just happens) to be a form of the name of Ahura Mazda, the good creator God of the Zoroastrians. The old man is given the name Hazhraman: whatever this might also have rendered, it sounds like the name in Middle and New Persian of Ahura Mazda's cosmic enemy Angra Mainyu, Ahriman. So the mysterious elder might be an incarnation of the evil demon. If so, the story can be seen to adumbrate the contrast between the inspired music of the divine, passively received but pure, and active human artifice, which is fallible and can be perverted to employ music for the purposes of vice. As a corollary matter, the ancients pondered the states of sleeping, with its passivity, and waking, with its conscious activity.

The pagan figure of Orpheus, the good shepherd and lyre-player who charmed wild animals by his art and brought his wife back from Hades, was co-opted by Judaism and Christianity to the iconography of David, the lyre player who soothed the madness of King Saul and composed the Psalms, and (as the Christian New Testament insists) of David's lineal and messianic descendant Jesus. The possible "Jewish-Christian" *Odes of Solomon* receive the mixed pagan and Biblical tradition and juxtapose the music of the Aeolian harp with that of the lyre of the poet, the singer of God's praises. The Babylonian Talmud and Midrash Tanchuma contain slightly different versions of a myth about King David rising from a habitually light sleep every midnight when the north wind blew through the lyre hanging above his bed. I suggest that this may be a reply to the Greek aetiological story, and that it was composed so as to assert in multiple ways the pre-eminence of the sweet singer of Israel, by virtue of his true faith, over the siren songs of Hellenism.

1. HERMES, THE TURTLE, AND THE DEVIL'S MUSIC

On his day of birth, the Greek god Hermes was on the way to steal the cattle¹ of his brother, the god Apollo, when he discovered a turtle. He killed it, scooped out its shell, and fashioned a lyre of seven strings. Later on the busy youngster sang to Apollo and gave him the lyre to appease him for the theft. This account, from the Homeric Hymns, *ca.* 6th – 5th centuries BCE, is the earliest of a number of accounts, which differ in small details, of the complex myth on the origin of the lyre. Lucian, for example, relieves young Hermes of the disturbing detail of killing the creature: the little tortoise is already dead when he finds it². There is a slightly different myth as well, fragmentarily attested in Greek in the Hellenistic romance *Metiokhos and Parthenope*, *ca.* 1st century BCE; it seems to have become very popular and enduring, for it is more fully related in the Persian romance in *mathnavi* verse *Vāmiq u 'Adhrā* of Abu'l Qāsim 'Unsuri (*ca.* 970 – *ca.* 1040 CE). The Persian tale relates that the diners at a symposium (dinner party) at the court of Polycrates of Samos (the names are fairly faithfully rendered in Persian transliteration) were discussing the shapes of Eros (the god of love). The poet Ibycus took up the *barbaq*³ and sang of the beauty of the young couple Vamiq and Adhra, who were present at the celebration. Vamiq then told this story: the *farzāna* (“wise man”) Hurmuz (i. e., Hermes) once went up a mountain to worship God and saw a tortoise (Persian *sang-pušt*, lit. “rocky-back”) with dried sinews. He hung it up and the wind blew through the sinews, making music. Hurmuz wanted then to fashion an instrument he might play by himself, but all his attempts were unsuccessful. He went for a walk down the road feeling bad, and came upon an old man who just happened to be sitting there.

The old man, whose name was Hažrahman, arranged the tortoise shell with strings “in the likeness of the disposition of animate nature” (*āmīzeš-i gōhar-i jānvar*): “a stroke on the strings is like a movement in our body”, he explained. And that was the lyre. The Greek romance was evidently widely popular in the early Islamic period: Ibn al-Nadīm mentions in his *Fihrist*

¹ This is not necessarily an anomalous activity for a mythological figure, though it is admittedly not the first thing human newborns do. Cattle raiding is part of the job description of rakish young Indo-European epic heroes and divinities, from Cuchulain in pagan Ireland to the Kalaša god of raiders and rustlers Gīš (< *gāv-išti*– “cow seeking”) in the Hindu Kush. The narrative of the *Gathas* of Zarathustra, in their canonical order, begins with the complaint of the Soul of the Cow against the violence of her kidnappers; and the ancient Iranian Prophet comes in part to preach a way of life that excludes this customary practice as immoral. The raiders were called *mairya*, a word that originally meant simply “marriageable young man” (and became that again in Middle Persian, as *mērag*). The young Indian god Krishna enjoys dalliances with the *gōpīs*, “cowgirls”. In America all this is sublimated into the cinematic Western saga.

² See Graves 1957, 63–64, for a useful and lively composite summary of the story.

³ This instrument could be a lyre with deep pitch corresponding to the Greek *barbitos*, the invention of which was attributed to Terpander of Lesbos (7th BC): see Hägg 1989, 47.

(the “List” [of the books in his father’s Baghdād book shop]) an Arabic translation; and Birūnī knew a Persian prose version. The Persian rendering here of Hermes — Hurmuz — coincides with one form of the name of the good Creator God of Zoroastrianism, Ahura Mazda, Middle Persian Ohrmazd. This can scarcely have been mere happenstance, as already suggested, and the Iranist Bo Utas proposed reasonably that at some point the coincidence offered an opportunity to make a point. The old man’s unusual name, Hazhraman, might be a scribal corruption or, better, an otherwise unattested form of the name Ahreman, the Middle Persian form of Avestan Angra Mainyu — the name of the Evil Spirit, Ahura Mazda’s co-eternal cosmic enemy. Thus Utas remarks, “even if sung for the highest purposes, poetry and music will need something devilish”⁴. Hägg noted that Longus and Achilles Tatius attributed to Pan — the god of the “panic”, whom Christians early equated with the devil — the invention of the *syrix*, a flute⁵. Though the woodland god did this in a grief-stricken attempt to reconstruct the sundered limbs of his beloved, might this association of Pan with the origins of another instrument also have perhaps inspired a transmitter of the tale along the way to ‘Unsurī to take up the theme of music as potentially demonic?⁶

There are two kinds of lyre in this story, and the physical distinction between them seems to imply, or to facilitate, a moral divergence of greater import. For the first one, which Hermes makes in one version of the myth but simply discovers in the other version — the one that is attested in the Hellenistic romance and is transmitted down to classical Persian — is the kind of lyre that makes music when the wind blows through the sinews and makes them vibrate, without the exercise of any human agency save hanging the tortoise shell in the right place for the breezes to find it. This one belongs to God or Nature, without human interference. This instrument, which can be manufactured to have the wind play it, is the Aeolian harp⁷; and it will be of importance to our discussion shortly also to note that in a number of Semitic languages, including Hebrew and Aramaic/Syriac, the word for wind and spirit is the same, Heb. *rūah*, Syr. *rūhā*. So this first kind of lyre produces literally the music of the spirit. The second is the lyre the old man Hazh-

⁴ See Utas 1997.

⁵ Hägg 1989, 67–68.

⁶ American folklore abounds in cautionary tales about “the devil’s music”, fiddlers’ duels, *etc.* One need only recall the deal the great bluesman Robert Johnson is supposed to have made with Satan at the proverbial crossroads. Johnson recorded twenty-nine songs; a film on the search for the thirtieth suggests that it is, mystically, within each musician — his own, waiting to be created.

⁷ It is still manufactured; and the ceaseless winds of the Pacific play with their invisible fingers on the strings of one that hangs at one of the piers at Fisherman’s Wharf on the San Francisco Bay, to the distant accompaniment of the hearty barking chorus of the antic congregation of California sea lions at Pier 39.

raman crafted, a work of secondary human artifice⁸ rather than of primary nature *ab initio*, and one whose strings a musician must willfully strike with a plectrum or pluck with his fingers. Perhaps the intrusion of these elements of individual human artifice and art, of the musical expression of our fallible free will, is what is perceived to open the door to sin and evil — to the devil's music. This problem, or distinction, will loom large in our discussion presently. For the greatest and most vividly portrayed of the Kings of Israel, David, made his contribution to Scripture, and to the prayer and music of all later ages, both Jewish and Christian, as a lyric poet and musician. How can his art be set apart from that of other players of the lyre? Is it in any way morally vulnerable?

Though until Thomas Edison, a scant century and a half ago, all music everywhere was live, technology has set much of humanity at a distance from many of the direct experiences that our ancestors enjoyed and suffered. It is as though the information age and digital recording have thrust us deeper into Plato's cave — farther away from authenticity than ever, and deeper into the dreams of semblance, of illusion and simulacrum⁹. So the modern reader is unlikely to encounter a harp, much less a lyre, in the course of a day; and most of the music he hears is likely to have been recorded. His experience is thus third-hand, and the instrument itself is wholly unfamiliar, as are the mechanics and principles of its operation. This engenders a myopia that prevents one from appreciating, unless it is specially emphasized, a point crucial to this discussion: how very important and familiar the lyre is likely to have been for the ancient writers whose mythological tales and philosophical arguments we are presently to consider. All the music of antiquity was live, and the music of the lyre in particular pervaded the culture of ancient Greece. One need think only of the very designation of the genre of *lyric* poetry — now a wholly formal term, and nearly meaningless — to appreciate this, but the lyre had a role in heroic poetry as well, and in the lives of the heroes themselves. Reciters of Homer often played the lyre (Greek *kithara* or *kitharis*; the synonymous term *lyrā* is first attested in the poetry of Archilochus of Paros, 7th century BCE); and ac-

⁸ The Zoroastrians, relevantly for this story, distinguish between the capability of Ahura Mazda to create *ex nihilo*, expressed by Persian *dādan*, and Ahreman's more limited ability only to slap things together secondhand (*kirrēnīdan*) from material already created by God. See Russell 2004, 1333–1345 (“Some Iranica in Eznik”).

⁹ The advertisement for an American sound recording tape used to ask, “Is it real or is it Memorex?” This writer's friend Robert L. Karash, a mystic and computer scientist of genius, used to smile when we enjoyed together one or another direct experience of music or religious practice and say, “It's not Memorex — it's real!” The American science fiction writer Philip K. Dick, on whose work the film “Blade Runner” (1982) was based, explored through a creative life that produced over forty novels the question of cybernetic and other simulacra and its resonance with larger social, moral, and ontological issues of identity, the definition of human rights, and the nature of consciousness.

cording to Homer both the Achaean warrior Achilles¹⁰ and the Trojan prince Paris were accomplished players of the instrument. Aeschylus (*Supp.* 681) called the grimness of war in which the former at least excelled “lyre-less, generating tears”; so when the best of the Achaeans plays, it is in the lulls between battles, underscoring thereby, perhaps, the very horror of fighting and bloodshed. Musical training was a basic part of education for life, and Greeks could not imagine a paradise after death without it, either: Pindar includes the music of the lyre among the pleasures of the city of the virtuous departed (Pyth. 10. 37 sqq.). Music, with lyres and pipes, was associated mostly with cheerful events — with such celebrations as weddings or symposia — but also with ritual processions, both joyful and solemn. There were lyres of different types, as well as harps; and a red-figure Attic pottery fragment depicts young men playing tortoise-shell lyres (*chelys*)¹¹ — the kind Hermes was said to have invented¹². Music, being so ubiquitous and so obviously mathematical in its principles, was a subject of physical investigation and of cosmological, philosophical, and spiritual speculation. The Pythagorean school, followed by Plato, conceived the idea that the measurable, arithmetical intervals of the harmonies of terrestrial music pervaded the cosmos, with the sounds and distances of the paths and movements of the heavenly bodies of the rational *macrocosm* corresponding — resonating, literally — to those of the soul, thoughts, passions, and bodily members of the human being, the *microcosm*. For one recalls also that the Greeks believed the sound of each string of Hermes’ lyre did not merely stir the spirit — it resounded to a specific member of the human body.

2. THE LYRE AND THE PHILOSOPHERS

The practice of philosophy, considered by the Greeks to be the loftiest discipline of the mind, might thus lead one to appreciate the best of music and to experience the correspondingly highest music of the spheres; while the appropriate kinds of music performed here on earth were believed to have the power to exert a psychological influence upon an individual, with therapeutic effect. Doctors employed music in the belief it might heal both maladies of the soul and physical diseases. Of course not all music could do this: if some was sublime, other sorts might serve only to excite the lower passions

¹⁰ A Syrian mosaic captioned in Syriac Estrangelo script, mid-to-late 3rd century CE, in the Bible Lands Museum, Jerusalem, Israel, shows Achilles (*k'w's*) with a lyre serenading Patroclus (*p'trql's*). The two are seated on a low couch together: Achilles holds the lyre upright in his left hand and extends his right hand to his beloved friend; Patroclus gestures with his left hand towards Achilles, and holds a leafy branch in his right. See Russell 2001–2002, 62, pl. 9.

¹¹ Cf. the ancient Roman riddle *Dum vixi tacui; mortua, cano* (“I was silent when alive; having died, I sing”), the answer to which is Greek *khelōnē*, “tortoise”.

¹² See West 1992, 13–15, 50, and pl. 18.

(in latter-day terms, this would be the “sex and drugs and rock ‘n roll” kind), and to be detrimental to one’s moral and physical health. In the *Republic*, Plato prescribes limiting the kind of music that the youth of his imagined, metaphorical polis are allowed to hear, preferring military music to other types as being most encouraging to patriotic sentiment and conducive to useful activity¹³. Aristotle categorized the functions of music as educative (*paideia*), as providing intellectual enjoyment (*diagōgē*), and as effecting purification (*katharsis*). The Neoplatonist Plotinus, who viewed all things as linked in a chain of being, emanating from higher to lower, classified music in a three-stage hierarchy: *mousikos*, *erōtikos* — and, of course, philosophical. Christians inherited much of this ancient pagan music theory: some kinds of music might be base, and therefore to be avoided; so some churches to this day disdain polyphony and the playing of instruments, preferring plain song. But in its highest form music was angelic song: the *Trisagion* (Greek, “Thrice Holy”, corresponding to the Hebrew *Qedushah*) chanted before the throne of God, and conveyed to the prophet Isaiah by an angel¹⁴.

The lyre enjoyed a potent association with Greek religious mythology that went beyond mere theories of cosmology, psychology, and philosophy and entered the realm of faith and of hopes for life beyond the grave. It was the instrument of Orpheus: when he played his lyre, birds and wild animals

¹³ Platonic strictures about music have had an enduring influence on the cultural policy of ideology-driven societies, far beyond Christian fundamentalism. The Beatles were banned in the 1960s from playing in the State of Israel for fear their songs might turn the longings of young *kibbutzniks* from their tractors to girls. Russian readers will recall that a similar anxiety animated the ideological guardians of culture of the Soviet Union, who denied that there was such a thing as “sex” in the workers’ paradise at all — a very chaste Eden. As the Soviet bard Vladimir Vysotsky sang in his satirical “Instructions before a trip abroad”:

Там шпиёнки с крепким телом:
Ты их в дверь — они в окно!
Говори, что с этим делом
Мы покончили давно

“There are girl spies out there with supple bodies:
Show them the door and they come in through the window!
Well, just explain it to them straight:
We put an end to all that business long ago”).

Ever since Karl Popper’s *The Open Society and Its Enemies*, the notion has lodged firmly in Western thinking that Plato advocated artistic censorship, as part of the recipe for a totalitarian society of the kind that modern man knows, unhappily, only too well. But this *idée reçue* is untrue: in the dialogue, Socrates takes pains repeatedly to emphasize that his *politeia* is but a convenient metaphor for the study of the parts of the soul and of its training and control, and not a prescription or suggestion for the organization, governance, and morals of an actual human polity.

¹⁴ Wellesz 1998, 49 ff. Orthodox Jews do not allow musical instruments to be used in the prayer service: these will be restored only with the rites in the rebuilt Temple. But *klezmer* music, which is often devotional and ecstatic, is allowed for festive occasions. And Hasidism excels in its *niggunim* — melodies based upon sacred verses.

listened attentively and became tame, rivers paused in their flow, and even rocks and trees edged down the mountain sides to be closer to the mystic musician. As a shipmate of the Argonauts, Orpheus was able to out-perform the songs of the Sirens; and by his music he prevailed upon Hades to release his wife Eurydice. The music (and, to put it delicately, the person) of Orpheus so entranced the men of Thrace that their neglected wives conspired to relieve him of his head — which, though severed, seemed to survive death, for it kept on singing. A lost Orphic book referred to by Varro explained that the seven strings of the lyre of Orpheus corresponded to the seven circles of heaven; the souls thus required the strains of the *kithara* to make their ascent. (Eratosthenes wrote in a poem that Hermes himself went up to heaven and marveled to find the planets humming along their paths on the very notes of the lyre that he had invented down on earth.) So the theory of correspondences was widened to embrace the belief in the soul's ascent after death, *psychanōdia*. It is not clear that there was in antiquity a definably Orphic religion, but it is undeniable that there existed a complex of mystical beliefs about salvation from death and other mysteries, expressed in hymns that focused on the divinized human singer¹⁵.

The figure of Orpheus as a spiritual master of the lyre posed a challenge to Jews at a fairly early date, and they found a creative solution: in the second century BCE, Aristobulus of Alexandria in his commentary on the Pentateuch identified Moses with the homonymic Greek Musaeus, making the latter the teacher of Orpheus, and thereby subordinating the Greek sage, songster, and shaman to the greatest of men, the lawgiver of Israel, who spoke with God awake and face to face (more on Moses and David presently). And in a pseudepigraphon, Orpheus is made to abandon his inconvenient polytheism for belief in the one true God. The loose ends are neatly tied¹⁶. Early Christians adopted as a matter of course various images of earlier gods and philosophers to portray their Savior, who had, after all, a human form. Among these was the figure of Orpheus holding his lyre (or a little lamb), employed to depict Christ the good shepherd; and the episode of Orpheus and Eurydice was interpreted as foreshadowing of Christ's own harrowing of hell and liberation of the souls of the righteous¹⁷. Jesus Christ was not to the best of our knowledge a singer or musician. The pre-eminent harpist of the Bible is King David; so the musical as-

¹⁵ West 1983, 4, 30–31.

¹⁶ West 1983, 33–34.

¹⁷ See Boardman 1970, especially chapters II and III: “Moses’ Pupil: The Orpheus Who Came out of Egypt” and “Orpheus-Christus in the Art of Late Antiquity” (pp. 13–85); and Mathews 1993. The latter argues specifically against the so-called “imperial” image of Christ that seems to have been particularly popular with German scholars, in favor of more eirenic and less political models. Christians tended to regard the pagan gods, heroes, and mythological themes that had affinities to their own divinities and beliefs as either phenomena prefiguring the revelation of the fullness of the Christian revelation, or (as in the case of recorded miracles in paganism) as demonic simulacra designed to lure men away from genuine, true religion — the latter being the case especially with regard

pect of the personality of Orpheus was diverted to the Psalmist. Medieval Christian commentators compared the healing strains of Orpheus' lyre to the young David's exorcism by his lyre playing of the demon from the afflicted King Saul. The pagan image of Orpheus picking his lyre and charming the animals also found new employment in the iconography of King David, among both Christians and Jews¹⁸.

Christians inherited from the Hebrew Bible the Book of Psalms, which from the start came to play just as important a role in the evolving liturgy of the new faith as it did and still does in Israel. But there is an interesting disparity in nomenclature: the name of the Biblical book in Greek, which was duly inherited by Slavonic, English, and most other Christianate languages, means literally music sung to the plucking of the strings of a lyre — that of King David. But in Hebrew the "Psalter" has no such designation, no such specific focus on the instrument. It is *Sēfer Tehillīm*, literally the Book of Praises, from the unique superscription of Psalm 145, *Tehillāh le-Dāvid*. (No other Psalm bears this title.) The Syriac term for the Psalter, *ktābā d-mazmūre*, lit. "book of songs/melodies", cf. the Hebrew superscription of some Psalms *le-Dāvid mizmōr* — seems to occupy a middle ground between music and praise. It is musical and not just words, but musical also without necessary reference to a lyre, though, as we shall observe presently, that instrument is exceedingly prominent in Syriac Christian poetic imagery.

The first lyre known to history is depicted in a pavement graffito of ca. 3100 BCE from Tel Megiddo, Israel¹⁹. That does not mean it was invented right there in the Holy Land (or that it is to provide musical accompaniment to the end of the world at Armageddon!), but it is at least strong evidence for the Near Eastern origin of the instrument. We do not know what the anonymous artist called the object he had doodled, but the usual term for it in Biblical and later Hebrew is *kinnōr*, loaned for instance into Armenian via Syriac *kenār* as *k'nar*. (The Psalter mentions many different musical instruments, including harps and lyres with different numbers of strings. The *nēvel*, for instance, had 22,

to Mithraism, which never posed a real challenge to Christianity but was still seen as uncomfortably and threateningly similar, with its rites and mysteries and soteriological doctrines.

¹⁸ Boardman 1970, 149–155; see especially pl. 19, opp. p. 151, in which the crowned King David, seated in the shade of the letter *reš* of the Hebrew word *Ašrei* ("Happy is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked...") at the beginning of the Book of Psalms, serenades with a harp four animals in niches above the *incipit* (Ambrosiana B., 32 inf., 3r, 13th century). David is also shown (and named, in *scripta plena* Hebrew as *dwyd*) on a mosaic from a synagogue of the early Byzantine period at Gaza, Israel: he is seated, playing a multi-stringed lyre with a little hammer, and various wild animals including a giraffe are gamboling tamely before him. The image, clearly derived from that of Orpheus, has achieved modern iconic status: it is reproduced, for instance, without the exotic animal audience, on a medal of the State of Israel commemorating the 3000th anniversary of Jerusalem, City of David.

¹⁹ West 1992, 49.

said to correspond to the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet²⁰.) There is a Cycladic marble statue from the island of Keros, somewhat later, from the 3rd millennium BCE, of a seated harpist playing his instrument, and “some sort of seven-stringed lyre” is represented by a Minoan hieroglyph. The lyre probably came to Crete and mainland Greece from the Near East: so its origins go back to the beginnings of civilization and it seems quickly to have achieved universal popularity in the ancient world²¹. But it is to the pre-eminent player of the lyre in the Near East, in Biblical tradition, that we now turn.

3. THE SWEET SINGER OF ISRAEL

The singer and lyre-player *par excellence* of ancient Israel was of course King David, the comely, ruddy young shepherd whose playing soothed King Saul in his madness. Orthodox Jews attribute the Psalms to some ten different authors, beginning with the first man, Adam; and secular scholarship considers them to belong to different hands and ages, for quite different reasons. Perhaps the point is not so much as to argue fruitlessly over which of the songs belong to the historical David as to observe why the most poetic book of the Bible is called his own. He is the most poetic of Biblical figures. The very name David means “beloved”, and as one recent biographer has observed, nobody in the Bible is loved so often, as much, or by so many as he²². Lyric verse is often the poetry of love, but seldom does it celebrate the lineaments of gratified desire; and all David’s love relationships are beset by problems, tragedies, and reversals. The ruddy, handsome young shepherd, delicate and gentle, was also the diminutive warrior who slew Goliath and created in that instant one of the most durable archetypes of the human imagination — that of the underdog defeating the seemingly invincible juggernaut of the oppressor. David the King was the charismatic who leaped and danced stark naked before the Ark, to the prudish lady Michal’s consternation²³. He is a complex, even a tragic figure, allowed to make Jerusalem the royal capital, the site of the House of God (so Rabbinic doctrine still assigns him the credit of a builder), but forbidden by God to erect the Temple therein. That is left to his son, Solomon. For David lusted after Bathsheba and arranged for the death of her husband, provoking

²⁰ Following the theory of corresponding resonances harmonizing members of the body and sounds, this likening of the 22 strings to the 22 letters would be but one more facet of the magical employment of the alphabet. In pagan Greco-Roman and later Christian societies, special powers and influences, Divine and other, were assigned particularly to the seven vowels. See Russell 1989.

²¹ Lindsay 1968, 14, 115, and plate opposite p. 29.

²² Wolpe 2014, X.

²³ One scholar has argued that a naked dancing figure carved in the center of a round marble slab a little over half a meter wide — perhaps the top of a little side table — of the Roman Imperial period is David and the object is Jewish. The object was unearthed in the province of Pannonia (modern Hungary). See Thomas 1970.

a wrathful, sarcastic accusation by Nathan: “Uriah the Hittite you have struck with the sword; and his wife you have taken for yourself to wife” (2 Samuel 12:9). Elijah’s parallel accusation against another King of Israel, Ahab, “Have you murdered, and inherited also?” (1 Kings 21:19) may be the earliest case of the condemnation of *chutpah* in world literature. Yet in his own last words, in 2 Samuel 1–2, David declares, appropriately in song, a kind of vindication:

*Ne’um Dāvid ben Yīšai ū-ne’um hag-gever huqam ‘āl, mešīaḥ Eloheī
Ya‘aqov ū-ne’im zmīrōt Yīsrāēl: / Rūaḥ YHWH dibber bī, ū-millātō ‘al lešōnī.*

(“David son of Jesse speaks, yea, the man established on high speaks — the anointed of the God of Jacob and the sweet singer of Israel: / The spirit of the Lord has spoken through me, and His word is upon my tongue”).

The image here of the spirit of the Lord (it is again to be recalled that “spirit” and “wind” in Hebrew are the same word) speaking in or through David, the harpist, might conjure up in the imagination of a reader of the Hellenistic period and Late Antiquity the evidently well known aetiological myth, discussed above, of the wind/spirit passing *through* the sinew-strings of the tortoise-shell Aeolian harp of Hermes. Thus David, though the human player of the lyre, may be absolved from the danger of playing on his own and making Ahreman’s music, as it were, since he is no less than the inspired anointed of God: the wind of Heaven blows through him.

A hymn composed in the early Christian centuries takes the two images: Hermes’ tortoise-shell lyre and the Divine spirit/wind speaking through David — and sets them side by side, with a little mystical music theory added on about the resonances of the strings to the parts of the body. The mention of love at the end of the Pericope perhaps is an oblique nod to the king whose very name means love. Thus, the first two verses of the sixth of the Syriac *Odes of Solomon* read:

(1) Ayk da-mehalkā (rūḥā) b-qītārā u-menne memallān (2) hākanā memallāl b-handāmai rūḥeh d-māryā wa-memallel ‘nā be-ḥūbeh.

(“As the wind/spirit goes through the kithara and the strings speak, / So speaks in my limbs/members²⁴ the spirit of the Lord and I speak in His love”).

The hymn continues: “He destroys all that is alien forever, and nothing shall oppose Him. He multiplied knowledge and gave us His praise. Then a stream came from Him and widened into a river that carried all away and brought it to the Temple (*l-hayklā*, cf. Hebrew *hēikhal*)²⁵. Nothing could restrain

²⁴ In Syriac this is a loan from Middle Iranian *handām*, cf. Armenian loan-word *andam* “member”.

²⁵ This is directional, not accusative: see Charlesworth 1973, 31, n. 12. And Lattke 2009, 74, agrees, and further notes that this word for the Temple, *hēikhalā*, is a hapax in the text. That would be an argument for specificity — for the author referring to the Temple at Je-

the stream, it spread everywhere, and all the thirsty drank of it. Happy or blessed (*tūbayhūn*, lit., “it is good for them”: this is the Syriac term that consistently renders the Hebrew *ašrei* of the Psalms, which in turn is the Gk. *makarioi* of the Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount) are its ministers”. For the water is restorative, and all lived “by the living water that is for eternity, Halleluyah” (*mayyā ḥayye da-l-‘ālam, hallelūya*).

The original of the Odes was probably Greek. Some of the Odes survive in Coptic, but the Syriac version is by far the most complete. We do not know who composed the Odes or what if any defined religion they belonged to: some earlier scholars associated them with Bardaišan of Edessa; others, with early Christian sectarians. It is not unreasonable to speculate that early Christians who still adhered to some of the *mitzvot* — such as Sabbath observance, the dietary laws of *kashrut*, and perhaps male circumcision — and persisted in traditional Jewish reverence for Jerusalem and the Temple might have composed the Odes in Greek (which was widely spoken by Jews of all classes in the period), and like-minded people in northern Mesopotamia where Syriac was spoken (the centers of Edessa or Nisibis seem most likely) received and welcomed them and subsequently produced a Syriac version for the communal use of local believers who knew no Greek, only the local dialect of Aramaic, Syriac. The Ode cited is in any case sufficient proof that early in the age and region of the setting down in writing of the *Gemara*, a learned religious poet writing also in a form of Aramaic, and not far away, associated David with the Greek myth.

The image, or better, images of lyre and spirit endured and developed in the Syriac literature of Pauline Christianity as well. The great poet-theologian St. Ephrem is regularly called *kenārā d-rūḥā d-qūdšā*, “the lyre of the Holy Spirit” (or simply, in modern Syriac parlance, *Kenoro*). The title is still used of St. Narsai as well, but it is pre-eminently Ephrem’s. The lyre was evident-

rusalem. But Lattke (ibid. 81) states also that the *mythos* of the hymn takes place “in some undefined and timeless past” so there is no point in talking about the Second Temple. Elsewhere he claims, likewise without proof, that the assertion in another Ode that God will never change His holy place for another can have nothing to do with Jerusalem (which is in the Psalms and elsewhere, and always, His holy place). But in context it would seem to have everything to do with the city — perhaps it was a defiant Jewish Christian response to the Pauline Christians’ abandonment of earlier reverence for the city and Temple following its destruction of 70 CE and the further devastation following the defeat of the Bar Kokhba uprising in 135. This context — Lattke’s seemingly relentless inclination to de-Judaize the Odes and to do so by employing special pleading to neutralize all inconvenient evidence to the contrary — raises one’s suspicions of a venomous, familiar animus when he quotes approvingly the question of R. H. Connolly, “Why is the Greek word for harp always used in the Syriac version, and the Semitic word avoided?” Surely the correct answer, if the question is taken as an ingenuous one, would have to include the reflection that the Syriac is a translation of a Greek original. Do the classical Armenian Christian usages of Semitic words such as *k’nar* (lyre), *k’ahanay* (priest), *bēm* (altar), *sop’r* (text), *magalat’* (parchment), etc., not to mention Amen and Halleluyah, suggest then a de-Aryanizing, a deliberate avoidance of *Indo-Germanisch*?

ly seen as superior to the flute: Jacob of Sarug is normally called the “Flute of the Holy Spirit”, a designation symbolizing his subordinate position relative to St. Ephrem. Examples of Ephrem’s use of the image include the following passages from his hymns:

Because thou hast loved the poverty, of thy master who in secret was rich,
the fountain of his words shall flow from thee, that you may become a harp
for the Spirit, and may sing to yourself inwardly His good will;

and

They scorned the trumpet of Isaiah, which sounded forth His pure Con-
ception — they silenced the lute of the Psalms, which sang of His Priest-
hood — the harp of the Spirit [when used of a person by St. Ephrem, this
phrase refers exclusively to King David] they hushed, which sang again of His
Kingdom — under deep silence they closed up, the great Birth that joined
the cry — of them above with them below²⁶.

When the spirit wafts through a man and stirs the strings of his mind, is he fully conscious, fully in control of his will? Or is he a passive instrument, like the tortoise shell hanging from its perch? Is a person the same when he is asleep as when he is awake? The question, albeit an ancient one²⁷, seems to have exercised the imagination of the heresiarch Montanus, whose teachings have been held to have affinities to Jewish Christianity²⁸. Epiphanius, *Haer.* 48. 4 reports:

Montanos phēsin: idou, ho anthrōpos hōsei lyra, k’agō ephiptamai hōsei plēktron. Ho anthrōpos koimatai, k’agō grēgorō.

(“Montanus says: look, man is just like a lyre, and I [God] fly over like a plectrum. The man lies asleep, and I am awake”²⁹).

Does the Lord ever sleep? Though “the Guardian of Israel will neither slumber nor sleep” (Ps. 121. 4), the question of sleep and waking seems to have

²⁶ For much of this information, including citations, I am indebted to a former pupil, Christian Šidak, a devout Syriac Christian fluent in both classical and modern forms of the language. The Russian reader will know St. Ephrem Sirin from the liturgy of the Orthodox Church, and from Alexander Pushkin’s rendering into modern Russian from Slavonic the prayer of St. Ephrem composed for Holy Week, “Master of my days...” (*Владыко дней моих!*) in the second poem of the “Каменноостровский цикл”, the lyric cycle of Stone Island, an idyllic district of Saint Petersburg. The cycle concludes with Pushkin’s famous testament *Exegi monumentum*.

²⁷ In the play of Sophocles, *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Jocasta tells Oedipus not to worry about prophecies of incest, since people in dreams marry their mothers. In dreams, the Irish poet William Butler Yeats responded two and a half millennia later, begin responsibilities; and with an extra Freudian urgency the American Jew Delmore Schwartz took up Yeats’ statement in a poem and a short story T. S. Eliot acclaimed as a classic.

²⁸ See Ford 1966.

²⁹ Cited by Lattke 2009, 77, n. 28.

been posed even with relation to God, though here it seems more a matter of rousing God and getting the Lord to focus on us down here, rather than speculating about where His mind goes. According to the *Mishnah*, the High Priest Jonathan abrogated three practices that had been customary in the Temple at Jerusalem. Among them, he abolished the “Awakeners”, that is, those who recited “Awake, why do you sleep, O Lord” (Ps. 44. 24) to arouse God in the morning. The idea is not altogether counter-intuitive: even though on a theoretical level the religious believer knows God is aware of everything we do³⁰, and thus cannot be sleeping, one still invites or tries to attract His attention in prayer. Saul Lieberman compared the practice to the way Egyptians used to wake up their god at the Serapeum of Alexandria every morning (as reported by Porphyrius of Tyre)³¹. We will review the thoughts of the sages of the Babylonian Talmud on this matter of harps, sleeping, and waking.

And we are to consider presently also a story about how David used to hang his lyre on his bedpost every night. The simple visual image of hanging up this instrument is strongly and tragically evocative in a Biblical context. In the Hebrew Bible, the *locus classicus* is Ps. 137:

(1) By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat, and cried, when we remembered Zion. (2) On the willows in its midst we hung our lyres (*kinnorōtēinū*). (3) For there they asked us — our captors — for the words of song; and our tormentors — for pleasure. (4) How shall we sing the song of the Lord on alien soil? (5) If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand wither: (6) Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not raise Jerusalem above my chiefest joy.

Surely this archetypal lament will echo in some way in any later evocation of a hanging lyre. But let us hear the story of David’s nights, from the Babylonian Talmud.

4. KING DAVID AND HERMES’ HARP

A meandering discussion in Tractate *B. Berakhot* 3b of how many watches there are in the night, touches upon the long abecedarian Psalm in which King David declares:

At midnight (*ḥaṣōt laylāh*) I will rise to give You thanks for the judgments of Your righteousness” (Ps. 119. 62).

³⁰ The tenth of the thirteen articles of faith formulated by Maimonides is expressed in this way in most orthodox prayer books: “I believe with perfect faith that the Creator, may His Name be blessed, knows every deed of the children of Adam and all their thoughts. As is said, He shapes their hearts together and understands all their deeds”.

³¹ See Lieberman 1950, 142. There is a modern parallel: upon entering a Hindu temple the worshipper strikes by agitating its tongue a hanging bell that is usually a little under a foot in width, to rouse the attention of the divinity: the constant ringing of this bell is one of the most memorable everyday sounds of life in India.

The text then asks whether David indeed arose at midnight and goes on to describe his activities upon waking. But it is first objected that he was already awake in the evening, so how could he be asleep, in order to rise? (The logic is a bit like that of the Mad Hatter's tea party in the English mathematician Lewis Carroll's novel, ostensibly for children: When Alice in Wonderland is offered *another* cup of tea, she ruefully observes that it is impossible to take one, since she has not yet been poured a *first* cup.) R. Ze'irā solves the dilemma by offering a compromise solution: *'ad ḥaṣōt laylāh ḥāyāh mitnamnēm ke-sūs* "till midnight he would doze like a horse". This is to be understood as a light sleep: horses most often rest thus, standing on four feet, rather than sprawling whenever they sleep³². R. Aṣī adds, *'ad ḥaṣōt laylāh ḥāyāh 'ōsēq be-divrēi Tōrāh, mi-kān ve-ēilākh be-šīrōt ve-tišbāḥōt* "till midnight he would occupy himself with the words of Torah; thenceforth, with songs and praises". So in a way David did not really sleep at all the way other men do. But the conversation returns to the initial question: How did David know when it was exactly midnight?

R. Aḥā b. Bīznā comes to the point (an Aha! moment, if you please), echoing the tale of Hermes and the lyre. He says (in the name of) Šim'on Ḥasīdā, *Dāvid simānā havā lēih de-amar rav aḥā bar bīznā amar šim'on ḥasīdā kinnōr ḥāyāh tālūi le-ma'lāh mim-miṭṭātō šel dāvid ve-khēivān še-higī'a ḥaṣōt laylāh bā rūaḥ šefōnūt ve-nōševet bō ū-menaggēn mē'ēlāv miyyād ḥāyāh 'ōmēd ve-'ōsēq ba-Tōrāh 'ad še-'ālāh 'ammūd haš-šaḥar*

("... A lyre was hanging over David's bed and as midnight arrived the north wind would come and would blow through it and play over it: at once he would stand and busy himself with Torah until the break of the dawn").

So music played by the wind/spirit would waken the King who by playing his lyre and praising God would then himself waken the very dawn. After this pre-dawn Torah study, as morning came, the sages of the nation would enter into the presence of the King and remind him: Israel needs sustenance (*parnāsāh*). So then presumably David would leave his study of Divine Scripture for a time (both the Law and the Psalms, before midnight and after it, qualifying as Torah) to attend to the needs of his people. We shall see presently that this order of *nocturnal* activities parallels, the schedule according to which the Lord divides His own *day*.

There are four winds, and each blows for six hours of the day, in this order: East, South, West, and North. R. Ḥai Gaon, cited by the Rashba, said there was a timer that made the harp face the north wind exactly at midnight, but this

³² One offers for this observation not a printed source (one tome delivering another, as in the horrid scene of arid academic fertility depicted by Orozco in his fresco in a dining hall at Dartmouth college) but that most elusive kind of learning in modernity, direct experience — a life lived in the good company of both horses and cats. Horses will stretch themselves out on their sides only in deep sleep or if they are, God forbid, very ill.

seems a superfluous explanation verging on the comic inventions of Rube Goldberg, as the lyre could easily be hung in the right cardinal direction and, alarm clock or no, Boreas still had to be punctual. Indeed, Rashi explains the matter that way: David's lyre was positioned to catch the north wind when it blew, and it blew on time³³. And how do we know it was a lyre that woke David?

R. Yiṣḥaq b. Addā and others cite by way of a source Ps. 57. 9, where David declares, *'ūrāh khvōdī 'ūrāh han-nēvel ve-khinnōr ā'irāh šāhār*, "Wake, O my glory [i. e., heart, soul], wake, psalter and lyre — I shall awaken the dawn"³⁴.

The verse does not, to be sure, tell us precisely that the lyre woke David. It is more a justification, one thinks, for the co-optation of the Greek story. The *Gemara* tells us David would then address God (*B. Berakhot* 4a):

ribbōnō šel 'olām lo ḥasīd anī še-kol malkhēi mizraḥ ū-ma'arāv yešēnīm
'ad šāloš šā'ot va-anī ḥašōt laylāh āqūm le-hōdōt lākh

("Master of the Universe, am I not pious? For all the kings of west and east sleep till the third hour and I at midnight will arise to render thanks to You").

Why was he so anxious? He knew he had sinned lustfully; so his music was offered in expiation.

There is a variant of this mythological tale in the discussion in *Midrash Tanḥūmā* of the *parashah* — weekly Torah portion — *Be-ha'alōtkhā* (*Bamidbar*/Numbers chs. 8–12), which discusses *inter alia* the musical instruments and other implements to be made for the *Mishkan* — the Tabernacle, precursor of the Temple. The text comments on the verse "Make for yourself two trumpets" that the two in the Temple were hidden or deposited in the treasury (*af ha-ḥašoṣrōt še-hāyū vam-miqdāš nignezū*); therefore, it seems, David used to use (*mištamēš*) a lyre instead³⁵. There follows the story in *B. Berakhot*, but with an addition at the end: when the north wind blew through it, David would arise instantly *ve-khol hat-talmīdīm ve-hāyū 'ōsqīn ba-Tōrāh 'ad 'amūd haš-šāḥar* "and all the schoolchildren, and they would occupy themselves with Torah until

³³ Davis 2006, 226, n. 8.

³⁴ In medieval Armenia the guards of the last watch of the night at Hromkla ("Fortress of the Romans", near Aintab), the residence of the Catholicos (Supreme Patriarch of the Armenian Church) St. Nersēs Šnorhali ("full of grace", an ecclesiastical-academic title), used to greet the welcome rays of dawn with a pre-Christian hymn to the sun, a divinity of Zoroastrianism. Hearing these, he chose this verse of the Psalm, in its literal translation "Wake, O my glory!" as a proper Christian hymn to greet the morning, *Zart'ik' p'ark'im*. The word for glory in Armenian is itself a loan from a form of Old Iranian *farnah*-, the Divine sun-like glory bestowed upon heroes and kings. St. Nersēs often co-opted such Zoroastrian imagery, often more explicit, in his religious songs to reach out to a Zoroastrian sect, the still-unconverted Children of the Sun of his nation. See Russell 2005.

³⁵ Since David's son Solomon was to build the Temple, the reference to it in the *midrash* seems an anachronism.

the break of dawn". David would then explain, *Derekh haš-šāḥar lihyōt m'ōrēr benēi ādām, avāl anī me'ōrēr et haš-šāḥar*, "It is the way of the dawn to be the awakener of the children of Adam, but I am the awakener of the dawn". The *midrash* here adds to the story, introducing a subtle element of moral decision to what might otherwise be unseemly boasting: David's free will or inclination (*yišrō*; this may likely be an abbreviation for the Evil Inclination within men, the *yešer ha-ra'*) would ask him, "David, are you not a King? It is the way of kings to be sleeping till the third hour; and why do you stand at midnight?"³⁶ So David would reply with the Psalmic verse "Awake, my glory [literally rather than as a word for the heart and soul, cf. *supra*]" and explain, taking the meaning of *kāvōd* in its literal sense of "glory", *ēin kevōdkhā lifnēi kevōd yošerkhā klūm*, "your glory is nothing before the glory of your Maker"³⁷. David's retort may contain a play on the Hebrew root "to make", *y-š-r*, and address also thereby the distinction and potential conflict we noted earlier between human free will and artifice, and the (evil) *inclination* to which they are vulnerable (*yešer*) vs. divine inspiration and action — the work of the *Maker* (*Yōšer*). He would seem here to resolve the problem by suggesting one has the power to control one's inclination towards vice, including here the vice of sloth.

The detail of schoolchildren (students? disciples?) is not in the *Gemara*, but one suspects it was drawn in the *midrash* from the famous and charming discussion in the Talmud, *B. 'Avodah Zarah* 3b, about how the holy One, blessed be He, spends His day, since the description of David's night in the *Gemara* already corresponds, *grosso modo*, to it: R. Yehudah reports that Rav said the day is 12 hours long. During the first three He studies Torah. During the next three He sits in judgment on the world, and when He sees it is guilty enough to deserve destruction, He moves from the seat of justice to the seat of mercy. During the third part of the day He feeds the whole world. During the fourth part He plays with the sea monster Leviathan (cf. Ps. 104. 26). But another authority differs, insisting God has not laughed since the destruction of the Temple, and insists instead that now He *yōšēv ū-melammēd tīnōqōt šel bēit rabbān tōrāh* "sits and teaches Torah to little children from rabbinical houses" (on babes as pupils, citing Isaiah 28. 9). God's action in the third part

³⁶ The sages who set down the Babylonian Talmud lived in Parthian and Sasanian Mesopotamia; so their discussions are steeped in knowledge of, and direct or oblique references to, the Zoroastrian state religion of the Iranians. There may be one such reference in David's resistance to the inclination to sleep late. Zoroastrians were in oldest times mostly rural folk, herders and farmers, for whom it was virtue to rise at cock-crow (the rooster, thus, is holy) and vice to lave a lie-in. So there was a demoness of sloth, Bušyastā, whose name was originally an optative form of the verb "to be" meaning "let it be (later)". This verb turned temptress would whisper to sleepers her infernal tune of "Let It Be", encouraging them not to get out of bed yet. It is an anti-alarm clock we all know. In Judeo-Persian she is de-demonized to *bušāsf*, an innocuous siesta.

³⁷ Davis 2006, 226–227 with Hebrew text and English rendering; all translations here are mine.

of the day — nourishing the whole world — resonates with the morning visit to court of the sages recounted in the *Bavli* to ask King David to give sustenance to Israel. And one notes a correspondence, too, of the quadripartite Divine day and the four winds and four watches³⁸. It is difficult to assert the priority of a narrative in the correspondences and intertextualities of the Talmud, perhaps the world's first true hypertext. But it seems safe at least to suggest that in some ways the schedules and protocols of the court King of the Kings of Kings (Who is thus one up on the Sasanian Persian *šāhanšāh*, who is merely “King of Kings”) are to inform those of the royal court of His people Israel.

In the Torah portion that our *Midrash* comments upon, elaborating the story of David and his lyre from the *Bavli*, God also addresses Aaron and Miriam (Num. 12. 6–8), telling them that He makes Himself known to a prophet in a vision (*mar'eh*), and speaks to him in a dream (*ḥalōm*); but not so with Moses, with whom the Lord speaks mouth to mouth, plainly, and Moses beholds His likeness (*temunāh*). Though David is not Moses, and does not behold the Lord face to face, neither is he one who receives inspiration passively, in sleep: the assimilated *topos* of the Aeolian lyre of Hermes becomes here only a call to him to wake more fully from a light slumber — and then, in full wakefulness, after midnight when other monarchs are still sound asleep, moved passively in the oceanic tide of dream, the alert and watchful King of Israel composes his songs of praise and, like the holy One, blessed be He, employs the fourth and final watch to teach Torah to children. On his lyre, the lyre of the Psalms, he does not play the devil's music — for he has overcome by his piety the blandishments of the evil inclination as the pagans cannot hope to do. The Amoraim have thus taken the popular story of Hermes' lyre and deployed it to the advantage of Israel. David acquired the lyre of Hermes and the image of Orpheus; with his psalmody and piety he has out-performed both Greeks.

Earlier one suggested that the mournful Psalmic image of the lyres of the exiles hanging on willow branches by the rivers of Babylon — though chronologically long after David's reign, of course — must overshadow subsequent uses of the image when writers look in retrospect to the Biblical age³⁹. The Talmudic reader cannot have failed to compare the two: the seated ex-

³⁸ There are four faces of the Divine *merkabah*-chariot, too; and Christians carried over this quadripartite symbolism into further elaborated commentary on the four-armed Cross. See Russell 1997.

³⁹ The Chronicle of Yerahme'el senses the violence of the grief of the exiles: when their captors threatened to force them to play, the Children of Moses (*benēi Mošeh*) tore off their fingers with their own teeth. Then a cloud came, and lifted them, and took them beyond the river Sambatyon. See Reeves 2005, 211. On the goings-on beyond the mythical river that throws up stones all week long but rests on Shabbat, see Russell 2013 and Russell 2014–2015. This essay began as a Shabbat stay at the hospitable home in Kiryat ha-Yovel, Jerusalem, with its well-stocked library, of my old friend and mentor Professor Michael Stone of the Hebrew University. He invited me to offer the *Dvar Torah* at his synagogue; as I leafed through *Midrash Tanchuma* on the week's portion, I realized I had heard of wind

iles' silence and refusal vs. the rising David's greater, eager songs of praise. The Psalms are poetry, and a poet may understand them in ways a scholar is not trained by sensibility and inclination to do. So one defers to the comment on these passages of a friend in whose soul the spirit plays — the Israeli English-language poet Paul Raboff (private letter of 30 June 2017, from Ein Kerem, Jerusalem). He writes:

Everything that David hanging his harp in Jerusalem *is*, the Jews hanging their harps by the river of Babylon *isn't*. Can we learn anything from the contrast? There the *Shechina* [the Divine Presence, which is believed to have dwelt in the Temple — JRR] is already homeless, dispersed, the Kingdom shattered, lost with the Temple — all, all lost. They cannot sing, despondent, hang their harps, perhaps, a fugitive whisp [*sic*, combining perhaps wisp and whisper] of the wandering *Shechina* will yet pluck a muted remembrance of Jerusalem where the *Shechina* had nested, appeased by a penitent David (who had a lot to be penitent about) who hung his harp in the same room where he had spied Bathsheba and plotted. It would be a pure song, unmediated by any human hand, sinned, stained. The *Shechina* was close, intimate. It would speak to the besieged penitent directly. His enemies packed around him — men and demons. Words are the music of emotion; emotion, the music of principle; and *dvar Elohim* [the Word of God], three layered. The naked harp is our soul exposed to the ministrations of the *Shechina*, hanging unsupported by will power, human interference.

It has been suggested that the canonical Hebrew Bible has 24 books (Josephus mentions only 22) because the Rabbis knew each of the epic poems of Homer had 24. Codification was stimulated in part perhaps by competition, and also emulation. From the Ten Commandments (five on one stone, five on the other, like the fingers of two hands) to *gematria*, Torah learning is insightful exegesis and entrancing storytelling — and a numbers game. There are five books of the *Chumash*, the Pentateuch — the mind, law, and prose of God. When it came time to codify the Psalms, the Rabbis divided them accordingly into five books to correspond to the five of the “Five”, the *Chumash*, as the heart, grace, and poetry of God's own sweet singer, His beloved David. Though the number here appealed to a precedent within the tradition, the Rabbis lived in a world where they also heard the sound from outside, heard the myth of Hermes and turned it around, to answer unasked but anxious questions, to affirm the truth of the faith, to embroider the rich career of their own great lyricist. One can answer, when it comes to unpacking a Talmudic tale, Tertullian's tendentious question, “What has Athens to do with Jerusalem?” When it comes to music, everything⁴⁰.

blowing through a lyre before, and one thought led to another. It is a pleasure to offer these musings to him.

⁴⁰ One hesitates to combine the sublime with the ridiculous; but it must be observed parenthetically that some elements in Western culture have co-opted David in a vulgarly Hel-

BIBLIOGRAPHY/REFERENCES

- Boardman, J. B. (1970). *Orpheus in the Middle Ages*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Charlesworth, J. H. (ed. and trans.) (1973). *The Odes of Solomon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- David, A. (2006). *The Metsudah Midrash Tanchuma, Bamidbar I (Midraš Tanhūmā, Bamidbar-Šelah)*, trans. and annotator by S. Cassel. Lakewood, NJ: Israel Book Shop.
- Ford, J. M. (1966). Was Montanism a Jewish-Christian Heresy? *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* 17 (2), 145–158.
- Graves, R. (1957). *The Greek Myths*. New York: Braziller.
- Hägg, T. (1989). Hermes and the invention of the lyre: an unorthodox version. *Symbolae Osloenses* 64, 36–73.
- Latke, M. (2009). *Odes of Solomon: A Commentary*. Minneapolis: Fortress.
- Lieberman, S. (1950). *Hellenism in Jewish Palestine*. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary.
- Lindsay, J. (1968). *The Ancient World: Manners and Morals*. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons.
- Mathews, Th. F. (1993). *The Clash of Gods: A Reinterpretation of Early Christian Art*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Reeves, J. C. (2005). *Trajectories in Jewish Apocalyptic: A Postrabbinic Jewish Apocalyptic Reader*. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Russell, J. R. (1989). “*Vec' hazareak mateanā Hayoc 'mej*” [“The Book of the Six Thousand in Armenia”]. Armenian version published in *Banber Erevani Hamalsarani*, Erevan, Armenian SSR. Expanded English version: “The Book of the Six Thousand: An Armenian Magical Text” *Bazmavēp* 147 (1–4), Venice, 221–243.
- Russell, J. R. (1997). The Four Elements and the Cross in Armenian Spirituality, with an Excursus on the Descent in Merkavah Mysticism. *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 4 (4), 357–379.

lenizing direction that masks an unmistakable and dark bias. I do not mean Michelangelo's statue. In 1974, Thomas Burnett Swann published a science-fiction/fantasy novel about David and Jonathan entitled, unsurprisingly, *How Are The Mighty Fallen*. Swann populates his homoerotic reverie with pagan fairies, satyrs, leprechauns, mermaids, chimerae, and so on; and Jonathan is made to sport a pair of atrophied wings. The author portrays the prophet Samuel as a batrachian creature, a squat, bug-eyed, fat religious fanatic serving a monstrous god (that is, God). The Philistines (*scil.*, gentiles, Aryans) are a gentle, highly civilized people without a bone of cruelty in their svelte bodies. The Israelites are presented as scrappy savages whose various battles are part of one continuous war of expansion and conquest. Jonathan himself is blond and blue eyed. Spunky little red-haired David is blue eyed as well. David ambles around the Israelite camp, dodging the lewd advances of hairy Jews and occasionally announcing, rather like a folksy singer-songwriter *avant la lettre*, “I'm writing a new psalm”. He composes Psalm 23 (not numbered in the text but easy to identify, shall we say) in honor of Jonathan, to cheer him up after Jonathan's faithful armor bearer is immolated as yet another human sacrifice to God by the sanguinary Samuel. Enough! Mr Swann, this is your song. How are the mighty fallen, indeed.

Russell, J. R. (2001–2002). The Epic of the Pearl. *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 28, 29–100.

Russell, J. R. (2004). *Armenian and Iranian Studies* (Armenian Heritage Press and Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; Armenian Heritage Press.

Russell, J. R. (2005). The Credal Poem *Hawatov xostovanim* (“I confess in faith”) of St. Nerses the Graceful. In J. J. van Ginkel, H. L. Murre-van den Berg, and T. M. van Lint (eds.). *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam* (Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta, 134). Leuven: Peeters, 185–236.

Russell, J. R. (2013). Hārūt and Mārūt: The Armenian Zoroastrian Demonic Twins in the *Qurʾān* Who Invented Fiction. In S. Tokhtasev, P. Luria (eds.). *Commentationes Iranicae: Sbornik statei k 90-letiyu V. A. Livshitsa*. St. Petersburg: Nestor-Istoria, 469–480.

Russell, J. R. (2013). Hārūt and Mārūt: The Armenian Zoroastrian Demonic Twins in the *Qurʾān* Who Invented Fiction. В кн. С. Р. Тохтасьев, П. Б. Лурье (ред.). *Commentationes Iranicae: Сборник статей к 90-летию В. А. Лившица*. СПб.: Нестор-История, 469–480.

Russell, J. R. (2014–2015). An Armenian Spirit of Time and Place: the *Švot*. *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes* 36, 13–59.

Thomas, E. B. (1970). *King David Leaping and Dancing: A Jewish marble from the Roman Imperial period*. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó.

Utas, B. (1997). The invention of the *barbat* according to ‘Unsuri’s *Vamiq-u-‘Adhra*. In H. R. Roemer and I. Afshar (eds.). *Sokhanvari: 55 papers in memory of Parviz Natel Khanlari*. Tehran, 145–152 [repr. in: C. Jahani, D. Kargar (eds.) *Manuscript, Text, and Literature: Collected Essays on Middle and New Persian Texts by Bo Utas*, Wiesbaden: Ludwig Reichert, 2008, 195–202].

Wellesz, E. (1998). *A History of Byzantine Music and Hymnography*. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

West, M. L. (1983). *The Orphic Poems*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

West, M. L. (1992). *Ancient Greek Music*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

James R. Russell

*Harvard University, USA, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel,
russelldeep@gmail.com*

**THE BIBLE AND REVOLUTION:
SOME OBSERVATIONS ON EXODUS, PSALM 37,
ESTHER, AND PHILO**

*(К СТОЛЕТИЮ ВЕЛИКОЙ ОКТЯБРЬСКОЙ
СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКОЙ РЕВОЛЮЦИИ)*

Abstract: Human ideas and events develop and unfold in the context of inherited culture and tradition. The idea of revolution in the modern world, even in atheist ideology, partakes of necessity of religious beliefs and imagery, where the natural order is miraculously and apocalyptically overturned and the poor and downtrodden are vindicated. The foundational text is Exodus; Psalm 37 with its overt reference to the poor inheriting the earth develops the theme; and Esther translates it into a romanticized narrative of political history. It is proposed that Philo encodes Esther into his *In Flaccum*.

Keywords: Revolution, Lenin, apocalypse, Exodus, Psalm 37, Jesus Christ, Esther, Philo of Alexandria, *In Flaccum*, dreams.

Джеймс Расселл

*Гарвардский университет, США,
Еврейский университет в Иерусалиме, Израиль
russelldeep@gmail.com*

**БИБЛИЯ И РЕВОЛЮЦИЯ:
НЕСКОЛЬКО ЗАМЕЧАНИЙ ОБ ИСХОДЕ, ПСАЛМЕ 37,
ЕСФИРЕ И ФИЛОНЕ АЛЕКСАНДРИЙСКОМ**

Резюме: Идеи и события в истории человечества развиваются и развертываются в контексте религиозной идеологии и иконологии: естественный и общественный порядок божественным чудом перевернуты, униженные и угнетенные сего мира приобретают богатство и власть. Основной текст: книга Исхода; Иисус Христос применял и Псалом 37, где подчеркивается спасение бедноты. Книга Есфирь переводит тему в сферу романтизированной политики; автор статьи полагает, что Филон Александрийский в своем сочинении *In Flaccum* пользуется ключевыми темами и структурами Книги Есфирь, скрытых от римлян и обращенных к еврейскому читателю, знающему библиейский текст.

Ключевые слова: революция, Ленин, апокалипсис, Книга Исхода, Псалом 37, Иисус Христос, Книга Есфирь, Филон Александрийский, *In Flaccum*, сны.

Товарищи!

Рабоче-крестьянская революция, о необходимости которой все время говорили большевики, совершилась!

В. И. Ленин (из к/ф «Ленин в Октябре», 1937)

You say you want a revolution, well, you know, we all want to change the world.

John Lennon (The Beatles, *White Album*, 1968)

1. RECENT REVOLUTIONS AND BIBLICAL ECHOES

“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth” (μακάριοι οἱ πραεῖς, ὅτι αὐτοὶ κληρονομήσουσιν τὴν γῆν) declared Jesus Christ in His Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:5)¹. But the messianic Parousia still has not yet arrived; and the revolutionary prophecy of redemption attending that supernatural event can seem farther than ever from fulfillment. “Philosophers have hitherto only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it”, fumed a later Jewish prophet, Karl Marx, in his *Theses on Feuerbach*, 11. So suffering mankind, understandably impatient, has taken the business of revolutionary transformation into its own hands in the interim — and, given human nature, with predictably mixed results. In the lapidary words of Victor Stepanovich Chernomyrdin, delivered in the wake of the latest watershed events of Russian history, *Хотели как лучше, а получилось как всегда* (“We hoped for the best, but got the usual”).

Hope, as the Russian saying goes, is the last to die. Many of the fond hopes that attended the previous watershed — the second, Bolshevik revolution of the year 1917 in the Russian Empire — wilted in the care of a bureaucratic establishment inherited from the *ancien régime*. Its sanguinary criminality, tragically, reached its nadir on the twentieth anniversary of Soviet rule: that year, 1937, saw the great terror, the Stalinist show trials, the decimation of the Red Army, and the liquidation of the old Bolsheviks. Yet revolution is a youthful passion and humans are nostalgic creatures, even if a sardonic voice whispers within that anyone under thirty who is not a communist has no heart, but anybody over thirty who is one has no head.

¹ “Blessed” is the standard English and has conveyed the spirit of the sermon for many generations. It is still inaccurate, however; for Greek *makarios* translates Hebrew *āšrei*, “happy”. In a separate work in progress, the preliminary findings of which were presented as a plenary lecture at the conference on diaspora organized by the department of Jewish studies of St. Petersburg State University in September 2017, one proposes that a central prayer of the synagogue liturgy that bearing the latter name — it consists of Ps. 145, preceded by several verses from other Psalms beginning with the word *āšrei* — developed as a response to the Beatitudes, whose original text might have been in a gospel in Hebrew or Aramaic used by Jewish Christians.

There is no denying how bitterly ironic the words of the actor Boris Shchukin playing Vladimir Ilyich that close the film “Lenin in October”, released in that dark year of 1937, must sound. Why is it, then, that the viewer, conscious of all he knows, and understanding all that he feels, can still be moved by that exulting proclamation — the first epigraph to this essay — just at the moment the curtain comes down and the word Конец, “The End”, appears on the screen: “Comrades! The revolution of the workers and peasants, about the necessity of which the Bolsheviks have been speaking all the time, *has been accomplished!*” Part of the reason Lenin’s cinematic valediction can resonate so strongly is that it has overt Scriptural overtones: the declaration of that “most human of men” (самый человеческий человек) at the end of the movie echoes literally the last words as He died on the Cross of Jesus Christ, believed by much of the human race to be both the most human and the most divine of men. According to John 19:30: ὅτε οὖν ἔλαβε τὸ ὄξος ὁ Ἰησοῦς, εἶπε, τετέλεσται. καὶ κλίνας τὴν κεφαλὴν, παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα (“When Jesus took the vinegar, then, He said, ‘It is accomplished!’ And, lowering His head, He gave up the spirit”)². The Old Church Slavonic for Greek *tetelestai*, “it is accomplished”, is *sovershishasia*; modern Russian *sovershilos*’ — the very word that concludes “Lenin in October”! Most Russians alive in 1937 were born and raised in the traditions of the Orthodox faith; and despite the terrible suppression of religion a decade earlier and the subsequent convulsions of collectivization of the land, theirs was no subconscious memory. The lexical Christian-Communist correspondence, then, is exact: both the Soviet slogan “Ленин жил, Ленин жив, Ленин будет жить” (“Lenin lived, Lenin is alive, Lenin shall live”) and the popular song “Ленин всегда с тобой” (“Lenin is with you always”) echo the Christian belief in the Resurrection, as well. Death, or the end of a world-epoch, must happen for the resurrection to be possible: this is the chain of teleological thinking, and both the historical determinism of Marx and the dramatic title of Edmund Wilson’s famous history of European revolutionary thought *To The Finland Station* display a crypto-religious, apocalyptic teleology. The sociological historical method of Giambattista Vico begins to gather steam and turn its wheels, and Lenin alights at the final stop³. It seems that even with down-to-earth, avowedly atheistic revolutions we still cannot do without apocalypticism and teleology, cannot get away from postponed *Parousiai*: Communism, one was always assured, is on the horizon (which, as one wry Soviet anecdote used to add, is defined as an imaginary line that vanishes as you approach it). The paradigm of religion is as inescapable today in modern revolutionary ideology as it was over two millennia ago in the Servile rebellion of Spartacus, which took Dionysus, the dying and rising god, as its patron.

² The film adaptation of the novel of the modern Greek writer Nikos Kazantzakis, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, closes with these words as the crucified Savior gives up His spirit on the Cross, and the movie ends with an ensuing joyful thunder of bells.

³ Fly forward, our locomotive: in the commune is our destination. We have no other path — we hold a rifle in our hands!” runs the famous early Komsomol song *Паровоз*.

None of this is news, but such a recollection of recent, lived events and familiar slogans and turns of phrase is still useful to a discussion of the concept of revolution, when one returns to parse the details. There has always been a recognizably eschatological, religious fervor, and a passion for martyrology, in revolutionary upheavals; and the arts of Communism, from phrases and iconic banners to the usages of the more recent medium of cinematography, are much indebted to their Christian precursors, to the Hebrew Bible, and at least to some degree, to the notable pagan exemplar already mentioned — Spartacus⁴. The intervening gulf of time between the turbulent first century CE and the convulsions of the twentieth was not, to be sure, a void over which such inspirations leapt. It was replete with movements of social protest, with primitive and inchoate rebellions. The last days of the Sasanian dynasty in Iran saw the proto-communist Mazdakites (who served as a precedent rooted in pre-Islamic tradition for Iranian secular revolutionaries in the 20th century)⁵; and soon after, the Paulician and Tondrakite movements washed over Armenia, leaving their traces in the Bogomil and Albigensian “heresies” of the medieval west. Bandit-rebellions of the Robin Hood type, studied notably by the great Marxist scholar Eric Hobsbawm, have been so frequent and widespread, from the British Isles to the movement of Köroghlu (Turkish, “Son of the Blind Man”) in 16th–17th-century Anatolia, that it is accurate to study them both as

⁴ On the Soviet Armenian case see Russell 2012a: in the little Transcaucasian republic the enthusiasts of the new dispensation drew freely on both Christian and earlier Zoroastrian symbolism in the creation of a canon for the future. The anatomy and genealogy of these transformations can embarrass ideologues, who aver that they are rationalists overthrowing superstition (or *vice versa*). An illustrative incident is perhaps worth recording here for posterity. Some years ago this writer was invited to offer a paper on Russian revolutionary posters at a conference on the art of the Islamic Revolution that was to be held at Harvard, and had secured partial funding from the office of the university’s Provost. One was suddenly disinvented by the organizing committee, when after consultation amongst themselves, they determined that the paper I had been asked to write — and had not yet even been written — might conceivably give offense to the Iranian régime by implying that its propaganda could be compared to art made by atheists. The conference went ahead without one’s sage contribution; and the Provost’s office did not respond to several formal complaints, both before and after it. So much for the freedom, diversity, and so on that the American “liberal” academic and media establishments self-righteously preach to others, while practicing the opposite themselves. To return briefly to cinematography, the American movie epic “Spartacus” ends with our hero dying on, yes, a cross. But there will be a kind of resurrection — his wife holds up to him their baby son. In the Soviet Union, *Spartak* was, of course, a soccer (football) team!

⁵ Several Classical Armenian writers termed Zoroastrian heresy, presumably Mazdakism, *anbari barerarat’ iwn*, “bad beneficence”, lit. “not-good good-doing”, the implication being that the reformers who promoted economic and social fairness and equality were motivated by heterodox beliefs that negated their efforts, or placed them in the service of evil ends. The phrase is used in connection with the serpent-man who in Iranian mythology, with its strong ideological foundation of kingship, is presented as the paragon of misrule, Aždahak.

general social phenomena arising independently in diverse cultures and displaying functional parallels, and as lines of tradition that are transmitted as heterodox and dissident teachings, altering details in time and space. Their literary-epic expression becomes then a *topos* of folklore and romantic balladry, with a filiation in some cases of transmitted literary models — but only in some limited cases can one insist confidently upon a linked historical chronology of influences from one movement to the other⁶.

2. THE PROTOTYPICAL BIBLICAL REVOLUTION

Revolution is, literally, the overturning of something: making what was below stand on top, vertically and in society and economics; and, laterally or temporally, reversing the normal and expected course of events. The Hebrew root for overturning, *h-p-k*, which will be central to our discussion, serves as the base of the modern Hebrew word for revolution, *mahapekha*⁷; many other modern languages either borrow the Latin term directly or form calques upon its prefix and verbal root⁸. The idea of God's overturning powerful and seemingly unchangeable human institutions, and reversing the inevitable course of human events, is absolutely central to Judaism. When it happens it is the stuff of miracle, the irruption of the wonder of the divine into the mundane. And when it does not happen, one prays for it to⁹. We shall examine presently how it suffuses alike the earliest foundational text of Israelite national and sacral history, the Biblical Book of Exodus in the Pentateuch, and one of the most recent texts of the canon of the Hebrew Bible, the Oriental romance we know as the Book

⁶ On the Paulicians, see Russell 1995–1996; on Kōroghlu see Russell 2017.

⁷ Less dramatically, the root produces also the name for the signature cappuccino of the Israeli café, *hafukh* (lit. “upside-down [coffee]”) — a calque on European usage. In both Biblical and modern Hebrew, v. t. *hafakh* with the preposition *le-* on its object means to turn or change into something, as from black to white in the laws on leprosy in Leviticus.

⁸ Thus Russian *revoliutsiia* but, for instance, Armenian *yela-p'oxut'awn*. The popular Arabic *thawra* (as in the slogan ending *hatt'al-mawt[i]*, “till death”, which may attract the *šahīd* “martyr” but is scarcely the point of a revolution) really means an uprising (cf. modern Greek *epanastasē*); the late Edward Said predictably accused philologists who dared to mention the association of this term in Classical Arabic with the behavior of rowdy or randy camels as “orientalist” conspirators in the service of imperialism, colonialism, and so on. Modern Persian *enghelāb* (and other “Islamicate” tongues, e. g., Hindustani, with the pleasant *Lati-nate* transcription *inquilab*) employs a seventh form of the verbal root *q-l-b*, “change, alter”.

⁹ Wanting better and winding up with “as ever” is the best case for such political and other disappointments of life. The worst is the truly impenetrable fog of human evil, such as the Holocaust and genocide. At that point monotheists must take cover behind the mystery of theodicy. But those Zoroastrians who still believe in the original dualism of their tradition have a better answer, even if it is not necessarily true: they can produce an all good but not all powerful Ahura Mazda, locked in battle with the inferior but wholly independent archdemon Ahriman, who assures His steadfast worshippers, to paraphrase William S. Burroughs, “I’ll do what I can, but I’m hustling, too”.

of Esther. It is expressed often in various contexts, to various ends, and always with the assertion of Divine sanction. And it will be seen in conclusion how the Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, a contemporary of Jesus, encoded the revolutionary plot of the Book of Esther into a chronicle of Roman oppression.

Christ himself, a Jew who never called Himself anything else, derived his ideas directly from His own tradition, specifically, in the case we are briefly to consider, from a Psalm. He kept company with at least one adherent of the “Fourth Philosophy”, that of the revolutionary *Sicarii* (“dagger men”, after their preferred method of assassinating collaborators with the Romans) or Zealots (Hebrew *Qana'im*). The Apostle Paul, who almost singlehandedly invented a de-Judaized gentile Christianity, a development that Jesus perhaps neither imagined nor intended, and which many of His earliest followers bitterly opposed and rejected, was still to echo this core idea. He does so with a somber, thrilling eloquence that must touch the very soul of any believer in the one God, whatever else one may think of Paul’s strategic abandonment of the Torah and the Commandments of normative Judaism in the propagation of his message: “For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Cor. 1:26–29)¹⁰. It is a statement of Divine revolution, of the enfranchisement of the downtrodden, of the involution of mundane hierarchical values.

The motto “Rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God” would seem to combine active human initiative with an appeal to Biblical tradition and the hope of Divine assistance. During another revolution, Benjamin Franklin proposed those words for the Great Seal of the brand new American republic only a month after the Declaration of Independence: it was to surround an engraving, tellingly, of Israel crossing the Red Sea; and of the pursuing Egyptians, drowning¹¹. The difference, of course, is that the Americans took up arms against the British colonial authorities and defeated them. The only instance of Israelite violence

¹⁰ This writer, whose early Jewish education precluded the reading of Christian scriptures, was first exposed to these verses of the New Testament through Madeleine L’Engle’s *A Wrinkle In Time*. Like some other books meant for children, and books of science fiction, it is much better than much of the fiction written by *soi disant* sophisticates for adults.

¹¹ The new country received instead the preposterously cryptic image reflecting the Masonic iconography popular with many of the founding fathers that now adorns its currency: a pyramid representing the Pythagorean *tetraktys* with a blazing, all-seeing Eye in a triangle floating above it, and a quotation from Virgil, the sycophantic epic poet of the Roman empire.

in the events of the Exodus itself is Moses' smiting the Egyptian taskmaster. God does all the heavy lifting, as it were.

Let us consider this revolutionary prototype, Exodus, following the use of the Hebrew root *hpk* through it as a sort of trace element. The overthrow of the Egyptians might be said to commence when God turns Moses' rod into (*nghpk*) a snake, defeating the machinations of the court magicians (Ex. 7:15)¹². Since Egypt is the land of sorcery par excellence, this defeat is of great symbolic importance, and not mere legerdemain. Immediately thereafter, God orders Moses to inform Pharaoh of the first of the ten plagues, in which the waters will be turned (*wnghpkw*) to blood (Ex. 7:17). The king releases the Hebrew slaves, but has a change of heart (*wyghpk*, Ex. 14:5) and sends his army after them, to his ultimate doom. Further reversals follow in swift succession: the oppressor who would kill the Israelite first-born loses his own; the thieves of the Jews' labor are themselves utterly despoiled; the sea becomes dry land; the slaves become free men; and the army pursuing unarmed women and children is destroyed, with Pharaoh alone left to tell the tale¹³. To the prophetic Messenger of the *Qur'an*, Exodus is, indeed, *the* tale of *all* tales — the chapter in which it is summarized is entitled *al-Qisas*. Though "The Story" is actually that of a particular people, it is regarded not so much as the foundational saga of one nation as an exemplary event that teaches a universal and perennial message to all monotheists: Pharaoh was a worker of corruption (*mufsid*) in the earth; his victims were the oppressed (*mustadaf*); and God made them the *inheritors* (*wārith*; the root is the same as Hebrew *y-r-š*, a crucial term to be considered presently in the discussion of Ps. 37, which we have already noted from the Sermon on the Mount). God makes of His great deed an example — to the Egyptian tyrant, and, looking ahead to the Esther story (or from the vantage point of the revelation of Islam in the seventh century CE, looking back), to Haman (the villain of the story) as

¹² Jews and Christians felt the need to give names to the Pharaonic magicians, and came up with a rhyming pair, Jannes and Jambres. The latter then came to be associated with legends about another demonized duo, Harut and Marut (originally the Zoroastrian *yazatas*, "divinities", Haurvatat and Ameretat), and their garden became an antitype of Eden. An early modern Armenian poem decrying the latest vice of Ottoman society accuses them of having cultivated there a noxious weed from hell, tobacco (actually a product of the New World, of course): see Russell 2009; Russell 2013; Russell 2014–2015.

¹³ Jewish pietistic tradition makes the Egyptian tyrant the sole survivor of the rout of the Egyptian army in the Red Sea and the later king of the Assyrians, to whose court at Nineveh the Prophet Jonah is sent. Pharaoh's earlier humbling thus explains his strange alacrity in hearing out the warning of the reluctant Hebrew prophet and ordering immediate and general repentance. But another way of understanding this very short book of the Bible is to see Jonah as a late text whose sardonic irony is perhaps Hellenistic and certainly deliberate: though Rabbinic tradition discovers many ingenious justifications for his behavior, Jonah, the only Jew in the story, is also the only character who is angry, ill-intentioned, and disobedient to God: see Bickerman 1967. One is reminded of Jesus' admonition — probably not original even then but perennially good advice — to notice the plank in one's own eye before pointing out the splinter in another's.

well (Sura 28:3-6). It is unsurprising that such theological terms as “workers of corruption in the earth” and “the oppressed” were to become watchwords of modern Iranian Islamic revolutionary rhetoric¹⁴.

3. REVOLUTION PROPHESED: JESUS AND PSALM 37

In the Gospel narrative, the flight of the Holy Family with the infant Christ to Egypt and their return to the Land of Israel recapitulates the events of Genesis and particularly of Exodus: one is clearly intended to telescope Egyptian oppression into the narrative of Christ’s infancy, whether the parallel persecution be the supposed Herodian massacre of the innocents or, more likely in historical terms, the Roman census that was the first step in the tightening of direct imperial rule over the restive population of Judea.¹⁵ After this symbolic Exodus, and His correspondingly symbolic sojourn and temptation in the desert — these recapitulations of Biblical typology and fulfillments of prophecy are at the heart of the canonical biography of Jesus — comes His teaching itself. We may focus here just on Psalm 37 (according to the numeration of the Hebrew Bible) as one source for the declaration in the Beatitudes cited at the beginning of this essay. The Psalm is abecedarian — an alphabetic acrostic — with the first word of every second verse beginning with a letter of the Hebrew alphabet. The verse that would have begun with the letter ‘*ayin*’ is absent — not unusual in such Psalms — but the letter is present in three of the six words of the *samekh*-verse that would have preceded it. One might suggest that the author might have been following a deliberate plan, and by pointing out the missing letter repeatedly beforehand wanted one to anticipate the ‘*ayin*-verse and then to notice the line by its very absence¹⁶: *swr m-r*’

¹⁴ One prominent Persian theoretician of revolutionary Islam, Ali Shariati, even suggested that the Quranic address, *Yā ʿayyuhā 'l-insāna*, “O ye people,” is an appeal to the masses as understood in Marxian terms.

¹⁵ Herod was by ancestry an Idumaeon, a convert to Judaism; and he had to tread a dangerous path, accommodating and entertaining the Romans on the one hand and satisfying the restive Jewish population, most of whom detested them, on the other. But there was a “Herodian” religious party, Herod was apparently kind to the sectarians at Qumran, and he enlarged the Second Temple to its magnificent and final splendor. The demonization of Herod may reflect nascent Christian anti-Semitism. The Roman census in Judaea might have been the actual political turning point of Jesus’ lifetime, as the first act of imposition of direct imperial rule; and taxation (without even the ghost of representation) was a factor in the uprising of 66 CE. See: Brandon 1967: 49, 66.

¹⁶ It is important to understand that the order and length of the 22-letter Phoenician and Hebrew alphabet is arbitrary and not phonetically based, and did not change at all over the centuries. An exception is Arabic, which follows a scribal order of shapes but still preserves the ancillary *abjad* (i. e., A, B, C, D) list that follows the Phoenician order. Some alphabets adapted from it in antiquity added letters at the end but still preserved the basic order. The number and placement of the letters would seem to have possessed from the start, or achieved soon, a sacral status. (See the interesting and thought provoking study of Bund-

w-*śh* *ṭwb* w-*škn* l-*ʿwlm*, “Turn from evil and do good¹⁷, and dwell for ever” (Ps. 37:27, “do good” echoing the third verse¹⁸). A more subtle reversal may

gård 1965). A native reader of Hebrew would therefore be likely to notice and remark upon an absent letter in an abecedarian text, and it would affect his reception of the text in what computer geeks and mathematicians would call a non-trivial way. So the *ʿayin*-line is thus what I christen an example of the ghost verse, something that one sees out of the corner of one’s eye as it were, and imagines to be there, a verse that exerts an influence on the poem around it, and can be written about and commented on, but still does not exist. *Yesterday upon the stair/I met a man who wasn’t there/He wasn’t there again today/Oh, how I wish he’d go away* wrote William Hughes Mearns (1875–1965) in his poem “Antigonish” (1899). The absent line 1000 of Vladimir Nabokov’s “Pale Fire”, described by Kinbote (Botkin?) as a poem of 999 rhymed *couplets* (?!), must be the same as line 1, for intricate and compelling reasons of rhyme and theme alike, but it is not there. There is no “actually” in *Pale Fire*: that is what infuses the experience of reading the novel with wonder. In the case of the Psalms, the *locus classicus* is the missing *nun*-verse in the Masoretic text of Psalm 145. Tractate *Berakhot* of the Babylonian Talmud declares it deliberately to have been omitted, lest one think of a gloomy pronouncement of the prophet Amos beginning with the letter: *nāflāh*, “Fallen is the maiden of Israel; and she shall not rise.” But the Psalm scroll of Qumran and the LXX — and the Christian Psalter, subsequently — have a wholly innocuous *nun*-verse beginning with *ne’eman* “faithful”. But *Swmk YQWQ l-kl h-nplym w-zwqp l-kl h-kpw-pym*, “The Lord upholds all the falling and straightens up all those who are bent over”, reads the *samekh*-verse that would have followed *nun*. The *fallen* are raised, as though to reassure readers distressed by the (nonexistent) *nun*-line. The parallel second half of the *samekh*-verse seems to allude even more cryptically to the ghost line, for in square-character Hebrew *nun* is the “bent” (*kafuf*) letter, symbolic of the Messiah, the man bent beneath his heavy burden of trouble and sorrow. But at the *end* of days in the Messianic era he will be straightened, crowned king, even as the scribal *final nun*. There is no such distinction between initial-medial and final letters in Paleo-Hebrew script, however; so this further *allusion*, mystically and eschatologically replete with meaning, is also a temporal and historical *illusion*, a ghost of a ghost. For the Psalm that gives the entire Psalter its Hebrew title, *Tehillim* (Ps. 145 alone begins with the word *tehillah*), is probably too early to have been composed when square-character script was current in Israel. For pietistic and exegetical purposes, though, these phantasms are still useful; cf. the play of ostensible misprints, “fountain” and “mountain”, again, of Nabokov’s poem.

¹⁷ *Sur me-ra’ ve-’aseh tov* is also a part of the Psalmic *niggun* (a short song based on one or several Scriptural passages) “Who is the man who desires life (*Mi ha-ish he-chofets chayyim*)” popular in Hasidic Judaism.

¹⁸ The Midrashic discussion of the admonition to do good in the Psalm introduces, to explain David’s plight, the parable of a man who is not paid. The king — his employer — then hires another laborer and rewards him richly. How much more, the first man muses, will the king give me in the end, since I have served him longer. The implication is that one’s faith demands patience. See: Braude 1959: 1, 423–424. It may be that just recompense never arrives for an individual in his lifetime: Kirkpatrick 1902: 187–188, who rightly considers the issues the Psalm addresses much the same as those in Job, suggests that the ancients, who were more family-minded than humans of the latter day, would have taken solace in the firm belief that compensation was sure to come to their progeny and descendants, if not to themselves. This idea of recompense delayed by a generation seems to be adumbrated in Psalm 37:25: “I was a youth; I also grew old, and I never saw a righteous man abandoned, or his progeny begging bread”. Because of the reference to food, the verse is chanted also towards the end of the Hebrew blessing after meals. There is a Zoroastrian parallel to the first part

foreshadow this literal *turning point*. The third verse, which verse 27 echoes strongly, reads: *bṭḥ b-H w-šh ṭwb škn 'rš w-r'h 'mwnh*, “Trust in the Lord and do good, dwell upon the earth and cultivate faith” (the word *rə'ēh*, “cultivate, shepherd, cherish”, here differs scribally from *ra'*, “evil”, in 37:27 by only one letter). Verse 14 reads: *hrb pṭhw rš 'ym wdrkw qštm l-hpyl 'ny w-'bywn l-ṭbwh yšry drk*, “The wicked have sharpened the sword and strung their bow, to cause the destitute and the poor to fall; to slaughter those who are upright on the way.” The letters of *bəṭaḥ* “trust!” of 37:27 seem here to be *transposed* to *(lə-)ṭbōaḥ*, “(to) slaughter”. But this transposition is a sign of the unlikely reversal of fortune, and in a direction the wicked are least expecting; for verse 15 assures us that their sword shall be turned upon their own hearts, and their bows shall be shattered. The image of sword drawn and bow bent will instantly remind the pious reader of the vivid word-pictures of Psalm 7, the song of reversals *par excellence* in the Psalter, where the unrepentant man has sharpened his sword and bent his bow — but he will fall into the pit he dug, and his mischief will return upon his own head.

Psalm 37 repeatedly admonishes one not to fret (Heb. *ṭhr*, used thrice, in lines 1, 7, 8), and not to envy evil men (*rš 'ym*) for their apparent success. Indeed, the words “evil man” and “evil” (*r'*) are so frequent that one editor has subtitled the Psalm “The Problem of Evil”¹⁹. The attendant issue is envy of the wicked, who should not prosper but still do; Philo, whose *In Flaccum* we shall consider presently, constantly cites envy, Gk. *phthonos*, as the great temptation and pitfall that bedeviled his own life and that turns men generally to vice. But this situation will be overturned, the author protests five times, his assurance spread evenly through the text — the good, variously characterized, will inherit the earth:

37:9 *ky mr 'ym ykrtwn w-qwy H hmh yyršw 'rš* “For the doers of evil will be cut off and those who hope in the Lord will inherit the earth”.

37:11 *w-'nwym yyršw 'rš w-ht 'ngw 'l rb šlwm* “And the meek shall inherit the earth and take pleasure in great peace”.

37:22 *ky mbrkyw yyršw 'rš w-mqlyw ykrtw* “For those who bless Him shall inherit the earth and those who curse Him shall be cut off”.

of the verse (but without the key reference to progeny) that this writer noted in a Pahlavi didactic poem (Russell 1987, repr. in Russell 2004). One thinks here also of Jesus' deliberately provocative parable with the conclusion, The last shall be first. The issue of reward and payment is a vital one in the religious literature of antiquity, as it is today. Antigonus of Soho in Mishnah Pirquei Avot (The Ethics of the Fathers) enjoins the pious not to labor for God as one might for a human master, expecting a *peras* — which, the Renaissance scholar Casaubon first saw, to be followed by Bickerman latterly, is not payment by right but a bonus the owner/employer is not required to bestow. That is, expect nothing. The Sadducees and followers of Boethus deduced that there is no heavenly reward: later Rabbinic Judaism, with its canonical belief in heavenly reward, was to brand them *minim*, heretics.

¹⁹ See Cohen 1945: 111.

37:29 *šdyqym yyršw 'rš w-yšknw l-'d 'lyh* “The righteous shall inherit the earth and shall dwell for ever upon it”.

37:34 *qwh 'l H w-šmr drkw w-yrwmmk l-ršt 'rš b-hkrt rš 'ym tr 'h* “Hope in the Lord and preserve His way and He will raise you up to inherit the earth and you will see the cutting off of the wicked”.

The author of the Psalm takes pains to indicate, through the imagery of borrowing, lending, and repaying, that this inheritance is neither an otherworldly promise nor a metaphoric figure, but a concrete and down to earth matter of land and cash. The evil man borrows but does not repay (*šlm*), in contrast to the righteous man, who lends, gives generously, and enjoys peace (*šlwm*): a nice verbal figure²⁰. The righteous and the pious (*šdyq*, *šsyd*) moreover, are constantly associated with the poor and the needy (‘*ny*, ‘*bywn* — cf. the Ebionites, whose name means “the Poor”!). The eldest son of the family is in the way of the world the heir; but God overturns the ways of the world. The younger Jacob, not the elder Esau, receives the inheritance from Isaac; and to God it is Jacob, with his new name, who becomes the first-born: *bny bkwy Ysr 'l*, “Israel is My first-born!” One recalls that God did not just free the Israelites from Egyptian bondage. He slew their first-born and ordered them to despoil their oppressors: our ancestors departed with all the former masters’ gold and silver, making Israel not only free men, but rich ones (the precious spoils went to the casting of the implements of the Tabernacle), and first-born heirs as well, one and all.

So inheritance is not defined here automatically by pedigree, as in civil law. It is a matter of Divine election, as stated in Psalm 2 and echoed at Christ’s Baptism²¹. “He who sits in the heavens will laugh — the Lord will mock them. Then he will speak to them in His anger, and terrify them in His wrath: And it is I who have anointed My king on Zion, My holy mountain. I will speak of the ordinance that God commanded me: ‘You are My son. I have begotten you this day. Ask of Me and I will give the nations

²⁰ In a written communication of 6 May 2017 Prof. David Sperling of Hebrew Union College, who meticulously read the draft of this article and offered several important corrections, notes that I. L. Seeligmann has argued convincingly that Ps. 37:21 does not describe an attribute of the wicked man but his fate: in the days to come he will be unable to pay back a loan, while the righteous will be rich enough that they will be in a position to afford to be generous. The generosity of Prof. Sperling, my friend and colleague, over many years is but one facet of his righteousness: it is a pleasure here to thank this good man and Torah sage.

²¹ Those who focused on the words from Heaven at the Baptism and reckoned them as the starting point of his Divine career, but refused to accept His virgin birth or divinity, considering these a blasphemy against monotheism, were later to be anathematized as adherents of a heresy, Adoptionism. This was a legitimate early Christian point of view in its time, though, and it became the Christology, also, of normative Islam. Medieval Jewish scholars, including David Qimhi, were aware of Christian claims concerning Psalm 2 and refuted them: see Sperling 2011 with refs.

as your inheritance (*nḥllh*); the very ends of the earth, as your possession (*ʿḥwzh*)”²².

4. A PRELUDE TO REVOLUTIONARY ROMANCES: THE DREAM OF ILL OMEN

Jesus offers the prophecy of a just future; but what if one has a premonition of evil instead? The Jews of the Talmudic era, like other peoples at other times, believed that dreams are prophetic. So there is an extensive discussion of them, including instructions on how to avert such a dire future in Tractate *Berakhot* 55a–b of the Babylonian Talmud. R. Huna ben Ami transmits these: he received them from R. Pedat, who got them in turn from R. Yoḥanan: *hrw ʿh ḥlwm w-npšw ʿgwmh ylk w-yptrnw b-pny šlšh* “One who sees a dream and is anguished in himself, let him go and have it interpreted before three (men)”. They should assure him that all will be well, and then *w-l-ymrw iii ḥpwkwt w-iii pdwywt w-šlš šlwmwt. Šlš ḥpwkwt ḥpkt mspdy l-mḥwl ly, ptht šqy yt ʿzrny šmḥh ʿz tsmḥ btwlh bmḥwl w-bḥwrym w-zqnym yḥdyw w-ḥpkty ʿblm l-ššwn... w-lʾ ʾbh H ʾlhyk l-šmw ʾl blʾm w-yhpwk...* “And they should recite three [verses of] ‘overturning’ [*ḥāfūkhōt*], three of ‘redemption’ [*pedūyōt*], and three of ‘peace’ [*šelōmōt*]. The three ‘overturnings’ are: ‘You turned my lament into dancing and girded me with joy’ [Ps. 30:12]; ‘Then shall the maiden delight in the dance, and youths and old men together — I will turn their mourning into rejoicing’ [Jer. 31:13]; “And the Lord your God refused to listen Balaam — instead, the Lord turned the curse into a blessing for you, for the Lord your God loves you” [Deut. 23:6]. We are to discuss the Book of Esther presently: it evokes the remembered life and customs of the Achaemenid royal court, not very distant or different from the Parthian and Sasanian world of the Babylonian Talmud — the *Bavli*. One of the fixtures of the pre-Islamic court, and of stories told about it, was the *topos* of a monarch waking from a nightmare and summoning his advisers to interpret it²³. At the beginning of the sixth chapter of Esther — that is, at its exact center — when the prospects for the Jews are bleakest, the sleep of king Ahasuerus is disturbed (by a *bad dream*, explain Jewish exegetes, from which he wakes — the issue is not insomnia) and he

²²The typical parallel figure, with the somewhat assonant *naḥālāh* and *aḥūzāh*, may be rhetorical and nothing more. But it might also be read so as to embrace both monetary and real property.

²³For the use of the *topos* of dire dream vision, wakeful king, and seer in Armenian and Iranian epic narrative, see Russell 2012b. One Armenian word for a dream, *eraz*, derives from Iranian *rāz*, cf. the loan word *rz* in the Aramaic of Daniel in connection with yet more royal dreams: see Russell 1992. In the language of the Jewish texts of mystical ascent to the Divine palaces (*Hekhalot*), Heb. *raz* becomes a general term for the praxis in general of the presumably dream-like *Himmelsreise*.

has the *spr zkrwnwt*, the “book of memorials” (i. e., the royal annals)²⁴ read to him. This is how he learns of Mordechai’s report of the plot of two courtiers to assassinate the king, and from this moment the fortunes of Israel begin to turn for the better.

5. REVOLUTION AS ORIENTAL ROMANCE: THE BOOK OF ESTHER

The holiday of Purim has its origins in the Persian Empire — pre-Islamic Iran — and is based on events described in the Biblical Book of Esther that if they did occur would historically have to have transpired in the fifth century BCE or thereabouts, during the reign of the Achaemenid dynasty founded by Cyrus the Great. The book, probably composed in the Hellenistic period, describes the plot of Haman, the ambitious and hate-filled prime minister of an easily swayed and foolish king, Ahasuerus, to murder all the Jews of the vast Empire because of his malice towards a single man, Mordechai — who, as it happens, has saved the king from the plot of two assassins. Mordechai is also the guardian of an orphaned cousin, Esther, a beautiful woman whom Ahasuerus has chosen as the queen of Persia. At first, the king does not know of Esther’s background; and he does not know of Mordechai’s good deed, either. He also approves without question the genocidal decree Haman puts in front of him although it does not even name the nation to be destroyed. He goes so far as to lend the royal signet ring — the instrument of his autocracy — to Haman. It is a cloud, a fog, of ignorance and vagueness.

Once the dread decree is published, Mordechai urges Esther to come out to the king and reveal to him she belongs to the very people Haman wishes to massacre. She protests that she risks death to come before Ahasuerus without being summoned. But perhaps, Mordechai reasons, it is for the sake of this moment that she has attained her position at court. She fasts, and reveals herself to the king, who, fortunately, loves her and will do anything she asks. But wait, there’s more! Ahasuerus, who has not been sleeping well lately — as we have seen above — has the royal annals read to him and learns from them of Mordechai and his good deed. Truth is emerging from the fog — people and things are beginning to be called by their proper names.

And as this happens, the course of events reverses. Instead of Haman, Mordechai is honored: he is fitted out in royal robes and rides through Shushan on the king’s horse, with Haman walking before him to proclaim why he is being rewarded. Finally he is seated on the king’s throne. Instead of Mordechai being executed by impalement on a stake fifty cubits high, Haman is, along with all his ten sons. Instead of Jews being the victims, they take up arms, go out,

²⁴ Heb. *zīkārōn*, it might be noted, translates precisely the appropriate Middle Iranian term for some of these texts, *ayādgār*, “memorial”.

and kill thousands of their enemies in a preemptive attack. Anti-Semites cower in fear, and many gentiles convert to Judaism. The feast of Purim is established to commemorate the miraculous turn of events; and Mordechai becomes viceregent. Feasting is a notable aspect of both the text and the occasion on which it is read: the Book of Esther's ten chapters mention ten feasts, one of which lasts fully half a year; and on Purim night, after reading *Megillat Esther* from a special handwritten scroll, often in an ornate case — no other holiday merits such an object — and drowning out Haman's name with noise — again, unlike any other Scriptural public reading — Jews are bidden to drink and make merry till they cannot tell the exclamations “Blessed is Mordechai” and “Cursed be Haman” apart from each other. But Purim is strange in its excesses of sanctioned behavior, and has clear parallels in other early spring festivals like Mardi Gras. Most every holiday has its special food; for Mardi Gras celebrants in Louisiana it is gumbo, and for Ashkenazic Jews, on Purim it is *homentashen*, a three-cornered pastry stuffed with jam or poppy seed that is meant to look like the ear of a jackass — the shape may have its origins in antiquity, for the ancient Persians once ripped the ears off Gaumata, an illegitimate pretender to the throne, and there is a Greek mythological topos as well about donkey's ears²⁵.

If Ahasuerus has a historical counterpart it is most likely the early fifth-century king Xerxes, whose name, *Xšayarša*, means in Old Persian “Ruling like a man”, and who in his famous “Daiva” inscription at Persepolis boasts of having suppressed other religions and establishing Zoroastrian rites in their place. One can compare in spirit Haman the Agagite, son of Hammedatha. The father's name is pure Persian for “having the same law” (**hama-dāta-*); and Haman's name, if it is also Persian (it could have been from Elamite, a local language, but still can have sounded Persian enough to Jews that they interpreted it so), would mean “of the same mind/opinion” (**ham-manah-*) and thus the names of father and son underscore the point²⁶. And the point is that everybody in the 127 satrapies of Persia has the same law, except the Jews.

Why does Haman hate Jews? If there is any historical basis for the story, the reason would probably be that Israel as the Chosen People sets itself apart from all other nations: pagan anti-Semites called the Jews misanthropes for this. But the exegetes explain that his ancestors were the Amalekites, that ancient and peculiarly ruthless enemy whom God Himself swears in the Book of Exodus to wipe out utterly.²⁷ But the proximal cause is that Mordechai twice

²⁵ The Armenian Mardi Gras food is *herisa*: for an account of the riotous celebrations, in which traditional social and sacerdotal roles are mocked and overturned, see: Russell 2003.

²⁶ See Russell 1990. Similarly, in the Book of Tobit, which is also steeped in ancient Iranian lore, both the name of the hero and his son Tobias mean “God is good”: see Russell 2001.

²⁷ In some Jewish tradition, the Armenians are said to be the descendants of Amalek (and there is a legend that the people of Amasia, a Pontic city that once had a large Armenian population, were Amalekites); and the Yiddish name for them, *Timkhe*, is a Cockney rhym-

refuses to bow to Haman. The Hebrew text does not explain why; but the Greek version does. If it had been merely a gesture of respect that would have mollified the king's minister, that is one thing, but the kind of bow Haman demanded would have been tantamount to idolatry. This episode may reflect a real concern of Jews in ancient Iran: it was customary fully to prostrate oneself before the king (or other high official), and when Alexander the Great conquered Iran and took a fancy to local ways, even his Macedonian generals, idolaters to a man, balked at the *proskynesis* — full prostration — that he now demanded of them. Would such obeisance be halakhically idolatrous? And it has been suggested that there were images of false gods embroidered on Haman's clothes: one thinks of the figural roundels of Sasanian silk brocade — so by bowing to him one would be bowing to them.

Haman's name is symbolic; so is that of his wicked wife, Zereš. It derives from the Iranian name of a demon Zairičā, meaning “jaundice”, and forms a rhyming pair with another imp of hell, Tairičā, meaning “harm”. The two of them, a kind of infernal recipe for a bad harvest, are the opponents of the two archangels, Haurvatāt (“Health”) and Amərətāt (“Immortality”) (Middle Persian Xurdād and Amurdād), who are the guardians of fertility — of waters and plants. Tairičā appears in Esther as Tereš — one of the pair of would-be assassins of Ahasuerus whose plot Mordechai discovers. The other is Bigthan, which may be from Bagadāna, “God-given”. So Esther and Mordechai represent the forces of goodness and life, a kind of Khordad-Amurdad rhyming pair; their opponents, Teresh and Zeresh, the powers of evil and death. The term Purim itself means “lots”, and there is an old Zoroastrian game, preserved by Armenian girls, of casting lots (*vičak*) in the springtime (on Ascension Eve) to see who will fall in love and be married. They throw a flower into water under the *stars*. The flower is called *horot-morot*, a form of the names Khordad and Amurdad just mentioned. And as for the star, we have Esther, whose name probably means that. Did the author of the Book of Esther know the ancient key words encoded into his story, that make it into an allegory of cosmic war as well as a game of love and marriage? There can be little doubt of his knowledge of Persian: he uses the correct Persian term, *aḥašdarpana*, which is also, incidentally, the longest word in the Hebrew language, for a governor (English uses the same Persian word, *via* Greek, as “satrap”). When Mordechai

ing slang-style reduction of the Biblical injunction against Amalek, *Yemakh timkhe*, “May he be utterly blotted out!” Anti-Semitism exists in Armenian life and culture: the two Diaspora peoples, so similar in their energy and aspirations — and, later, in their misfortunes — evidently could be bitter rivals at times. But happily there is also friendship and mutual respect: the Jew Franz Werfel's novel *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*, about the Armenian genocide, inspired resistance during the Holocaust; and the Armenian-American anti-fascist writer Avedis Derounian (a.k.a. John Roy Carlson), whom this writer had the pleasure and honor to know, combatted anti-Semitism and saw in the nascent State of Israel the model for a future Armenia.

becomes *mišneh*, “second”, to Ahasuerus on the throne, at the end of the book, the author is rendering into Hebrew a historical Persian rank, **bitya-xšaya-*, “second-ruling” (cf. Greek *pitiaxēs*; Armenian l-w *bdeašx*). And numerous other details of the story and setting are authentically Iranian. The use of gentile names and the intimate knowledge of Iranian language and ways suggest that the writer of Esther was not merely attuned to the dangers and insecurities of life in diaspora, but belonged to a well established and deeply rooted, viable diaspora community.

There seems to be a kind of very specific, supernatural event taking place, then, beneath the fog of vagueness, of identities concealed and people not named, in the Book of Esther. And where names are given in lists, they are suspiciously symmetrical. Seven noble families served the Persian throne, and these “sages” are named in the book in order as: Carshena, Shethar, Admatha, Tarshish, Meres, Marsena, and Memucan. The king’s eunuchs are also seven in number, also listed, and the name of the first eunuch rhymes with that of the last of the sages; the names of the last three eunuchs, with those of the first three of the sages: Mehuman, Bizzetha, Harbona, Bigtha, Abagtha, Zethar, and Careas. (Note that some pairs in these lists rhyme, in inverse order; cf. the diptych structure of the book itself.) Lists mattered to the ancient reader, as mnemonic tools and demonstrations of erudition (the classic example is the list of ships in the *Iliad* of Homer), and he was alive to this aspect of the story in a way a modern reader might not be. The Book of Esther provides the names of all ten of Haman’s sons, all of them authentically Persian. There are ten feasts and ten chapters, and the key reversal occurs right at the midpoint of the book. Everything is as symmetrical — and reversed! — as the two covers of a book, the two wings of a butterfly, the two panels of a diptych. Clearly, the author wants the reader of this romance to figure out puzzles, to pay attention when something is named, and also to notice the contrast between naming and not naming, between precision and vagueness — between truth and deception. Deception rules the first half of Esther; in the second half everything is overturned, inverted, made to run backward, and truth wins the day. So the parallel between the two name lists is in *inverted* order; and ironic *reversal* is the great thematic strategy of the story. Haman plans to kill all the Jews, but in the end by counter-edict the Jews slay all the anti-Semites. Haman hopes to be honored by the king; but it is Mordechai instead who receives honor, while Haman is humiliated. Mordechai is to be impaled; but instead Haman and his whole family suffer this gruesome form of execution. The reversal is as complete in its way as in Exodus. There, the very laws of nature are inverted; here, the seemingly inevitable course of history is reversed. Chiasmus is one of the more important stylistic features of Biblical composition, and the author of Esther uses it to the hilt.

The triumph of Mordechai — his reward for having unmasked Bigthan and Teresh, the would-be killers of the king — is worth mention, for it is por-

trayed in the Purim scene, one of the frescoes of the third-century synagogue at Dura-Europos. All four walls of this unique structure teem with portrayals of Biblical figures and episodes, painted by an artist whose “frontal” style, studied famously by the great Russian scholar and archaeologist Mikhail Ivanovich Rostovtsev, indicates he might have been an Iranian Jew, or at the very least a local from Syria with the strong cultural ties to Parthia characteristic of the place and time (one recalls that Edessa, the “blessed city” of early Syriac Christians, bore also the moniker “daughter of the Parthians”). We can imagine that if this were the case, the story of Esther, with its Iranian locus and flavor, would have had special resonance for him and his audience, who would have been attuned to the fine details of his portrayal of the scenes and characters. Events are shown in sequential order: Haman, attired as a slave to increase his abasement, leads Mordechai, who sits astride the white royal steed. Then Mordechai is enthroned — there are animals on each step of the platform of the throne in the painting. That is a kind of iconographic shorthand intended either to recall, or, overtly, to represent the Persian throne as that of Solomon, who, according to tradition, knew the languages of the animals. But the stories that accreted around the complex figure of Solomon suggest that he was weak in some respects, too. One recalls the legend that Solomon, who according to apocryphal legend had enlisted the help of the demon Ašmedai (English Asmodeus; this is the Zoroastrian demon of wrath, Aēšma daēva, *xašm* in New Persian) in the construction of the Temple, foolishly lent his signet ring to the demon; and Ahasuerus gives his own signet ring to Haman! This would seem to suggest that even the greatest monarch, Solomon, could be thoughtlessly impulsive; and Ahasuerus is far from the wisest of kings. Solomon loved women immoderately; and so does Ahasuerus. He marries Esther because of the disrespectful behavior of his previous queen, Vashti (whose name, I have argued, may be related to an Iranian word for lust). The image of Solomon’s throne may suggest to the attentive observer that Ahasuerus/Xerxes, for all his greatness and power, is a man with flawed and impulsive judgment, ruled by his passions. As the Biblical scholar Prof. Jon Levenson has observed in his witty and learned study of the Book of Esther, Ahasuerus is a king “who never says no”.

Given these strange data and *data* (Persian law, if the gentle reader will forgive the etymological pun), this mixture of comedy and high seriousness, of the profane and the profound, of important, even perennial themes lightly treated, what is one to conclude about the Book of Esther? Perhaps one way to approach the question is to address the question of the literary genre to which it may be assigned. Although it is a part of canonical Scripture and draws on Biblical precedents and parallels (there are a number to the story of Joseph, for instance), it is also the basis for an early spring holiday, a carnivalesque celebration with analogues elsewhere in the Near East and beyond. It is likely to have been the work of an Iranian Jewish author addressing the anxieties

(and evoking the life ways) of a deeply rooted Diaspora community. The book has very little to say of the Land of Israel, save that Mordechai's forebears had been exiled from Jerusalem — but it does not intimate or hope for a return there. All this is clear. But what *kind* of a book is it? The Bible presents many different styles of narrative. Pious believers accept the Bible as a single, normative, Divine scripture. It is the history of God's interaction and successive covenants with Israel. But it is still extremely diverse in genre: it has songs, carefully and tautly crafted stories, homilies. The Psalms are a compilation of prayerful poems, some connected with the Temple, others with private devotions and personal emotions. Ecclesiastes and Proverbs are wisdom-literature. The Song of Songs is an allegorical love poem with an antecedent in ancient Egyptian literature. And so on.

Esther, without doubt, belongs to the category called the Oriental romance. It is a genre that is most abundantly attested in the Greek of the Hellenistic age, and thereafter in both Greek and Latin: one of the longest and finest works of this type is the *Transformations of Lucius* of Apuleius of Madaura, a North African writer in Latin of the second century CE. The ancient romance typically has an exotic and sumptuous setting: often Persia, but also India or Ethiopia, or Phoenicia. The plot partakes abundantly of love triangles, situations of peril, and ironic reversals. The characters are generally a virtuous couple pitted against villains who are wicked, stupid, lustful, and base, in varying proportions. There is very often a religious subtext: Apuleius' narrative concludes with the praises of the cult of Isis, and the story of Rhodanes and Sinonis in the *Babyloniaka* of Iamblichus is covertly Mithraic²⁸. The end of the romance ties all the threads neatly together: virtue is always rewarded, lovers and sundered families are happily reunited, and the heroes, vindicated and delivered from peril, triumph over their enemies. The latter receive their just deserts, often in ways a modern reader might find gratuitously vindictive, even sadistic. Tragic heroes are larger than life; in romances the heroes are not, and the villains are sometimes comical and pathetic. By all these criteria, Esther is just such a romance.

The romance, by comparison with some other kinds of writing, has proven to be a durable genre over the centuries, partly because it is more accessible and immediately entertaining to the average reader than more sophisticated forms; partly too, because even though it is overtly escapist, a relief from the everyday grind, it can elevate and enchant the reader and deliver a powerful message through its sumptuous magic. A good example of such a survival, from more recent times, is the opera of Mozart *Die Zauberflöte*, with its lovers Pamina and Tamina (and of course, as in Esther, they rhyme), the pathetic, evil eunuch of a monk, the sinister Queen of the Night, and the high-priest Sarastro, who is none other than Zoroaster, the Prophet of ancient Iran, albeit here with abundant Masonic images and themes, and some modish Egyptian trappings added on.

²⁸ See Russell 2001–2002; Russell 2002–2003.

And this seems one key to Esther: the book addresses an important issue of common—and communal— anxiety as well as the perennial problem of the contest between good and evil, and solves the problems with a denouement that, for all its sumptuous Oriental fantasy, still delivers a sober, religious message that underscores the virtues of love, commitment, and faith. And through the book runs, like a trace element, also the key root *h-p-k* we noted above. Prof. Levenson cites a sage pupil, Brooks Schramm, who at a seminar in 1986 at the University of Chicago declared that one word in Esther 9:1 sums up the entire book²⁹: on 13 Adar the enemies of the Jews were to get them in their power *wnhpk hw'* — *və-nahafokh hū* “and it was *overturned*”, i. e., the opposite happened, and the Jews got their enemies in their own power instead. And in verse 22 of the same chapter, the holiday of Purim is ordained for 14 and 15 Adar, since a time of grief and mourning *nhpk, nehpakh* “was turned” into festivity and joy. Although these overturnings (or, to use the Latin, revolutions) suggest a Divine agent, rather than the mere operation of chance, the Hebrew text of Esther does not mention the name of God anywhere; and though Esther fasts, no prayer she might have uttered is recorded. The translator of the Greek version, in the Septuagint, hastens anxiously to fill in both lacunae, but the theological silence of the original may suggest — and this is literally an *argumentum ex silentio* — that the events of the narrative are so mundane, so much a part of the conditions of the exile, that the artful reversals and the verb *hpk* must suffice to suggest that the Almighty is still active in the world and a helper to His people Israel. In Exodus, God works with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; here in Esther, though the revolution takes place, the Lord is working, as it were, behind the scenes. Hence perhaps the crucial turning point and *deus ex machina* is made Ahasuerus’ disturbed sleep, or mantic dream, triggering the reading of the royal annals, rather than a fully wakeful, daytime event.

6. THE *IN FLACCUM* OF PHILO: ESTHER AS CRYPTOGRAM

As we have seen, revolutionary ideas tend, paradoxically, to be rooted strongly in earlier prototypes of all kinds, from the theoretical to the artistic. The urge to break away into the new never fully achieves the escape velocity to overcome the gravitational pull of the past. So it should be even less surprising that a work of antiquity presented by a Platonist, Hellenophone Jewish philosopher as a historical narrative might have been patterned very closely upon the Book of Esther, though the author had good reasons to ensure that only a Jewish reader would discern the underlying armature and its message. This is the *In Flaccum* of Philo Judaeus of Alexandria. Philo was a leader of this diaspora community, which was large and well established but in many

²⁹ Levenson 1997: 8.

respects without political power or civil rights. Although Philo wrote in Greek, it is unlikely gentiles read his books: he had an exclusively Jewish audience in his own time³⁰.

The text, which differs strikingly in its dramatically narrative style from Philo's other works of philosophical exegesis of the Bible, deals with events of 38–40 CE that may be summarized thus in brief: the Roman emperor Tiberius appoints Flaccus prefect of Egypt, and at first he performs his duties properly; but upon the accession to power of Gaius Caligula, Flaccus finds his own position precarious. Two corrupt men, Isidorus and Lampo, persuade him to deflect from himself the adverse attention of the new emperor by using the Jews as scapegoats. In the meantime Herod Agrippa, scion of the royal house of Judaea, stops in Alexandria (the ancient equivalent of an airline hub) on his way home to the Land of Israel from Rome. Though he tries hard to avoid ostentation, even notice, the locals still behold his splendid bodyguard and retinue. They are consumed by *phthonos*, “envy”, a moral failing on which Philo focuses (he regarded it as a serious shortcoming in his own character). They are outraged, too, that the Jews should dare to claim a king of their own. The spiteful Alexandrian Greeks and Egyptian natives conceive a stratagem of provocation, what we would call nowadays a “set up”: they install statues of the emperor in the synagogues of the city knowing the Jews will regard them as idols and remove them. The second Commandment forbids idolatry — as the Seleucids had learnt nearly two centuries before, at the time of the Maccabees, and as we have seen in Esther. God alone is to receive *proskynēsis*³¹.

This religious obduracy would guarantee a furious reaction from the mercurial and choleric Caligula, who already finds it offensive that Jews offered sacrifices *for* him but not *to* him. In this dedication exclusively to one God, the Jews differed from the other religio-national communities of the Roman Empire in the same way they had differed from the other peoples of Ahasuerus' domains³²; and ancient proto-anti-Semites further claimed that Jews were misanthropic in their refusal to share meals and intermarry with their pagan neighbors. In short, the Jews were different from everybody else — an echo of Haman's claim. A grisly pogrom ensues³³; and it seems certain Caligula

³⁰ See Birnbaum 2001.

³¹ Goodenough 1938: 27.

³² As Gibbon drily observed, to Roman pagans all gods were equally true; to philosophers, equally false; and to politicians, equally useful.

³³ Van der Horst 2003 notes how Philo takes pains to detail how prominent leaders of the Jewish community were flogged with scourges, a punishment much more demeaning than being beaten with the flat of a sword, as citizens were. He points out also (p. 214) the frequent use in the text of the term *hybris* — out of all proportion to its appearance elsewhere in the Philonic corpus. What the Jews experience, then, is a state peculiarly dreaded in antiquity (and not at all pleasant today, either): public humiliation, expressed in Greek by the passive verb *hybrizomai* — “to be hubris-ed against”, as it were. On this theme as a cat-

will introduce harsher measures still — for although the Jewish community had written a decree proclaiming their loyalty to the new emperor, Flaccus deliberately neglected to send it, “so that we alone of all people under the sun would be considered enemies” (*Flacc.* 101–102).

But the reversal, the *h-p-k* moment, comes just when Jewish fortunes look bleakest: Agrippa takes the document and has it delivered to its Roman addressee. This happens precisely at the mid-point of the narrative, and signals the dramatic reversal of the fortunes of the Jews for the better (and of Flaccus’ fortunes, for the worse). Philo calls the reversal “revolutionary” (*neōteron*, *Flacc.* 120) — one of the very rare instances in which the eirenic, conservative philosopher uses the term in a positive sense. He does so evidently because he considers the revolution a Divine act³⁴. Several scholars have noticed the general affinity of *In Flaccum* to Esther³⁵, but the points of comparison in both large structure and minute detail — the chiasmic reversal, for instance — are so striking that it seems all but certain the Philo intentionally patterned his work upon the Biblical book in order to deliver the Jewish reader this *coded* message³⁶: Caligula, like Ahasuerus, is a vile and ignoble buffoon; Flaccus is like Haman; Isidorus and Lampo play the roles of the petty villains Bigthan and Teresh; Mordecai will not bow to Haman and the Jews will not countenance a statue of Gaius in the synagogue; and God will intervene subtly in history to give protection (*epikouria*) to His people. In its overall structure, its thematic and narrative armature, *In Flaccum* is symmetrical, a near perfect diptych³⁷.

Prof. Peter Brown wrote eloquently in his *Power and Persuasion in Late Antiquity* of the utility of *paideia*: a shared background in Greek culture and learning and common values such as self-restraint and respect for freedom of speech and civility enabled the educated but powerless commoner to speak effectively to the ruler. But speaking truth to power safely is possible only when the powerful respect *paideia*, or when the rule of law constrains them.

alyst to the “bandit” epic see Russell 2017, and recall the humiliation of Haman in the Purim scene of the frescoes of the synagogue at Dura.

³⁴ See van der Horst 2003: 200.

³⁵ Notably Goodenough 1938: 7–10.

³⁶ van der Horst 2003: 16, quotes approvingly the astute judgment of the Philonic scholar Dr. Ellen Birnbaum: the book would have been addressed to the Jews as a consolation in adversity, and as a warning to the gentiles against harming them.

³⁷ *In Flacc.* 36–40, the enemy Alexandrians take a hapless pauper named Karabas from the street, dress him up as a king of the Jews, surround him with a mock retinue, and call him jeeringly in Aramaic *Mārān* — “our Lord”. This is first of all a message to the Jews and their Agrippa. As a literary strategy it may be a reworking of the theme of the enthronement of Mordechai as well. One hears perhaps an echo of the “lord of misrule” of vernal customs analogous to the Purim festival; or, more chillingly, the echo of the mock enthronement, but a few years before of another *Rex Iudaeorum*, a certain Nazarene. One notes that Philo apparently wrote a book, now lost, on the persecution of the Jews by Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor who condemned that King to death.

That was not the case with Gaius Caligula. So when one wishes in such conditions to give an audience a piece of one's mind the choice is either a highly visible martyrdom (perennially an effective if costly tool), following the advice of the old Armenian proverb to tell the truth only if you've got one foot in the stirrup (or, *mutatis mutandis*, Joseph Brodsky's Eleventh Commandment, "Scatter!"), or cryptography — encoding the message somehow. Leo Strauss in *Persecution and the Art of Writing* argues that Maimonides did this in the *Guide to the Perplexed*, a philosophical book that, Strauss believed, had to get past religious censorship. And even encoding a message to those who will understand it — Maimonides on divinity to fellow philosophers, Philo on Caligula to fellow Jews — only works if there are no informers in the house. In 1933 the Soviet Armenian poet Charents published his *Girk' chanaparhi*, "The Book of the Journey". The first printing was confiscated and burnt because the censors discerned a satirizing reference to Stalin as the buffoon Pierrot. Charents told a friend with glee that they had missed the subversive message spelled out by every second letter of the initial word of each line of the poem *Patgam*, "Message", in the book. It was: "Armenian nation, your only salvation is in your united strength." The friend informed on the poet, and the matter went from departmental level to the dean's office, as it were — from Erevan to Moscow. Charents was arrested in the summer of 1937 and died in prison in November of that year. *Совершилось*.

It seems Philo encoded his message with fair assurance he would not be turned in. But in his text the Jews offer a prayer of thanksgiving for their sudden and unexpected deliverance that begins with a curious, almost legal disclaimer (*Flacc.* 121): "O Lord, we are not delighted at the punishment of our enemy, for we have learned from our holy laws that we should sympathize with our fellow humans. But it is right to give thanks to you for having taken pity and compassion on us and for having relieved our constant and incessant oppression". Various scholars have considered this abjuration of *Schadenfreude* disingenuous. The ancients regarded hubris as a tragic flaw, to be sure, but the humiliation and ridicule of a defeated enemy was well within the acceptable terms of their politics and morals: the riotous, vengeful, joyous customs of the Purim holiday itself reflect these. Jewish tradition also stresses, though, that the Israelites were forbidden to rejoice over the drowning of Pharaoh's host in the Red Sea; and to this day at the Passover *Seder* Jews spill ten drops of wine for the ten plagues, plus three more drops at three acronyms of them, to subtract from the celebrants' joy — in compassionate memory of the suffering and death of God's creatures. On the one hand, the incipit of the prayer may be defensive, lest gentile readers think the Jews overweening in their pride. On the other, though, it may be an encoded message to the Jewish reader who knows the traditions of Passover, as if to say: all others indeed rejoice in the spectacle of a defeated, downtrodden enemy, but we and our Laws are, precisely, different

from (and better than!) all those other, barbarous nations³⁸. Or Philo might have been hedging his bets.

It is interesting to observe one way that Philo has brought up to date, as it were, a crucial detail of the Book of Esther. At the beginning of the sixth chapter of the latter, we recall, the sleepless king Ahasuerus has the *spr zkrwnwt*, the book of memorials, read to him. The book is the instrument of the reversal of the Jews' fate. That may be fitting for a people who, uniquely among ancient peoples, reposed their loyalty and identity in a single normative written canon of scripture believed to be the only true revelation of the only God. But ancient Iran was a culture that revered the oral tradition, not the written word; and Persian documents such as Ahasuerus' royal annals existed in at most a few copies. Even the Zoroastrian sacred scripture, the Avesta, was transmitted mainly by word of mouth: the Pahlavi texts assert that there were but a few written copies, so rare that they were kept in provincial treasuries³⁹. So the Persian book is more sacral than political. Philo, by contrast, lived in a far more literate world whose affairs were dependent upon written documents — officials were accordingly adept at manipulating them. Instead of an archive to be read to a sleepless king, in a scene drawn from the stock of epic and myth, we have a time-sensitive letter, the Alexandrian Jewish pledge of allegiance to Caligula, that Flaccus cunningly neglects to forward to its addressee. As if to direct our attention even more closely to such bureaucratic malfeasance of the written word, Philo uses an epithet of the villain Lampo *kalamosphaktēs* “one who murders by means of the pen” (*Flacc.* 132) that, van der Horst points out, is a *hapax* in Greek — a word found here and nowhere else.

7. CONCLUSIONS

One can only imagine how Philo's faith might have been shaken, had he been able to see the *kalamosphakteis*, the desk-murderers (*Schreibtischtäter*) of two millennia in the future, had he come to know how his *hapax* was to become a commonplace. Philo argued that for Jews, Jerusalem is the metropolis, the mother-city, but the foreign lands where diaspora communities reside are

³⁸ Balaam's prophecy that Israel will dwell alone is double-edged indeed. But as to taking pleasure in another's misery, the American Jewish folk definition of a Jewish holiday treads a middle path, at once celebratory and gently humane: “They tried to kill us. We won. Let's eat!” As for *Schadenfreude*, one cannot help noting the language and culture that has supplied the word, along with *Blitzkrieg*, *Vergeltungswaffen*, *Endlösung*, *Beamtersprache*, and other terms the world could well have done without. Many are specific to what Victor Klemperer famously studied as the *Lingua Tertii Imperii* — George Orwell, shortly after the Second World War, conceived “Newspeak” in 1984 to warn humanity that no one is safe from the danger of the totalitarian perversion of language. I concur here with C. S. Lewis, *Qui Verbum Dei contempserunt, eis auferetur etiam verbum hominis*.

³⁹ See Bailey 1971, chapters *Patvand* (“transmission of the tradition”) and *Dēn dipīrīh* (“writing down of the Religion”).

their patria, their father-land. He did not live to see the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, either — not two millennia, but a few short decades after the Alexandrian pogrom. It signaled the beginning of a precarious, powerless, imperilled diaspora, one with no mother-city left at all. “We had good reason to think that our hopes were *not* lost”, he writes of his fellow Alexandrian Jews, perhaps with reference to Ezekiel 37, *yḇšw ‘šmwtynw w-’bdh tqwtmw*, “Our bones are dry and our hope is lost” The Zionist movement, determined to end the condition of diaspora once and for all, was to adopt as its hymn, years before the Holocaust, a song called “The Hope”, with its poignant verse *‘wd l’ ‘bdh tqwtmw* (*‘Od lo avda tikvatenu*), — “Our hope is *not* yet lost”. In the aftermath of the extermination of the Jews of Europe, David Ben Gurion and his comrades would not and could not wait for Divine intervention: “Our future depends, not on what the gentiles think, but on what the Jews do”, he declared, much as Lenin had left off an essay half written, preferring to make a revolution rather than write about one. But paradigms of Biblical redemption quickly accreted still around the modern, secular State of Israel, with Hatikvah as its national anthem, and Jewish worshippers around the world began to bless it as *r’šyt smyht g’wltmw*, “the beginning of the flowering of our redemption”⁴⁰. As we have seen, in ideology and intertextuality, in passion and hope, in the homeland and in diaspora, religion and revolution are, and have always been, inseparable. For the Jewish, Christian, and Islamic faiths — the Abrahamic world civilization — the Hebrew Bible is at the living heart of them all, from Moses and Jesus to Lenin and Marx, and beyond. And “we all want to change the world”.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bailey, H. W. (1971) *Zoroastrian Problems in the Ninth-Century Books*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Bickerman, B. (1967) *Four Strange Books of the Bible: Jonah, Daniel, Koheleth, Esther*, New York: Schocken.

Birnbaum, E. (2001) Philo on the Greeks: A Jewish Perspective on Culture and Society in First-Century Alexandria, *The Studia Philonica Annual* 13, 37–58.

Brandon, S. G. F. (1967) *Jesus and the Zealots: A Study of the Political Factor in Primitive Christianity*, New York: Scribners.

Braude, W. G. (ed. and trans.) (1959) *The Midrash on Psalms*, 1–2, New Haven: Yale University Press.

⁴⁰ Hasidim, even those extremely supportive of Israel, refuse to pronounce this blessing, because for all the importance of human agency redemption must still come from a supernatural source: the Messiah. Many Jews in the Diaspora who do pronounce the blessing, and who dutifully recite “Next year in Jerusalem” at their Seder tables, seem to reflect in their choice of domicile another sort of faith, that of Philo: Jerusalem is the mother, but the land of dispersion is the father, and God will protect His people everywhere.

Bundgård J. A. (1965) Why did the Art of Writing Spread to the West? Reflections on the Alphabet of Marsiliana, *Analecta Romana Instituti Danici* 3, 11–72.

Cohen, A. (1945) *The Psalms*, London: Soncino.

Erwin R. Goodenough, E. R. (1938) *The Politics of Philo Judaeus: Practice and Theory*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Kirkpatrick, A. F. (ed.) (1902) *The Psalms*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Levenson, J. D. (1997) *Esther: A Commentary*, The Old Testament Library, Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press.

Russell, J. R. (1987) An Irano-Judaic Correspondence, *Journal of the K. R. Cama Oriental Institute* 54, Bombay (Mumbai), 81–84.

Russell, J. R. (1990) Zoroastrian Elements in the Book of Esther, in S. Shaked, A. Netzer (eds), *Irano-Judaica II*, Jerusalem: Makhon Ben-Zvi, 33–40.

Russell, J. R. (1992) Sleep and Dreaming in Armenian, in J. A. C. Greppin (ed.), *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Armenian Linguistics*, Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 147–169.

Russell, J. R. (1995–1996) The Last of the Paulicians, *Hask hayagitakan taregirk*, 7–8, Antelias, Lebanon, 33–47.

Russell, J. R. (2001) God is Good: Tobit and Iran, *Iran and the Caucasus* 5, Tehran, 1–6.

Russell, J. R. (2001–2002) The Epic of the Pearl,” *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes* 28, 29–100.

Russell, J. R. (2002–2003) Epic in the Armeno-Iranian Marchlands: The Metamorphoses of a Genre, *Journal of Armenian Studies* 7. 1, Belmont, MA, Fall-Winter, 3–17.

Russell, J. R. (2003) The Praise of Porridge, *Le Muséon* 116. 1–2, 137–179.

Russell, J. R. (2004) *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, Armenian Heritage Press and Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9, Cambridge, MA.

Russell, J. R. (2009) The Demon Weed, *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 19, 131–134.

Russell, J. R. (2012a) *The Book of the Way (Girk‘ chanaparhi) of Yeghishe Charents: An Illuminated Apocalyptic Gospel for Soviet Armenia*, Armenian Studies Program Occasional Paper Series, University of California, Berkeley, S. Astourian, (general ed.).

Russell, J. R. (2012b) Magic Mountains, Milky Seas, Dragon Slayers, and Other Zoroastrian Archetypes, *Bulletin of the Asia Institute*, N. S. 22, 57–80.

Russell, J. R. (2013) Hārūt and Mārūt: The Armenian Zoroastrian Demoniac Twins in the *Qur‘ān* Who Invented Fiction,” C. Тохтасъев, Р. Лурье (ред.), *Commentationes Iranicae: Сборник статей к 90-летию В. А. Лившица*, СПб.: Институт восточных рукописей РАН; Нестор-История, 469–480.

Russell, J. R. (2014–2015) An Armenian Spirit of Time and Place: the *Švot*, *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes* 36, 13–59.

Russell, J. R. (2017) From Parthia to Robin Hood: The Armenian Version of the Epic of the Blind Man’s Son (*Köroghlu*), in L. Di Tommaso, M. Henze,

W. Adler (eds), *The Embroidered Bible: Studies in Biblical Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in Honour of M. E. Stone* *Studia in Veteris Testamenti Pseudepigrapha*, Leiden: E. J. Brill.

Sperling, S. D. (2011) A Study of Psalm 2, *Ugarit Forschungen* 43, 435–445.

van der Horst, P. W. (2003) *Philo's Flaccus: The First Pogrom*, Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature.

FROM MASHTOTS' TO NGA'ARA:
THE ART OF WRITING AND CULTURAL SURVIVAL
IN ARMENIA AND RAPA NUI

JAMES R. RUSSELL

Professor Jos Weitenberg was a superb scholar, courteous colleague, and faithful friend. He was also a man of strong principle, who cared deeply for human rights and freedoms and made a practice of his convictions, helping endangered gay Armenians to obtain asylum in the Netherlands and sending masking tape for safe rooms at his own expense to Israeli colleagues when their country faced possible attack with poison gas by an Iraqi tyrant. This essay, dedicated to his blessed memory, considers the way culture and learning helped two peoples to survive assaults on their human dignity and physical survival. I dare to hope he might have liked it. I am grateful to have known him. May his luminous soul rest in everlasting peace.

PREFACE

This paper* compares the role of newly-invented writing systems and the men who championed them in the cultural survival of two peoples that would at first glance seem to be utterly different—the vast Near Eastern realm of Armenia, at the teeming crossroads of the ancient and modern worlds; and the tiny island of Rapa Nui (Easter Island, Chilean Isla de Pascua) at the eastern edge of Polynesia, in the empty middle of the Pacific, on the other side of the world, the loneliest place of human habitation on the planet. The former is an ancient center of civilization and technology that has flourished for at least three millennia, with a lucid alphabetic script that has endured without significant change for some sixteen centuries; the latter, a stone-age culture whose hieroglyphic

writing system, of uncertain purpose and possibly recent age, may have been used for only a century and still resists convincing decipherment as a whole. Yet both peoples, the Armenians and Rapanui, have faced with versatility and vigor the most radical challenges to their physical and cultural existence. Both created civilizations of astonishing richness. And it will be seen that for both the art of writing proved crucial to their survival. The unlikely parallels between these two most distant manifestations of human culture are astonishing, even poignant— even as their differences illustrate the diversity of human culture on the planet.

Like many Americans born in the 1950s, I first became fascinated by Easter Island when as a little boy I read *Aku Aku*, the account by the Norwegian archaeologist and explorer Thor Heyerdahl of his journey in his reed boat, the *Kon Tiki*, from Peru to Easter Island. The island, with its gaunt, cyclopean statues, the *moai*, and its beautiful and enigmatic hieroglyphic script, *rongorongo* (hereafter RR), seemed the very essence of mystery. Easter Island's minute size and utter remoteness in the emptiness of the South Pacific made its vanished classical civilization even more entrancing and exotic. My academic interests in school tended in another geographic direction— towards Russia, then to Armenia and Iran. Although the Apostle Paul enjoins us to give up the things of childhood as we grow, some scholars never do this, and, taking consolation from the example of the great J.R.R. Tolkien, I confess my own prolonged adolescence.

The nine-mile long island is a triangle formed chiefly by three extinct volcanoes: Rano Kao, Terevaka, and Poike; and the *moai* are of gray volcanic rock starred with green lichen, on grassy hillsides and rocky fields. At fifteen I found myself in a place whose tallest mountain, Ararat, at the time of the Deluge had been the only island on earth, according to the myths of my culture. In history that land was to become isolated in other ways, through language and religion, a rugged Christian island defined by a triangle of three lakes, Van, Sevan, and Urmia, in an Islamic sea: the Soviet Armenian poet Paruyr Sevak (1924–1971) even called his homeland a “mountain-island” (Arm. *leṛnakṭzi*). Gaunt red and gray volcanic monuments with patches of lichen stand on its slopes and plains— the *khach'k'ars*, or Cross-stones, with their lacework bas-reliefs and inscriptions in the exotic Armenian alphabet. And that script, invented by a visionary named Maštoc' sixteen centuries ago, has changed little over all that time.

On 5th April 1722, Easter Sunday, the Dutchman Jakob Roggeveen, sailing on the ship *De Afrikaansche Galey*, christened the island after a

holiday unknown to its people of a religion they had never heard of. The people he “discovered” probably called their home simply *Te Kainga*, “The Land” (or *Te Varu Kainga*, “The Eighth Land”); later on they came to call it *Mata Ki Te Rangi* “Eye (looking) at the Heavens”, *Te Pito O Te Henua*, “The Navel of the Earth”, or *Rapa Nui*, “Great Rock” or “Land’s End”—the latter its proper name today and the one we shall use (the people themselves, and their language, are Rapanui as one word). At its height of its prosperity the population of the island may have hovered around as many as 12,000 souls. But by the last quarter of the 19th century, after colonial exploitation and depredation, the introduction of pandemics, and mass kidnappings into slavery, the population of Easter Island had plunged to barely over a hundred. Its ancient monuments had become neglected ruins, the lofty moai lying face down; its script—the only indigenous writing system of Polynesia!—virtually forgotten; its economy and ecology, utterly shattered; its few remaining inhabitants confined to a walled ghetto on their own land. In the case of Armenia, the country’s gradual isolation from the rest of the world and the impoverishment and degradation of its indigenous population by wave after wave of alien invaders culminated in the First World War in a program of ethnic cleansing unlike anything the Eurasian continent had seen before, leaving nine-tenths of the country desolate. A generation later, the Polish Jewish lawyer Raphael Lemkin coined the word “genocide” to give a name in law to that crime.

The tiny Pacific island also never faded entirely from one’s thoughts. Over the years I read here and there references to pictographs in medieval Armenian manuscripts that were compared to the hieroglyphic writing system of the ancient Hittite neighbors of the Armenians on the Anatolian plateau, less plausibly to the still-undeciphered hieroglyphic symbols of the ancient Harappan civilization of the Indus Valley, and still less sensibly to the enigmatic RR glyphs of Rapa Nui. In the summer of 2012, being between projects, I decided to revisit that question, examined the evidence, and soon came to the same conclusion at which sober Armenian philologists had arrived long ago: the very few similarities are entirely fortuitous. The figure of a man or a bird looks much the same from place to place. But the parallels between the two cultures and the place of writing in them turned out to be far more interesting than any diffusionist fantasies; and one carried on reading. This essay is the beginning of the journey. Since its completion I was fortunate enough to visit the island, in January 2013, and to make friends there, among both Rapanui and students of the island’s culture.

1. TO THE NAVEL OF THE EARTH: RAPA NUI

Monsters dot the coastline. Hollow-eyed beings with elongated ears, weather-beaten skin and pouting lips like sullen children... The end of the world is an accepted fact, and Easter Island is a case in point with its chain of unfortunate events that led to self-destruction; a lemming marooned in the calm of the ocean.¹

Humans originated in East Africa, diffusing northwards through the Rift Valley into the Middle East and branching from there north to Europe and the Caucasus, and eastwards into Asia. Scholars of palaeo-culture now hypothesize that around 6000 BC migrants from the coast of southeastern China settled Taiwan; and over the next two millennia the Proto-Austronesian culture evolved, with sea voyagers venturing over the Pacific to settle Melanesia around 1300 BC. Polynesians sailing east from Mangareva or nearby islands may first have come to Easter Island in the first centuries of the Christian era; some researchers place the settlement closer to 600-900, though carbon dating favors an early date. The island is the easternmost edge of Polynesia; settlers from the same place(s) of origin settled also Hawai'i, to the north (named after the mythical Polynesian homeland *Hawaiki), and New Zealand in the distant south: the languages of all three island (groups) are closely related (at least by Indo-European standards!), so Maori and Rapanui, for instance, are quite close.² The settlers had to sail against prevailing currents about two thousand miles of open ocean to Easter Island— an astonishing feat. They could scarcely have drifted there by accident. Rather, the place must have been scouted in advance before a huge party was sent in huge and heavily laden, ocean-going catamarans to settle the place, making about a hundred miles a day in good weather.

Foundation legend replaces this stage of scouting with a visionary dream by the mythical ancestor Hotu Matu'a, and makes war or inundation the cause of the exodus. The settlers brought fire and food crops (taro, yams, bananas, sugar cane) and some animals for eating— chickens, and, as we shall see presently, the little Polynesian rat. They probably took along dogs and pigs as well, but the latter two left no trace on

¹ Schalansky 2010, 100.

² For a good discussion of Polynesian origins, patterns of settlement, and the archaeological record, see Bellwood 1978. The best monograph on the language and its connection to the rest of the Polynesian family is still Churchill and Roussel 1912.

Rapa Nui.³ Polynesians sailed to the Americas as well: the sweet potato, with its name, came from there, and it was a two-way cultural exchange; for the word for a stone ax in the language of the indigenous Mapuche people of Chile is most likely a loan from Old Rapanui. A detailed traditional narrative of the journey of Hotu Matu'a in Rapanui inscribed in Latin script in a ledger ("Manuscript E") was studied minutely by Thomas Barthel in his monograph *The Eighth Land: The Polynesian Discovery and Settlement of Easter Island* (University Press of Hawai'i, Honolulu, 1978). Aside from its intrinsic importance, the narrative is a reminder that the indigenous Rapanui oral literature and mythological corpus is extensive and cannot be ignored when one approaches the question of how to interpret the Rongorongo texts.

The island is located at 27°9' S. and 109°25' W., with an area of 163.3 square km.; and the distance to Tahiti is 4190 km; to Chile, 3690 km. It is triangular in shape, its extremities marked, as noted above, by three extinct volcanoes with crater lakes, thrusting nine thousand feet from the ocean floor and about a thousand feet from the present-day surface of the Pacific. Scores of smaller volcanoes dot the island's surface. Far from anywhere, Rapa Nui is the remotest and most isolated human settlement on earth.⁴ Tradition has it that the first men pulled up their canoes on the sandy beach at Anakena: they found a subtropical rainforest with thick stands of giant palms; but their tiny rats, either shipboard stowaways or, more probably, brought as a food staple, seem quickly to have decimated the trees. Replanting them all would have been a pointless exercise, just feeding more rats (the animal reproduces and multiplies at a phenomenal rate); so, as a recent study of the island's archaeology and palaeoculture suggests, the early Rapanui soon resorted instead to lithic mulch farming. This was perhaps the first great technological marvel of the island's stone age culture, for it meant moving about a billion small, porous volcanic pieces of rock to create little gardens across the now largely treeless island that could be protected from the constant winds. There were no rivers, making the islanders dependent for fresh

³ The island now has as many horses as people. These were introduced in the 19th century and have multiplied without impediment by predators. They are called in Rapanui *hoi*, perhaps a loan from English or derived from an exclamation; in Tahitian the periphrastic term for them is *pua'ahorofenna* "pig run land" (see Fischer 1993, 169), even more awkward than the ancient Mesopotamian *anšukurra*, "ass of the mountains".

⁴ Well, almost. In Judith Schalansky's *Atlas of Remote Islands: Fifty Islands I Have Never Set Foot On and Never Will*, Penguin Books, 2010, Rapa Nui (p. 100) looms large by comparison to some isolated rocks with few or no people scattered across the world ocean.

water upon the large crater lakes, some underground streams, and rain caught in cisterns.

Though the island has a subtropical climate and it is possible to spend most of one's time outdoors and nearly naked, there are strong winds, winter can be chilly, and the people made bark cloth, as elsewhere in Polynesia, to protect themselves from the elements. They incised elaborate tattoos and body-paintings over themselves; and for ceremonial purposes they added headdresses of feathers. Chieftains wore a wooden breastplate, the *rei miro*, about which more presently. Headgear was of symbolic importance: the moai have cylindrical red stone crowns that were devilishly hard to elevate and safely install; and when the early European ships visited, the Rapanui relieved sailors and captains alike almost immediately of their hats. Food was what was brought or could be caught: yams, sweet potatoes, bananas, sugar cane, taro, chicken, and fish. There are no lagoons, no reefs to nurture very abundant fish stocks, and the growing scarcity of wood made the construction of seagoing canoes for deep-sea fishing uneconomical. At first there may have been some commerce with the rest of Polynesia; but the lesser Ice Age ca. AD 1500 cut off the Navel of the World from contact with the rest of Polynesia until the first European contact some two centuries later: the center of the universe was a lonely place to be. However the Rapanui, living in a decentralized society of clan-based areas with tiny villages practicing lithic farming, each clan with its sacred platform and serene ancestral statues gazing protectively inland, were loosely united under a head chief or king, were generally at peace, and had achieved a sustainable way of life and built a sophisticated material culture.

The spiritual culture of the island was similar to that of kindred Polynesian centers; and the language, though it has evolved in demonstrably long isolation, is still a recognizably close relative of Maori, Tahitian, Hawai'ian, and the other East Polynesian members of the Austronesian language family. Modern Rapanui contains numerous loans from Spanish and English; but there is scant evidence of early loan words from non-Polynesian languages such as those of the ancient Americas, with the significant exception of *kumara*, "sweet potato". Rapanui conceptions of society and self, of divinity and spirit, of death and the other-world, are typical of other Polynesian cultures in most respects and also are parallel, if not to those of the three dominant Western religions, than to a far greater number of other belief systems, ancient and modern, on the planet. This parallelism (*not* relationship) will become evident in a comparison of Rapanui and old Armenian mythological cosmogonic

texts. The moral system of Rapa Nui before Christianization in the late 19th century focused on the virtues of skill and power versus failure and impotence, rather than the abstract dualism of good and evil, much as one finds in other cultures based on external, social “shame” rather than internalized “guilt”—that of the Homeric Greeks furnishing perhaps the most familiar example for us. Invisible and spiritual power, called *mana*, inhered in objects, creatures, and persons. The population of the island was divided into clans called *mara*, marriage was most often within one’s clan though at a remove from the immediate family, and there were three divisions of society: the noble *ariki*; the commoner *urumanu*, and the expert craftsmen, *tuhunga*. The scribes of the texts of RR, for instance, were called *tuhunga tā*—experts in writing. There was also a class of slaves and outcasts. Social and geographical boundaries were strictly enforced and the force of *tapu* “taboo” was strong: this was a deeply stratified society, with an intricate and very elaborate system of genealogy and mythology. Feuds were common and violent; and defeated enemies were killed and eaten—cannibalism was a significant feature of the archaic culture of Rapa Nui. Late in pre-conquest history the *matato’a*, “warriors”, came to dominate the important Birdman cult, about which more will be said presently, and to challenge the authority of the hereditary nobility—a situation that led to instability and violence.⁵ As will be seen, a brilliant nobleman and scholar, Nga’ara, was able ingeniously, though only for a tragically short period, to establish a new kind of social harmony and cohesion.

The islanders are now all Christian, practicing a Catholicism enriched by a strong local substrate most visible in church art. But native texts still celebrate several gods, and considering the situation of Polynesia generally and of Rapa Nui in particular in the vastness of the Pacific⁶ it is scarcely surprising that Tangaroa, a being pre-eminently connected with the sea, was paramount, with his twin brother, the storm god Rongo. In later centuries a supreme creator-god, perhaps partly in imitation of the Christian cult it has been argued, came to the fore on Easter Island. The name of the latter, Makemake, whose meaning has been variously

⁵ Matato’a is now the name, *mutatis mutandis*, of Rapa Nui’s popular and successful (and anti-war!) rock band, which sings in the Rapanui language and celebrates the island’s traditions and ethnic identity, thereby presenting a counterweight to the powerful forces of linguistic and cultural assimilation while embracing the modern and global world.

⁶ The Pacific Ocean is some 20,000 km wide—so great that some hold to the hypothesis that the Moon tore away from Terra here; and if Polynesia be taken as a single cultural area, it is formally the largest on the planet.

interpreted as either “the shining one” or “having an erect phallus”, was perhaps at first a cult epithet of Tangaroa, and it would seem the shapers of the long, metered lays of the island’s oral literature were interested particularly in the generative roles of divinities and creatures alike. The act of generation and its instrument, as we shall see, have provided a possible key, moreover, in the first steps towards decipherment of the glyphs— according, at least, to one school of decipherment.

As was noted above, with the onset of the Lesser Ice Age the islanders began to lose contact with the Polynesian home islands to the far west and true isolation set in. The islanders remembered their origins overseas and the legendary voyage of the founders, led by the mythical figure Hotu Matu’a. It is possible that a mounting feeling of loneliness and a desire to be able to cross the endless sea elevated the importance of the image and cult of the *tangata manu*, the Birdman (literally “man bird”). Once a year young men sponsored by the clans competed to descend from the precipitous sacred site of Orongo and paddle on reed mats through the turbulent, shark-infested sea to the tiny islet of Motu Nui, where they then waited. The first to find and safely bring back the delicate first egg of the sooty tern (*manutara*) won for a year for his clan patron the elevated and sacral status as Birdman of the island. The rite was not just a sort of native Olympics but (as at times in ancient Greece) a way of sublimating tensions and even armed conflicts between clan powers. The sacred ritual thus codified and cemented social stratification and harmony; and the rite combined socially sanctioned elements of sacredness, danger, and virile prowess with key symbolic motifs of flight, sea travel, generation, and hybridization— the merging of categories of living species. When the Spaniards presented to the bemused Rapanui in 1770 a document ceding the island to them and asked them to sign it, the *ariki*, or chiefs, who had never seen writing before, gamely sketched a number of pseudo-alphabetic symbols in polite emulation of the Spaniards, a vulva symbol (underscoring the importance of the procreative pattern in the islanders’ system of cosmology: there are hundreds of vulva petroglyphs where young women have undergone the initiation rite of clitoral extension), and a large outline of the Birdman petroglyph. (This is shown in the appendix.)

Islanders believed in a multitude of spirits, called *akuaku*: some of these brought elements of culture to the island and then departed to the Otherworld. One might again imagine the Sumerian Ea, Hellenized by Berossus to Oannes, the supernatural, submarine creature who taught writing and other skills of civilization to men at the head of the Persian

Gulf and retired to his own realm at the end of every day. Rapanui believed, as did many other cultures, that a person had not one, but at least two souls. One died with him, but the other returned and was reincarnated, first as an insect or animal, then as a human being. One is reminded perhaps of the division in classical Zoroastrian culture between the *urvan* (Arm. l-w *uru*, now meaning “ghost”)—the personal soul that bears moral responsibility—and the protector-spirit called *fravashi* (Arm. l-w **hro(r)t*, attested in the ancient name of the last month of the year, Hrotic', cf. Avestan Fravašayō, *idem*); or of the multiple souls, some mortal and some transcendent, of ancient Egyptian thought; or of the Tibetan Buddhist doctrine with its intermediate stage, the *bardö*, in reincarnation. As for the location of the hereafter, it is either deep down or, more often, laterally very far away: when the first Rapanui of modern times ever to depart from the island returned on ships, their countrymen were terrified that these were ghosts from *hiva*, the otherworld, and were only gradually persuaded by relatives of the travelers that these were, indeed, the same mortal men they had known. Other shamanistic cultures, particularly in the Pacific region, locate the other world or worlds across the sea as well as up or down. The common belief of the three Abrahamic religions in a single human soul, and in a unitary and hierarchical universe in which female sexuality is somehow problematic or evil, is not the only view of life—maybe even a minority opinion, still—on the planet.

The island is best known for the great stone figures of human ancestors called *moai*, of which about nine hundred are known, some finished and either whole or broken, many abandoned at their quarry, in construction: they are on average eleven meters tall and weigh about 100 tons. These increased in size over time: the first were much smaller; and the largest and most recent was never erected. All were quarried and carved on the inner and outer slopes of Rano Raraku (an extinct volcano with a crater lake) near mount Poike over about six centuries beginning roughly AD 1000, and finished statues were “walked”—tilted and angled by small teams of workers using ropes—along stone-paved roads to the stone seawall platforms, called *ahu*, where they were erected, singly or in rows, protectively facing inland over a court of small, rounded rocks. The statues were part of a cult of noble clan ancestors and served as a focus of ritual and worship. The dead were often interred in their vicinity. The islanders celebrated rites of passage for both sexes, as noted above, carving the petroglyph of the vulva, *rona komari*, to signify the ritual distending of a girl's clitoris. (An individual stonecarver, it is

important to note, often had a personal *rona*, or monogram— much as masons from Antiquity to recent times the world over.)⁷ There are about a thousand sites, with over four thousand petroglyphs, scattered across the island. The Rapanui still craft polished wooden figurines of delicate and exquisite workmanship: the most common is the spirit *moai kavakava*, an emaciated old man representing an *akuaku* spirit, possibly the god Makemake; the *tangata manu* “bird man”, of whom more presently; the *tangata moko* “lizard man” regarded as a protector of the home and capable of removing disease from the body; staffs and Janus-faced ritual oars; and the half-moon shaped pectoral plate of authority, the *rei miro*,⁸ being the principal traditional types. A number of *rei miro* bear RR inscriptions; and one *tangata manu* has an incised inscription as well.⁹ So use of the RR script was not confined to the tablets or staffs bearing long inscriptions, though this does not mean or imply it was used for other than sacred and ceremonial texts. Islanders wielded the figures in ritual dances and chants; after evangelization, they also began to produce such Christian images as the Madonna and Child. Symbols carried over from petroglyphs, rock paintings, and carvings to tattooing, an art that was believed to have sacred origins: it was introduced by the two spirits Vi’e Moko and Vi’e Kena, who then returned to Ovaakevake, the spirit world, in a waterspout (*ohirohiro*).¹⁰ As elsewhere in Polynesia, tattooing much of the surface of the body was very common. When the time came to create a system of writing, the Rapanui thus already possessed an extensive and sophisticated iconographic and symbolic corpus of petroglyphs and paintings, statuary and tattoo, the range of media an indication of its versatility, that required only ingenious elaboration into a true script.¹¹ As all the symbols on

⁷ Fischer 1993, 212.

⁸ The silhouette of this object now serves as the emblem on the local flag of the island.

⁹ One viewed at the American Museum of Natural History on 10 August 2012 in the Margaret Mead Hall the inscribed *tangata manu*, “man-bird”, i.e., Birdman, which is mislabeled as “tangata mana” (*mana* means supernatural power), and is displayed in a glass cabinet in such a way and under such poor light as to make the unique inscription nearly invisible. Though the museum maintains the order and dignity of a third world railway station— it is filled to bursting with screaming, careening, uncontrolled and undisciplined hordes of children— one was able to view the rare Birdman in peace since nobody else was in the least interested in it. Nearby, however, crowds of tourists posed for photographs before the museum’s much-advertised but unlabeled, *plaster-cast* of a moai!

¹⁰ Fischer 1993, 212.

¹¹ This is a very general survey of the historical background and ecological situation, intended obviously for the reader who is not a specialist in Polynesia. The principal

which the inventor(s) of RR were to draw were already charged with mana, the hieroglyphic writing system was assured *ab initio* of a sacral status as well.

2. GENOCIDE

Older reconstructions of the history of the island are often based upon ill-founded conjecture and seem to project the vices and misfortunes of the European and American past and present upon the Rapanui themselves and to cast the colonization of the island in a favorable light, as though the conquest were a kind of redemption from barbarism. Such imposition upon a people of an ignorant or malign misrepresentation of their own past can do incalculable damage. We are presently to consider parallels to the Armenian record; so one might note a significant correspondence here. The falsification of history—the political and academic machinery of denial of the Armenian Genocide—has intensified the anger and misery of an already traumatized people. It has done material harm to their country too; for a world dulled by “competing narratives” rather than quickened by moral responsibility has acquiesced in the blockade by Turkey and its Azeri henchmen of the Armenian Republic and the deleterious consequences that have flowed from it.

The Norwegian scholar Thor Heyerdahl, through whose writings most of us came to know of the island in the first place, was able to sail the Kon Tiki, his boat constructed of bundles of reeds from Peru, from the coast of South America to Easter Island. Having proven this could be done, he asserted that there had been a secondary South American settlement of the island. This theory might well have been subliminally patterned upon the fantasies of light-skinned, culturally and technologically superior “Aryans” invading and ruling more primitive (and, inevitably, darker) people in India and elsewhere. He then presented a series of comparisons of the island’s art and stonework to that of the Incas, deduced that several finely-worked seawalls of *ahus* most likely belong to the same culture that produced the architects of Machu Picchu, and concluded that the artistic geniuses who designed the moai, which have

studies consulted are Fischer 2005 (especially on history) and Hunt and Lipo 2011 (who provide an important corrective to prevailing misconceptions about the island’s history). One should also consult Routledge 1919 and Métraux 1940—still the best monographs on Rapa Nui.

elongated ears, were light-skinned descendants of South American migrants, the “Long Ears” of island lore. Their ancestors, in turn, had come from the Old World still earlier. To account for the Polynesian character of the island’s culture as we know it, he further hypothesized that darker-skinned Polynesian inhabitants, the so-called “Short Ears”, obligingly or sullenly labored for the lordly Long Ears, whose edifice complex led to the devastation of the palm forests since the builders employed the trunks as rollers to get the moai from the quarry at Rano Raraku to their *ahu*-platforms. Once the tragically hubristic but nobly creative Long Ears had created their immortal monuments at the price of ecological catastrophe, the enslaved, primitive, despised, savage Short Ears revolted and the tragedy reached its denouement in a war of mutually assured destruction in which the moai were toppled, the combatants set fire to everything else that could burn, and the enervated, starving survivors could only sit and wait for the first European ships to arrive.

The foregoing picture of the island’s history is largely fantasy, yet it survived till quite recently as the dominant narrative, not because European scholars were fools but because like many fantasies it was subliminally useful, even flattering, to those who maintained it. It is not just, as Steven Roger Fischer put it, an “insulting declaration that the Rapanui were not the authors of their own ancient culture,”¹² but an assertion that the islanders of the post-classical period were unworthy custodians of that culture, degenerated and violent epigones who brought about their own destruction and that of their island. In the warped perspective of this narrative the advent of the Europeans and of Christianity in particular was to the benefit of the Rapanui. It is much more likely the case that the Rapanui were a single population descended from Polynesians who had sailed there from the west around the middle of the first Christian millennium. After the rats originally brought as food escaped to gnaw away and decimate the primordial palm forest, the Rapanui seem, far from descending into ecological catastrophe, to have developed, as we have noted above, a fairly stable and sustainable lithic farming system well suited to their decentralized pattern of small homesteads in clan units loosely united under a king believed to be of divine descent. There were, thus, both local and island-wide religious rites to anchor oneself to family ancestors and to create and celebrate ties with others. The clans built their separate *ahus* and most erected moai on them: these were not a ruinous and pointless extravagance but an aesthetic practice that gave the

¹² Fischer 2005, 188.

people an important basis for social cohesion and a rich spiritual culture. The prototypes of the moai can be found to the west in Polynesia and the Rapanui merely refined, albeit to an astonishing degree, an existing art brought from their ancestral home. The moai were probably maneuvered over stone roads to their sites from the quarry at Rano Raraku by small teams of workmen "walking" them in a sort of zigzag movement with ropes: precious felled palm trunks were not, it would seem, wasted as rollers and the image of long-eared overseers commanding huge gangs of dissatisfied short-eared slaves corresponds more to romantic conceptions, fuelled by Hollywood, of Moses' people under Pharaoh than to Pacific realities. Nor was there an internecine war on an apocalyptic scale preceding the arrival of the Europeans, who saw (and duly depicted) all the moai standing when they first came to Rapa Nui. But, tellingly, the European visits did spark both clan feuding and an existential crisis of confidence in the traditional system of belief in the mana of moai and other foci of the sacred—as we shall see in greater detail presently.

What followed after first contact we know only too well, though, for it belongs, not to diffusionist fantasies tinged by narcissistic racism, nor to the misreading of archaeological data, but to the written historical record. On Easter Sunday of the year of grace 1722 Roggeveen named the island after a holiday none of its people had ever heard of, celebrated by a religion they did not practice: the Rapanui happily swam up and effusively welcomed the newcomers, whilst rather oddly taking special care to relieve them of their hats. The Dutch produced their awesome fire-sticks and shot a dozen of them dead in an unfortunate misunderstanding about property, terrifying the Rapanui but apparently not irretrievably alienating them. Then Roggeveen and his compatriots sailed away, never to return. The first real taste of Christianity—and the second, of the terrifying foreign fire-sticks—came with the Spaniards, who landed in November 1770, erected three Crosses on three matching hill-ocks, marched around in splendid uniforms, and fired a 21-gun salute. They named the island this time after their king, San Carlos, and tricked the natives, who were apparently impressed by and delighted with the show and with the Spaniards' gifts (more hats!) into signing over the island to them. The chiefs, bemused but game, sketched a top-to-bottom, left-to-right slanting line of several symbols including a vulva, and put a large birdman glyph to the right.¹³ Then the Spaniards sailed away and never returned. Captain Cook was the next customer, four years later:

¹³ See Heyerdahl and Ferdon 1965, fig. 81 (p. 417).

the Rapanui helped themselves to some more hats and made love to the pleased sailors, for whom sex was something of a taboo because of their religion, of which the Rapanui were still innocent. Cook's explorers stayed only a day since there was little in the way of food or fresh drinking water to be had for trade.

Between 1722 and 1862 there were a number of sporadic visits to the island; but the Europeans did not stay. In the latter year matters took a horrible turn for the worse: Peru, desperate for manpower in its economic boom, kidnapped and enslaved Polynesian islanders, including most of the Rapanui, to harvest guano under lethal conditions. Christian missionaries tried to save some islanders by removing them to Tahiti and elsewhere; and the French government, probably motivated as much by a dispute with Peru over the latter's support for an insurrection in Mexico as by the human plight of the Rapanui, agitated for the release of the "indentured" workers. But most of these were already dead by the time the Peruvians relented; and the very few who returned brought smallpox and tuberculosis, which decimated an isolated people lacking any immunity. By the 1870s the population had plunged to 111 souls, after wave after wave of pandemics. Adventurous French and English entrepreneurs then converted the entire island into a huge sheep ranch, the surviving native people ruled by sheer terror, subject to increasingly vicious violations of their property and person. They were ultimately driven by main force from the hundreds of their tiny crofts into a single village, Hanga Roa ("Great Bay", so named for the nearby coast where most visiting ships moored and close to the fertile plain of Mataverí), to which they were confined behind a stone fence modeled on a Scottish sheepfold and kept under curfew as inmates of a ghetto or concentration camp. In 1888 Chile, a latecomer to Pacific empire, was encouraged by its ally Great Britain hurriedly to draw up a bill of annexation (according to the Spanish text) or protection and friendship (as the parallel text in Rapanui written in Latin script puts it). It is important to note that there were now Rapanui who could read their spoken language in the Latin alphabet, even if the document was a lie.

Till but a few decades ago the Rapanui were entirely without the legal and human rights of Chilean citizens on their island, and also were not allowed to leave it. The population hovered at about 400 by the 1930s and has since risen to ca. 4000, though many of the present-day residents are Chileans who have settled on the island and only a quarter to a third of the population have an active command of the Rapanui language. Mataverí is now an airport, next door to Hanga Roa, and with a runway

long enough to accommodate a space shuttle. The hotels of the village welcome an exponentially (and dangerously) increasing horde of tourists, but the Rapanui people enjoy civil rights as citizens of a democratic Chile and have an articulate community structure striving for political and cultural autonomy within the country. And the language may survive globalization, thanks to a revival of ethnic and cultural identity and pride. The Chilean government has made large parts of the island a protected national park and imposes severe fines on tourists who touch the antiquities; so these, too, may survive. After the terrible tribulations of the 19th and 20th centuries, the Rapanui live. Their beautiful script did not survive the genocide; but, as we shall see, it probably contributed to their survival.

3. RONGORONGO

As we have seen, the ancient culture of Rapanui before contact with Europeans had a complex system of petroglyphs: both iconographical symbols and masons' marks. They employed these and other symbols in tattooing and in painting; and when the Spaniards came they were capable of inscribing a number on paper. The RR texts, on some twenty-five surviving boards (*kohau*) and other wooden objects (a pectoral, a Bird-man figurine), are all that remains of hundreds and hundreds. The *kohau rongorongo* ranged from small pieces of wood to huge planks six feet long, and were stored in the houses of experts in writing, to be used to teach or taken out for festivals.¹⁴ Some were hidden by various clan-members in the caves used to conceal treasure, of which there were and are a great many in the porous volcanic rock of the island. They constitute the only indigenous Polynesian writing system known. After the eclipse of the epigraphic craft on wood, and the loss of systematized knowledge of RR, islanders remembering the script in part copied glyphs in books that were hidden and shown to Europeans only in the 1960s. Till the mid-20th century the two great undeciphered scripts of America and Oceania— Maya and Rongorongo— were regarded dismissively by Western scholars as primitive systems of pictographs

¹⁴ McCall 1981, 44, suggests that the *kohau* RR, which are all incised, were touched rather than seen, in the dark buildings where priests studied— much as blind people employ Braille. (He also asserts that RR was an *aide de memoire* rather a true writing system.) This suggestion should be rejected, since Rapanui recalled that priests brought RR boards annually to outdoor celebrations at Anakena and read them.

without the full communicative function of a true script. The Soviet scholar Yuri Knorozov, who also worked on and encouraged the study of RR, deciphered Maya after World War II. At the Institute of Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in Leningrad he directed for decades a workshop in decipherment: I was fortunate to make the acquaintance of one of his pupils, Dr. Margarita Albedil, an Indologist at the Institute who worked with him on Harappan.¹⁵ Though scholars have made competing claims in recent years, RR has so far resisted, it would seem, convincing and complete decipherment.

Eugène Eyraud was the first outsider to be shown RR boards, in 1864—that is, two years after the beginning of the Rapanui Genocide. He reported that there were hundreds. (One of the surviving RR boards is shown in the appendix.) The last king of the island, Rokoroko he Tau, and the last Birdman, Rukunga, died in 1866. Vike of the Hau Moana clan was the last *tuhunga tā* to die on the island—of smallpox.¹⁶ Within a few years there were hardly any RR boards, or people who knew how to read them, to be found. The islanders had believed every RR glyph possessed the same mana as a *rona*, a petroglyph; perhaps the catastrophe that had overcome them suggested that supernatural power had been lost. (Some large boards were used as timber for boats.) Alternatively, conversion to Catholicism convinced Rapanui that the mana of RR was real, but heathen and therefore evil: though the monks themselves had a scholarly interest in RR, the very teachings they promulgated could easily have led their credulous proselytes to destroy the very monuments the scholarly priests wished to study. Or, indeed, during inter-clan feuding Rapanui destroyed and burnt each other's *kohau* RR. But the subsequent production of manuscripts, which were carefully preserved and hidden from alien eyes would strongly suggest that reverence for the writing system was not wholly lost. The elderly leper Tomenika (Rapanui for “Domingo”), who wrote glyphs on paper and was interviewed by Mrs. Routledge, was probably the last Rapanui to have preserved knowledge of the script, though.¹⁷ The brief surviving text of his differs substantially from the RR inscriptions on wood. The characters are fewer, simpler, and less elegantly made. Perhaps they represent a subsidiary, “demotic” type of RR—one does not find support for the supposition that Tomenika was faking it, and inventing them *ad hoc* on the basis of real RR he had seen, with the aim to please his interlocutor. Yet another

¹⁵ Knorozov 1982.

¹⁶ Heyerdahl and Ferdon 1965, 326.

¹⁷ Routledge 1919, 250-253.

possibility (and none of these entirely excludes the others) is that the perpetually competitive clans of the island, driven by multiple and severe social and natural traumas to feuding, destroyed each other's *kohau* RR. The sudden and radical diminution of the glyph-bearing boards has, thus, remained without satisfactory explanation—most likely all the above factors came into play. By way of comparison and analogy, one might observe the fate of the great stone figures, the *moai*. When Roggeveen came in 1722, all the statues his party saw stood upright on their *ahu*-platforms; but by the time of Captain Cook's visit in 1774, most had been toppled facing forward.¹⁸ The appearance of the Europeans perhaps persuaded the Rapanui that the images of their ancestors had lost their mana; or the new situation intensified feuding between clans, who vengefully toppled each other's *moai*. Yet just as with the hieroglyphic script, texts in which were recopied on a new medium even after the demise of the *kohau* RR and the loss of their key, the subsequent situation of the *moai* is not without ambiguity: islanders continued to bury their dead in the vicinity of the *moai*, often right underneath the fallen monoliths. This indicates many continued resolutely to regard the sites and the now prostrate statues as sacred.

After Eyraud's "discovery" news of the RR "hieroglyphics" spread, travelers to the island searched for RR boards: the Smithsonian, the Santiago museum, and other centers of research acquired the rare pieces of finely polished wood with row upon row of enigmatic characters. The great Russian ethnographer Nikolai Nikolayevich Miklukho-Maklai, for instance, visited Rapa Nui and other islands on the ship *Vityaz'* in 1871: he brought two RR boards to St. Petersburg, where they were deposited in the *Kunstkamera* of Peter the Great, which became part of the institute and museum of ethnography of the Russian Academy of Sciences. (I have seen and held them; and they are objects of an almost unearthly perfection and beauty.) In 1925 A. Piotrovsky compiled and published the first proper catalogue of the glyphs at Leningrad. In 1940 three teenagers saw the boards on a school trip and formed a club, "Descendants of Maklai": the museum's director, Prof. D.A. Ol'derogge, was so impressed with the young Boris Kudryavtsev's researches in particular that he proposed the youth publish a monograph. But the latter died on the front defending the Soviet Union from the Nazi invader; and two years after the end of the Great Patriotic War, Ol'derogge sadly published Kudryavtsev's posthumous papers. Yuri Knorozov, another

¹⁸ Routledge 1919, 204.

brilliant young scholar of the institute, devoted his attention first to Maya, which he deciphered correctly in the late 40s. Though some powerful Western academics, who seem to have had a vested interest in keeping down the Maya heritage as illiterate and “primitive”, initially dismissed this momentous discovery as Communist propaganda, a young Harvard researcher named Michael Coe bucked the establishment and Knorozov’s momentous achievement was soon universally accepted. Knorozov, Nikolai Butinov, and Irina Fedorova then worked on RR; the latter, a scholar of Polynesian linguistics, subsequently pursued her studies independently of Knorozov, and published in Russian a monograph containing what she claimed was a full decipherment, in 2001.

Fedorova, now deceased, came to the conclusion that the texts were all agricultural songs of magical purpose. She also accepted Knorozov’s paradigm that hieroglyphic systems historically arise at the point of the establishment of state structures (Rus. *gosudarstvennost’*), as was the case in China, Mesopotamia, and Egypt. Consequently she fixed the terminus for the invention of RR at the late 16th or early 17th century—the end of the high classical period of the island’s culture—believing it to have come about at the time of the apex of moai construction. But another linguist and specialist in decipherment, Steven Roger Fischer, had published in 1997 at Oxford his own massive tome in which he came up with very different conclusions. Both scholars agree RR is a hieroglyphic script like Egyptian, Chinese or Maya; that it was invented on the island by the ancestors of its present inhabitants; that its inventors based its characters on the earlier petroglyphs found in large numbers everywhere on Rapa Nui; and that it is to be read in Old Rapanui. But that is where their agreement ends.

All existing RR boards are of recent date and Fischer proposes that RR, which is written left to right in parallel boustrophedon lines, was based upon the Spanish writing the islanders saw and therefore was invented soon after 1770. The rationale for this dating is two-fold: the islanders believed the Spaniards, with their great ships of precious wood, their fire sticks, and their armor of a strange, hard, shiny material (metal) possessed through writing as well a superior *mana* that the Rapanui might acquire through emulation. The sudden appearance of these uncanny, powerful aliens presented also a radical challenge to the traditional Rapanui way of life. And all the existing RR artifacts are of relatively recent date. The Rapanui, then, created RR in emulation of the mysteriously powerful art of the powerful aliens. It was a way of preserving key oral texts: cosmologies, genealogies, erotic songs— and

endowing them with new prestige, at a time when the traditional Rapanui world view had been shaken to its foundations. Fedorova asserts, rather, that because of the perishable nature of wood as a medium the existing RR boards are copies of older ones. Quite aside from the inherent weakness of the *argumentum ex silentio*, one might then ask why there is no evidence of archaic **epigraphy** from the period when she supposes RR to have been invented. (We do have, in fact, a few rocks with lines of RR in relief brought to Heyerdahl from a cave of hidden treasures on the island; but unless and until new evidence emerges to the contrary, the common opinion holds that these objects are recent forgeries.) From the period following the invention of RR one encounters, for instance, two RR glyphs for the vulva, *komari*, incised into a petroglyph of the *tangata manu* on the smaller of the two boulders at the Harvard Peabody Museum.¹⁹ This is not a unique example, only one the writer has himself seen first-hand. And the adaptation of RR to writing on paper by the elderly islander Tomenika in the first decade of the 20th century, further demonstrates the versatility of the Rapanui: had RR existed in the classical period, one might expect to see it on stone (as indeed one does in Mesopotamia and Egypt, and in Mesoamerica). There is no *a priori* reason it should have been confined to wood, even though wood was a uniquely precious material on the nearly treeless island. Indeed in 1958 Thomas Barthel recorded the testimony of two informants to the effect that the aforementioned Tomenika claimed the mythical ancestor of the Rapanui, Hotu Matu'a, had brought "RR on paper" (using for the latter the Tahitian word *marau* "book") at the first settlement of the island. When the paper disintegrated the islanders wrote on *toro maika* "banana stem". This seems to be more than a retro-fitting of tradition to sanction new usage; for when RR was written on boards, students of the schools really did their exercises on *rito maika* "banana leaves". And the great chief and scribal teacher Nga'ara himself (about whom more presently) sketched the glyphs in *ngarahu* "soot" before engraving them.²⁰

Fischer further accepts the testimony of islanders who had heard priests recite from the RR boards, concerning their content. Although unlike Fedorova he does not produce a continuous reading of any text, he does note a very significant recurrent pattern of glyphs, which he renders by the formula X1 Y Z, according to which the being (X) copulates (1) with (Y) and (Z) is generated. Generation is taken for granted

¹⁹ See Horley and Lee 2012.

²⁰ Fischer 1993, 182.

in this shorthand because of the preceding copulation sign, and no glyph for it is written. And this pattern corresponds to the repetitive shape and style of an important cosmological hymn that the islanders said the priests who read the RR indeed chanted. It is a commonplace in folklore that a repetitive pattern, and the repetition of words, is an aid to memory, as is the verse form as opposed to prose. If Fischer's proposal is correct, RR is not a script representing every sound in the language, but an *aide memoire*. Even though Fischer has not produced a complete deciphered text, his approach seems by far the soundest; and he may be the principal scholar working today who is on the right track. The studies of Albert Davletshin in Moscow are also an important new contribution; and with collective contributions, including studies of glyph frequency, the general outlines of a decipherment may emerge within a decade of this writing.

It should not come as a surprise to the readers of these lines that scholars have egos, and a sort of Cold War mentality informs the debate between the Russian and American experts on RR: Fedorova dismisses Fischer's hypothesis brusquely, with an aggrieved and defensive Soviet dogmatism in ironic contrast to Fischer's sunny and assertive American cheerfulness (his eminently readable autobiography bears the rather swashbuckling title, *Glyph Breaker*). She does not subject Fischer's painstakingly detailed argument to a sustained or systematic critique in her own book, most of which is a review of Rapa Nui history and ethnography. Only a few pages of the large tome are devoted to a sketchy explanation of her method, and no justification for its arbitrariness is offered.²¹ Fedorova is able to produce an entire decipherment only by assuming the agricultural content of the texts *in advance* and working on that assumption in interpreting the glyphs: for instance, glyphs of all different sorts are assumed to be rebuses for a number of different terms for varieties of the yam; and nearly all the characters taken to represent verbs are likewise assumed to represent actions associated with digging,

²¹ The absence of a detailed exposition of her method is alarming. Unfortunately the same lack of explanatory argument typifies another recent work on RR, De Laat 2009. This independent Dutch scholar, who has achieved an enviable mastery of the Rapanui language, proceeds to identify and read all the glyphs as syllabic— not a possibility to be dismissed out of hand, given the phonetics of Rapanui, and a tantalizing one if RR is in fact a late invention. But in most cases he does not justify why a particular glyph ought to represent a particular set of sounds; and, most damagingly, the text he reconstructs in his attempt at decipherment is a narrative not related to what informants who heard RR texts recited told scholars what they said.

planting and harvesting. There are no formulae in her reading that are identifiably magical.

The importance of agriculture in particular, and of fertility in general, to a stone-age culture in a small, isolated, and challenging environment, cannot be overemphasized; and the student of ancient Greece is aware of the centrality of Hesiod's *Works and Days*, for instance, to the early literary corpus— there is even a reference to it in the Greek graffiti of Armawir, perhaps of the 2nd century BC, in Armenia.²² It would also be a methodological error to suppose that because the *kohau* RR are impressive in appearance and exquisite in execution, their textual content must conform to an outsider's preconception of the sublime. The belief that the Egyptian hieroglyphs must be of elevated mystical content was long an obstacle to their decipherment; and in more recent times Ilya Gershevitch showed that the alphabetic inscription at Baghlan, Afghanistan, in Bactrian—a Middle Iranian language far less enigmatic than RR— was not the eloquent hymn to the Zoroastrian divinity Mithra of which the German savant Helmut Humbach produced an erudite reading, but just the record of the repair of a well.²³

However Fedorova's arbitrary supposition of a single theme to the exclusion of all others goes against the testimony of witnesses to readings of the RR documents, and requires that the most disparate glyphs be forced into a Procrustean bed, or rather, a garden row of yams. Rather uncharitably, she downplays the reliability of the important testimony of 1886 of Daniel Ure Va'e Iko because he was slightly tipsy when he recited the content of a RR board to attentive American sailors. Daniel's recitation, though, contains the formula upon which Fischer relied. The evidence of the MSS produced subsequently, which we shall examine, suggests the Rapanui wanted to set down in writing much more than magically-charged lists of edible plants: they were interested in cosmology, in weather, in genealogy as well. Their traditional corpus of knowledge was meant to order their entire world— and to restore a sense of that order when it was shaken to its foundations. One also wonders how likely it was that texts of drastically varying length, from the few characters on the wooden *tangata manu* at the Museum of Natural History in New York to the giant planks out of which disillusioned islanders built boats, were all and only yam-growing charms. If RR was created in

²² Russell 1987, 54-55.

²³ See Gershevitch 1985, 55-82 on Bactria; on Champollion's misguided predecessors see Robinson 2012, 15-27.

response to a profound cultural trauma, as an adaptation to a rapidly changing world, then the content of the texts might be more of an emergency salvage operation of the culture as a whole than a calm encyclopedia of agriculture. This forces one to approach her findings with caution.

Fedorova's *a priori* application to the situation on Rapa Nui of Knorozov's theory about the rise of hieroglyphic systems in nascent states also seems to lack the necessary historical nuance by which one would distinguish a massive bureaucratic entity in a stable ecological system from a small, precarious, endangered culture; and this, too, calls her dating of the script into question. The little island, without so much as a perennial stream, can scarcely be compared to the great hydraulic civilizations of the Fertile Crescent. If the testimonies of native and European eyewitnesses are to be believed, the island before the catastrophe of the 1860s had a vast library of *kohau* RR. Fedorova might have adduced this in support of her opinion that the script was by then hundreds of years old—had it been invented less than a century earlier, how could so many written monuments have been assembled so quickly? One might answer this (admittedly unasked) question with two considerations: first, prodigious cultural production was a hallmark of Rapanui civilization. Less isolated kindred Polynesian cultures produced a few small stone statues: rather than lapsing in isolation on their little island into desultory lassitude, the people of Easter Island carved the moai. Second, the school of Maštoc' produced a huge canon of translated and original texts in under a century; and we shall presently note more interesting parallels between the Pacific island and the Armenian *leṛnaktzi*, the "mountain-isle" to show that writing has been invented, not only at the rude dawn of the nascence of a great state, but in the crepuscular last rays of the collapse of a small one. The Armenian paradigm will be seen to fit Rapanui better than the Fertile Crescent one.

Rongorongo script is now generally accepted by serious researchers as a hieroglyphic system containing names with their morphemes, i.e., a picture pronounced with the corresponding word for it; homographs, that is, pictures of objects whose name is a homonym of another word that cannot be represented visually, rather like a rebus; and determinatives, i.e., symbols representing the category to which the symbols belong. Thus, Fischer reads as a single phrase from a known cosmological hymn the signs designated in Barthel's standard list as 631, 700, and 8, in the long inscription on the "Santiago staff". The first is a composite showing a bird with a man's hand and a phallus. As the words for "hand"

and “all” in Rapanui are homonyms, pronounced *mau*; and the phallus (glyph no. 76 alone) is understood to mean “copulate(d)”, the first glyph reads *Te manu mau ki 'ai ki roto ki*, “All the birds copulated with”, followed by *ika* “fish”; the phrase *ka pū* “there was born” is understood since the hymn is made of repetitive formulas; and the final glyph is simply *te ra'a*, “the Sun”. (The phrase in glyphs is written out in the appendix.) This follows the X1 Y Z formulaic pattern of the cosmological hymn Daniel Ure Va'e Iko said was on a *kohau* RR and recited for a group of American sailors in 1886. But for Fedorova the fish-shaped sign *ika* does not represent a fish at all but is a rebus for the identical-sounding name for a variety of yam. So she argues that since Fischer cannot by his method produce the reading of an entire tablet, while she can, his reading of this formula, even though it is one found repeated in several inscriptions, is misguided wishful thinking. It is plain, I think, that Fischer's findings should not be dismissed; but Fedorova's insights are also valuable.

4. NGA'ARA

Following the appearance of the Europeans, then, Rapanui society evidently underwent severe internal stress: the destruction of the moai is the most obvious outward sign. (One may dismiss Fedorova's assertion that the statues collapsed in earthquakes. All the evidence points to intentional destruction.) But RR production and study flourished under the quarter-century reign of the island's most famous scholar-chief, the revered Nga'ara, who brilliantly combined his temporal power with authority as a *tahunga tā*, an expert on writing, thereby curbing the destructive power of the *matato'a* warriors and providing a new ground of spiritual and cultural harmony and continuity for the island. Nga'ara not only established the RR festival at Anakena as the primary rite on Rapa Nui; he also supervised all the RR schools on the island, which he regularly visited and inspected, rewarding good teachers with the gift of a *kohau* RR from his huge library. The pupils practiced glyphs, as noted above, on banana leaves. For feats of memorization they employed *kai-kai*—rhythmic songs sung to the manipulation of cat's cradle patterns. His was not an easy tenure: he suffered imprisonment and humiliation by enemies, but was vindicated as the greatest leader of the Rapanui of historical times, and not because of his prowess but because of his genius and patronage of learning.

Nga'ara died in 1859, just three years before the slave raids and pandemics began; his sons perished in Peruvian captivity. If RR was invented after the Rapanui first in 1770 encountered the writing of the Spaniards, then Nga'ara was, if not its creator, then certainly its principal proponent for most of the period of its existence as a living script, the statesman who presided over the massive project of the setting down in writing of the island's full corpus of oral literature in an astonishingly short time. Even though the sequelae of the Genocide of 1862 led to the loss of RR, Rapanui culture might have perished entirely, if not for the roly-poly *ariki mau* Nga'ara. For RR conferred sanctity on the versified and sung text, on knowledge itself, providing an impetus to the preservation of that knowledge even when RR was gone.

Yet in a way, the RR script Nga'ara had cultivated enjoyed a shadowy, powerful afterlife, like a benevolent revenant spirit— or perhaps he had successfully instilled in the Rapanui a love of writing *per se* and, thus, the foundation of an indigenous intellectual life. For during a very brief respite from foreign harassment and depredation, in the years 1892-96, Tomenika and a handful of others compiled and wrote down on paper traditional stories including mythological texts on the supreme god Makemake and the creation of the world; a version of the Hotu Matu'a cycle (a chronicle of the discovery of Rapa Nui); genealogical lists of the kings who followed him; episodes of the history of the island since the slave raids; a list of aboriginal lunar months with their European equivalents; texts on weather and on agriculture; names for types of sweet potatoes; texts for religious feasts; chants recited during religious ceremonies; etc. These are in ledgers in Latinized Rapanui, along with painstaking handwritten copies of RR texts taken from photographs, and lists of glyphs with New Rapanui translation drawn, not from indigenous knowledge but from the dictionary of the European savant Bishop Jaussen of a few years earlier. One ledger, tellingly, contains also a brief quotation in Rapanui translation from the Book of Genesis— cosmology was a principal focus of interest and here one witnesses an attempt to harmonize island tradition with Catholic dogma. The manuscripts were carefully hidden and regarded as sacred treasure, with the same reverence that once had been accorded the *kohau rongorongo*.²⁴ Though one cannot say for certain that the contents of the manuscripts reflect faithfully or exactly the contents of the *kohau* RR, they agree in general with

²⁴ See Fischer 2005, 147-148; Heyerdahl 1975, 96-101; and detailed reports with facsimiles in Heyerdahl and Ferdon 1965, Appendix B (pp. 391-411).

the testimony of those who had heard recitations from the tablets as to the contents of the latter; and it is seen that the ideas of Fischer and Fedorova about these overlap. Some of the island's oral literature deals with human generation, the microcosmic aspect of cosmology: *He time te akoako*, for instance is a very ancient choral song of sexual jeering; one might compare it to the ancient Greek nuptial hymenaea (Sappho's "Raise high the roof beam, carpenters" to let in a bridegroom with a towering erection, gave its name to a novel by the American writer J.D. Salinger), or to the bawdy pre-Christian Armenian *ergk' c'c'oc' ew baruc'*, "songs of *phalluses and dances".²⁵ And with that one turns now to these and other relics of another people and another past.

5. ST. MESROP MAŠTOC'

The mountain-island Armenia was in the first centuries of the Christian era a vast patchwork of clan-based dynastic holdings separated from each other by mountain ridges, in deep valleys or on high plateaux, each with its patriarchal hierarchy, the local temples (*bagink'*) with their statues of ancestors and gods over which it exercised patronage, its complex web of alliances with other clans, and its hereditary prerogatives at the court of the Arsacid king, whose power depended upon the maintenance of those prerogatives and the balancing of relationships with the *naxarars*—the dynastic heads of the various clan-lands. The welter of overlapping designations in native Armenian and in terms loaned from Parthian (*hayrapet*, "patriarch", *nahapet*, "*idem*"; *t'agawor* "king", *ark'ay* "*idem*"; *azg* "clan", *tohm*, "*idem*"; etc.) attests to the great antiquity and slow, organic growth of these institutions; and to their successful melding with the similar social structures of Zoroastrian Iran, whose noble houses in the Parthian era intermarried with Armenians and ruled the realm. It was a decentralized system much like that of Rapanui, internally fractious but durable.

In the early fourth century mass conversion of the nation to Christianity began, as the new faith achieved a critical mass of followers in the

²⁵ Gen. pl. *c'c'oc'* could be from *c'oyc'* "performance, display"; but in the argot of the felt-pounders of Moks a man is a *c'ic'*, "tent peg", in what is presumably a metaphorical allusion to the phallus. The dances were often called *kak'awuc'*, "of partridges", and *kak'aw*, an Aramaic loan, is often used to mean a woman. Christian authors uniformly condemn the songs and dances as lewd; and the reference may be, thus, to celebrations at which men and women danced together, with all the implications therefrom.

Near East. The Armenian Arsacids adopted Christianity as they wrestled to free themselves from the militantly parochial state structure and newly puritanical sacerdotal hierarchy set in place by the Sasanian Persian house that had usurped the throne from their clansmen in Iran. The pre-Christian religion of the Armenians was then suppressed; its temples, destroyed and churches built over their ruins. The Arsacids, particularly the larger-than-life king Aršak II and the brave commanders-in-chief Mušet and Vasak of the Mamikonean clan, fought a long, hopeless war through the fourth century against the inexorable strength of the Sasanian Empire under its long-lived monarch Šābuhr II. A later chronicle of the period, the *Buzandaran* (perhaps “epic histories”, though it might simply identify as a Byzantine its mysterious author, P’awstos, i.e., Faustus—not a common Armenian name), casts the narrative in the set form of a heroic epic in which the good are doomed but must fight on, so that even though they and their realm will perish, their true faith will survive. Such was the shape of the catastrophe as contemporaries perceived it; and in 387 the country was partitioned between Persia and Rome.

The Armenian Arsacid dynasty was to endure only till 429 in the larger, eastern part of Armenia, *Mec Hayk’*; and after then the country became a Sasanian province governed by a *marzpan*, “guardian of a marchland”. Maštoc’ (Mesrop is a later epithet of unknown meaning) was born in 362, a generation before the partition, in the village of Hac’ekac’ in Tarawn, in the greater Armenian heartland, to a minor noble (*karčazat*) named Vardan, a name closely associated with the Mamikonean clan, to a branch of which, then, he perhaps belonged; and Maštoc’'s name may mean something like “good tidings”.²⁶ The young man traveled to the capital at Vałaršapat and served the Arsacid court as both a soldier and a secretary. He took holy orders, too; so in addition to his native Armenian and the Middle Persian required of a courtier he learned Greek and Syriac. These were the languages of the Church; for till then the only writing system Armenian seems to have possessed was a relatively rarely-used heterographic script of the same sort the various Iranian peoples had developed from the Imperial Aramaic employed by the Achaemenids. The Armenians were about to lose the remains of political sovereignty, and their cultural identity as well was quickly becoming eclipsed: they could either be assimilated into the Greek- and Syriac-speaking Christian churches and communities, or else abandon

²⁶ See Russell 1994 on the Armenian alphabet and Russell 1994a on the name of the Saint.

Christianity and revert to Zoroastrianism, but now risk being Persianized by the aggressive Sasanian régime.

Maštoc' and an associate, the patriarch Sahak Part'ew ("the Parthian"), saw the invention of an Armenian alphabet as a way to save the nation in this existential crisis. They enjoyed the patronage of king Vramšapuh, and the hagiographer Koriwn, a disciple of Maštoc' records that they experimented with an alphabet supplied by a priest named Daniel whose letters "were buried and resurrected". This was perhaps the old heterographic writing system, employed for a pre-Classical form of Armenian, whose letters were, as Maštoc' discovered after some experimentation, insufficient to represent all the consonantal sounds and the various diphthongs of Armenian. But after augmentation with letters derived probably from Manichaean Middle Persian and from Coptic, and divine revelation in dreams, in AD 406 Maštoc' created an Armenian alphabet, with the order of the letters following in general that of Greek (though it would seem he also employed a sort of Pythagorean numerical mysticism in the ordering of the full set of 36 characters to encode cosmological ideas).²⁷

He immediately formed a school and sent his disciples to collect and translate both the Bible and a vast array of Greek, Syriac, and, probably, also Persian literature. This was done with extreme speed; and Armenia was in essential respects self-sufficient in scholarly resources in its own language within a century, equipped with technical vocabularies for theological and philosophical compositions as well as a durable literary style probably inherited from the sophisticated oral literature that preceded literacy (and, for most Armenians for many centuries, persisted alongside it). Maštoc' also engaged the services of one Rūp'anōs (i.e., Rufinus, perhaps a Roman) to design the uncial forms of the letters in such a way as to make them imposing in inscriptions and impressive in manuscripts. That is, they were to co-opt the propagandistic charisma—the *mana*!—of both Roman imperial epigraphy and the Greek codex. So the saint looked to the material around him to create a writing system that was still in many respects without precedent. He was a holy man but also a politician, an adept administrator, and a teacher. And he did all this at a moment of crisis. Had he failed, it is unlikely Armenia would have survived the tribulations of the campaign of the Sasanian Yazdegerd II two generations later, or the Arab conquest of the seventh century.

²⁷ See "Maštoc' the Magician," appendix to Russell 2013.

The mountain-island was precariously to survive, though battered by the waters of a rising Islamic ocean.

Maštoc' invented the Armenian alphabet primarily for a sacral purpose—the translation of the Bible and of other Christian texts into Armenian—and deliberately endowed it with visible symbolic sanctity. He chose to make the final, 36th letter an aspirate *k'* in the form of the Greek Chi-Rho symbol of Christ, thereby giving literal visual shape to the declaration of Our Lord that He is the Alpha and the Omega—the first and the last. (The last letter for Jesus, a Jew and native speaker of Aramaic and Hebrew, would have been *tav*, perhaps not coincidentally cruciform in form!) One finds a contemporary parallel to this deliberate sanctification in the writing system of the Ho people of India, a group whose language is under threat of extinction: its inventor placed a character representing the Hindu sacred syllable Om at the beginning of his list of symbols. In the Ho case, according to Harrison, each letter reflects intimately the realia, way of life, and cosmology of the Ho, so one symbol resembles a child crying; another, a plow; another, a tree falling; yet another, a leaf cup for drinking home-brewed liquor. The resonance of the latter is particularly important: according to local myth that curiously reverses the fall of Adam and Eve, the now-elderly first human couple had lived long in Paradise without procreating, and an exasperated God taught them how to make liquor. They became tipsy, then aroused; and generated mankind.²⁸ Here the parallel to RR as well as to Armenian is instructive: just as the inventor(s) of RR used symbols to hand that were of both everyday and mythological significance, so did the creator of the Ho script. The script of this small Indian people inspires and strengthens them, and is contributing to their cultural survival.

Although Maštoc's purpose was to anchor Christianity in Armenia and to secure for the Armenians national and cultural survival within the new context of the Christian faith even as the other paradigms of identity, whether social or spiritual, were faltering or disappearing, the alphabet was early employed also for the composition of original works. Much as the Rapanui sought through the recording on the *kohau* RR, as it seems, of genealogical and cosmological hymns to chart and affirm a stable mental map of their world, so the immensely learned Armenian *patmahayr* or “father of history”, Movsēs Xorenac'i, devoted the first of the three books of his *Patmut'iwn Hayoc'* (“History of the Armenians”) to a *cnndabanut'iwn Hayoc' Mecac'* (“genealogy of Greater Armenia”),

²⁸ Harrison 2010, 198-200.

in which one finds the parables of the eponymous ancestor of the Armenians, Hayk bravely confronting the superior force of the Assyrian god Bel; of the Armenian king Ara the Beautiful scorning the grand hests of the Assyrian queen Semiramis; of the Armenian king Tigran fighting and defeating the deceitful Median tyrant Aždahak; and of Tork' Angel, the ugly giant defending his home (a Polyphemus as viewed by his own people rather than through the lens of the Achaean colonial raiders!)²⁹—the web of myths that shaped the Armenians' view of themselves and situated and gave meaning to their origins in primordial time. Although the work is also a monument of learned eloquence suffused with Neoplatonic moral concepts and citations and imitations of Classical authors such as Josephus and Eusebius, it is replete with native tradition that is recorded nowhere else. We should do it injustice to give it short shrift as a learned lucubration or an un-historical pastiche, or to regard the Genealogy as a mere imitation and expansion of the genealogical sections of Genesis or the mythography of Eusebius and Berossus. This would fail to take adequately into account the crucial, native material, and would also be a failure to understand the work and its intention as a whole.

This is not the place to enter into the vexed question of the formal date of composition of this seminal book of the Armenian tradition: it is certainly plausible to date it to the late 5th century, and there are strong grounds for doing so. But then there must have been significant interpolations. It is equally certain—and more important, to our present purpose—that much of the legendary and mythological material in it goes back to well before the Christian era and endured in oral form down to the eighth century and beyond. (One recalls that the massive Epic of Sasun, with its accurate and detailed evocations of the pre-Christian cult of the apocalyptic Iranian divinity, Mithra, and other trappings of hoary antiquity, was set down in writing by ethnographers listening to oral reciters, beginning only in the early 1870s.) The preservation of this material in writing suggests, not the detached erudition of an armchair antiquarian, but the lively concern of a scholar laboring for the survival of his people, whom he eloquently praises as small in number yet not deficient in deeds of greatness meriting record. He insists that he has listened to the recitations of the *gusans*—the bards—and has faithfully recorded their lays. Xorenac'i's princely Bagratid patron Smbat and his family and retainers would have read (or heard) the book much as a Rapanui chief and his clansmen might have listened to the recitation of

²⁹ Russell 1996-97.

a genealogical *kohau* RR on the shore at Anakena where, legend had it, the primordial ancestor and visionary patriarch of the people, Hotu Matu'a, landed at the Navel of the World. The genealogy is as much orientation in space and time, in history and society, as the destruction of one's culture is *dis*-orientation.

The first book of Xorenac'i's *History* includes the famous pre-Christian song of the birth of the god Vahagn, which is also a cosmological poem, the oldest text preserved in Armenian and arguably one of the most intricate, for its size, in any Indo-European language. Of its 42 words, 26 are repeated (that is, well over half) and there is obvious formulaic repetition of the strophes— tell-tale evidence of orality akin to the structure of the hymns Fischer claims to have found in RR.

*Erknēr erkin, erknēr erkir,
Erknēr ew covn cirani.
Erkn i covun unēr
Ew zkarmrikn etegnik:
Ēnd etegan p'ot cux elanēr,
Ēnd etegan p'ot boc' elanēr,
Ew i boc' oyn vazēr
Xarteaš patanekik.
Na hur her unēr,
Boc' unēr mawrus,
Ew ač'kunk'n ēin aregakunk'.*

Heaven was in labor, earth was in labor,
Labored too the *golden³⁰ sea.
The labor in the sea had
Also the little red reed.

³⁰ Arm. *cirani* is the standing alliterative epithet of *cov*; and in the 5th-cent. translation of the Bible and elsewhere it translates Greek *porphyron*, “purple”. Homer's sea was wine-dark. Kocharov 2009 in the most thorough study of this poetic figure to date reviews early attempts to etymologize the word as a loan from Old Iranian **zaranya*- “golden”. He notes that the difficulty of deriving Armenian initial *ts*- from the Iranian makes these suggestions, if not impossible, then at least inconclusive. But the poetic use and context of the word is still noteworthy for comparison with Arm. *cirani cov*: in the Avesta it forms an alliterative figure as an epithet of *zrayah*- “sea”. Presumably Arm. *ciran*, “apricot”, received its name because it was the “golden”, i.e., “precious” fruit; and I would suggest that the meaning of *cirani* as “purple” would be secondary, following the Armenians' first encounters with the precious Mediterranean dye. That would have taken place around or before the time that the song of Vahagn, with its significant percentage of Middle Iranian loans, was recited in the form in which Xorenac'i heard it, so “purple sea” certainly is a possible understanding. However I would venture here that the color “golden” would be better consonant with the substantial register of closely similar colors— red, fiery, flaming, blond, sun(like)— in the poem, so one tentatively suggests an “archaic” reading of the epithet.

Along the reed's shaft smoke rose;
 Along the reed's shaft flame rose—
 And out of the flame ran
 A blond little youth.
 He fire hair did have,
 Flame had he a beard,
 And his little eyes were little suns.³¹

Xorenac'i could not have preserved the poem, were it not for the script of Maštoc'; and that script enables us to appreciate all the lexical and phonetic details of the poem exactly as the Father of History heard a minstrel recite it to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument. It describes how out of the birth pangs of heaven, earth, and the sea a fiery human emerged from a reed. This is an archaic cosmological theme. But let us suppose for a moment that we did not have the Armenian alphabet, or that a script for the language had been invented in some other way, or using other principles, and see what we might have had to work with instead.

The cliffs, boulders, and grassy slopes of the Armenian plateau abound in petroglyphs engraved and painted by members of early and unnamed human societies. They depict armed men and running animals, flying or perching birds and arcane, abstract symbols.³² And later cultures, also silent to the historical record, left along river banks the great, prehistoric cigar-shaped smoothed *višap* ("dragon") stones with bas-reliefs of sea monsters and oxen. The Urartians, as the Assyrians called them (and hence Ararat; they called themselves Biaina, from which comes Armenian Van; or Nairi), had hieroglyphics but later left cuneiform inscriptions on these *višap*-stones and on boundary markers, commemorative steles, and on clay tablets. Some of the ancient steles were re-used in turn by Armenians as *xač'k'ars* ("Cross-stones"). And a very few of the mediaeval *xač'k'ars* have engraved upon them encoded texts whose cryptograms of lines and dots are based, in all likelihood, upon those cuneiform wedge-shapes Armenians saw. So there were numerous symbols and inscriptions in Armenia that the alert and observant Maštoc'

³¹ Xorenac'i 1913, 85-86. The standard translation and commentary is that of Thomson 1978. See Russell 1989 and 2012 for analysis of the poetics and mythology of the hymn; and Russell 1987, Ch. 6, on the cult of Vahagn generally.

³² Petrosyan 2005 should be employed only for its helpful sketches of petroglyphs: the author's analytical essay, which advances the idea that the presence of the swastika symbol in these prehistoric glyphs proves Armenian origins in a putative "Aryan race", is best taken *cum grano salis*.

probably knew of; yet he opted for a fully phonetic alphabet of letters separated from each other, easy to read, and written like Latin and Greek from left to right, rather than joined together or stacked or read right to left or without vowels (like Pahlavi, Syriac, Hebrew, and Arabic). In the appendix to this essay I have performed an experiment, in order to show how much the saint's invention has given us: the song of Vahagn's birth is given in the *erkat'agir* ("iron-script", i.e., uncial) of Maštoc'; and the alphabet transmits all of the phonetic patterns and intricate poetic phraseology of the text. It is then rendered into a reconstructed, hypothetical Armenian-Aramaic heterography, where the literal sense of the *words* is preserved but nearly all the poetic detail of the *sounds* is lost.

One mentioned at the beginning of this essay that mediaeval Armenian manuscripts contain lists, also, of pictographic symbols, a number of which are quite similar in appearance to the still-undeciphered hieroglyphics of the ancient Harappan culture of the Indus Valley of the Indian subcontinent. A few of them are parallel also to RR glyphs; and this coincidence has long mesmerized the curious. Ačaṙean and Abrahamyan proved long ago, however, that nearly all these symbols were created as a shorthand or diversion long after the invention of the Armenian alphabet, many are based upon it, and none can be derived with certainty from the pre-Christian written or carven monuments of the country. The similarities to ancient Harappan and RR— the parallels to the latter are noted in the appendix— are entirely fortuitous: at best they merely show that people tend to see such aspects of reality as an armed man or a standing bird in much the same way even though separated by space and time.³³ There are only 500-odd Armenian pictograms known from the various MSS taken together, once one accounts for a few overlaps. All are explained in the manuscripts and have a very limited range of meanings (mainly religious); so we know that they were an arbitrary, synthetic list never intended to encompass all the varieties of vocabulary required for true communication in a natural language, nor were they ever employed to represent one. Some of the symbols, indeed, are mere abbreviations employing characters of the Armenian alphabet.

However on the basis of what exists I have attempted a rendering of the hymn of Vahagn, again— this time in pictographs. The best result one was able to achieve is a telegraphic formula, very similar to the X1 Y Z pattern Fischer discerned in the RR inscription on the Santiago staff. But for all the stark structural elegance, how much detail and nuance is

³³ See Ačaṙyan 1984, 411-429; and Abrahamyan 1973.

lost! For example, I have compiled a register of the words that either name colors or evoke them, in the Armenian poem, all of which the pictographic rendering loses. And next to that register a list is given of the Rapanui words for colors, each of which is a metaphor dense with poetic possibilities. Though the text on cosmology from Easter Island (if that is what it is) has its own beauty, it is thanks to Maštoc' that the precious, tiny poem kept its appeal to the various senses, its multi-dimensioned richness: pictographs would have been in this instance an aid to memory shorn of most of the aestheticism, the poetics of the poem. Moreover, it is most unlikely a hieroglyphic system would have even been recoverable, had but one generation forgotten the oral texts to which the writing referred. This was, in large part, the fate of RR. The heterographic script, scarcely used in Armenia in the first place, would very likely have been abandoned in favor of Greek, Syriac, or Arabic, which are very much better suited to wide literacy and ease of communication. But the project of the Armenian alphabet was so successful that Maštoc' went on to create the Georgian and Aṭuan (Caucasian Albanian) scripts.

In this Armeno-Rapanui coincidence of concise cosmological formulas there is perhaps a reflection of an archetype, not of the collective *unconscious* Jung postulated, but of man's collective *consciousness*, the art that emerges in the explanation and ordering of his world: heaven and earth and water come together and that is how fire is born. There are, apparently, three independent loci where early human cultures developed the cosmological myth, according to which light came about as the result of the separation of Heaven and Earth (which means they had been together): the largest stretches from Egypt and the lands of the eastern Mediterranean over Iran and India to China and out across Australia and Polynesia; the other two are northwestern Europe, and Central America.³⁴ In Armenia Heaven and Earth labor, so does the Sea, and out comes a Man of Fire whose Eyes are Suns. On Rapanui, all the Birds mate with the Fish, and out comes the Sun. The association of birds and fish on the island may reflect particular, local circumstances: a splendid carved boulder in the collections of the Peabody Museum at Harvard (brought by Alexander Agassiz in 1906 from Orongo) has a petroglyph of the *tangata manu* on the front and a *pātuki* fish more crudely carved on the reverse. The researchers who noted this observe that on Rapa Nui, the Birdman motif is associated closely with fish, probably because it

³⁴ Watson 2012, Map 4.

was the presence of sea birds that alerted the islanders to the proximity of large schools of fish coming into coastal waters.³⁵ In Armenia, the sea out of which the fiery Vahagn bursts is Lake Van, the place where he is later to battle *višap*-dragons, seizing and hurling them into the sun.

The medieval mystic Ramon Llull believed that if he could discover a pure universal language, its clarity in the representation of reality would convince Muslim and Jewish infidels of the truth of Christianity and effect their conversion. This did not happen; and to the extent one can discover expressions among humans on planet Earth that approach the common and universal, as these varied local iterations of a cosmological formula do, they tend to describe concepts that do not have necessarily to do with the exclusive claims of a particular dogmatic faith. And only a few faiths, including Llull's, advance exclusive doctrines in any case: those of pre-Christian Armenia and Rapa Nui do not. The third expression of this same cosmological formula that I would present was intended by its author to be, not a record of the past, but a poetics of the future. In May 1872 Arthur Rimbaud wrote,

*Elle est retrouvée.
Quoi? L'Éternité.
C'est la mer allée
Avec le soleil.*

She has been found again.
What? Eternity.
It is the sea, departed
With the sun.³⁶

But later the poet, musing on the lines, altered them significantly in his *Alchimie du Verbe* in the cycle *Une saison en enfer, Délires II*:

*Elle est retrouvée.
Quoi? L'Éternité.
C'est la mer mêlée
Au soleil.*

"She has been found again.
What? Eternity.
It is the sea, **joined together**
To the sun."

³⁵ Horley and Lee 2012, 17-18. I am grateful to Dr. Susan Haskell of the Peabody Museum for this reference, a copy of the article, and her generous and gracious time and effort guiding me through the museum's extraordinarily rich and exquisite Rapa Nui collection on 29th August 2012.

³⁶ Starkie 1961, 202.

In the visionary alchemy the poet sought to work through the force of his words alone, the eternal force of life is generated, then, when the great earthly embodiments of the elements of water and fire meet in coitus together.

6. THE ARSACIDS MEET THE RAPANUI

One cannot sail past, in approaching the end of our essay, a serendipitous correspondence— and even the former word is curiously suitable. For it derives from Sarandip, as Near Eastern voyagers called the tropical paradise in the Indian Ocean, Sri Lanka, that is halfway from Armenia to Rapanui, a distant island yet still part of the Classical world. Readers of Vladimir Nabokov's complex and magical novel *Pale Fire* will be familiar with the invented mirror-world of Zembla, whose name is a Westernized rendering of Russian *zemlya*, "land". The writer discovered to his delight that the real Arctic Nova Zembla has a river named Nabokov after an ancestor. I could not help but feel a somewhat similar tingle coming upon the 102nd chapter of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851). The narrator, Ishmael, visits his royal friend Tranquo; and the latter brings him to "a grand temple of lordly palms" sheltering the skeleton of a sperm whale, whose "vertebrae were carved with Arsacidean annals, in strange hieroglyphics."³⁷ The incident and its details are wholly fictional; but there is a Cape of the Arsacids in Malaita province of the Solomon Islands of the South Pacific, which received its (unjust) name because of the (equally unjust) reputation of the indigenous people as assassins. The Arsacids were of course the Parthian dynasty in Armenia, one of whose last kings, Vramšapuh (whose name means Vram, i.e., Wahrām, in Arm., Vahagn, son of the king), was the patron of Maštoc'. One of Melville's characters is a Parsi Zoroastrian, and at various points in the novel the author evinces knowledge of Near Eastern antiquity, even some familiarity with Armenia. He was of course quite knowledgeable about the Pacific and its local cultures as well. RR was the only native writing system of Polynesia; so there is a happy, strange, and singular coincidence in the American novel that in *Bend Sinister* Nabokov had correctly divined was not at all prose but a great epic poem.

³⁷ Melville 1964, 444.

7. LANDING ON ARARAT

Armenia, endowed with a durable script and literature, was a mountain-island, perhaps, from the beginning; but as the ages passed the sea around it grew wider. Iran, Syria, Anatolia, Egypt, Atropatene all embraced Islam, Crusaders came and went, the tsunamis of the Mongols, Tamerlane, the Ottomans, and the Safavids washed over the island, and in 1915, nine-tenths of historical Armenia was lost in the new inundation of Genocide. The last remnants of the nation stood at the foot of Ararat, although the mountain was in enemy hands, although the sliver of Armenia shared the difficult fate of the Soviet Union. But the script of Maštoc' endured, and on the steps of the Matenadaran, the institute of ancient manuscripts at Erevan, the saint with his alphabet on a tablet like that of Moses gazes out over the survivor country. In 1962, Armenia celebrated his 1600th birthday, and the Soviet Armenian poet Paruyr Sevak (1924-1971) marked the occasion with the long poem *Ayr mi Maštoc' anum* "A man, Maštoc' by name". According to the testimony of Agathangelos and other sources, the Zoroastrian *yazata* Tīr, with the cult epithet *erazamoyñ*, meaning perhaps "dream-interpreter", had been the scribal god and psychopompos of pre-Christian Armenia. His role passed in Christian folk belief to the angel Gabriel, called the *groč*, "writer", who comes with his list of names to a man when his time is up. Sevak contrasts the saint to the unnamed Tīr:

A god there was, but no literature.
He, faithful to his own new creed,
Chased out our false divinity of writing
And himself remained in that one's stead.
But while our ancient scribal god
Continually performed a single task alone,
Taking men's souls and bearing them off,
He came that he might endow us with a soul!

Astvac kar, sakayn dprut'yun č'kar.
Na— havatavorn ir nor havati,
Dprut'yan mer sut ascun vñdec'
Ev ink'ě mnac' nra p'oxanak.
Bayc' minč' dprut'yan hin astvacě mer
Šarunak miayn mi gorc ēr anum:
Mardkanc' hogin ēr aṛnum u tanum—
*Sa ekav, or mez hogi pargevi!*³⁸

³⁸ Sevak 1973, 257.

The poet sees the advent of Maštoc' as the fulfillment of a kind of historical imperative:

Their birth always seems, even now, unexpected,
And for centuries after leaves men constantly amazed,
Yet in life yet they are ever born for only this reason:
Beyond all measure people have awaited them.

Nranc' cnundě mišt ēl t'vum ē anspaseli
Ev heto mardkanc' darer šarunak zarmank' ē patčařum,
Bayc' nrank' kyank'um mišt ēl cnvum en lok ayn patčařov,
*Or anč'ap' šat en spasel nranc'.*³⁹

Paruyr Sevak, it was noted above, evoked Armenia as a mountain-island. His *magnum opus* is an epic poem, *Anlřeli zangakatun* ("The bell tower that cannot be silenced", 1959), written in commemoration of the birth of the composer and ethnomusicologist, Komitas *vardapet*, who went mad in the Genocide, died in a Paris asylum twenty years later in 1935, and was re-interred at Erevan the following year. The poetic mentor of Sevak was the Soviet Armenian poet Eliše Č'arenc' (Yeghishe Charents). In 1936 Charents wrote a poetic *Requiem aeternam* to the memory of the composer. Charents himself was arrested and murdered by the Soviet secret police in 1937, during the Great Terror. In the 41st stanza of the poem, Charents evokes the sliver of Armenia shielded by Russia from the Genocide but ravaged in the wake of World War I by civil war, famine, and epidemics. It is an island.

Only at the end of the land,
On the last rock left of home,
Planted like an island burning
In an ocean of blood:
On that final rock
Still escaping inundation
Despairing raved,
Still alive, our nation...

Verjřin hoři vra lok,
Verjřin k'arin hayreni,
C'c'vac křzu nman řog:
Ŗvkianum aryuni,
Verjřin k'ari vra ayd,
Deř mnac'ac anořoř,
Zařanc'um ēř husahat
*Mer řotovurdě— deř ořj...*⁴⁰

³⁹ Sevak 1973, 255.

⁴⁰ Č'arenc' 1969, para. XLI.

And so one seems to stand, figuratively, on Ararat, the lone earth-island in the midst of the deluge.

In this study one has compared the fortunes of two isolated and challenged peoples and the way their two writing systems contributed to their cultural, even physical survival. My purpose has been to compare the paradigms of response to the convulsion of the collapse of multiple aspects of the social and spiritual world of a people, the invention of a script as a response, the creation of schools, and the rescue in literature of a cultural inheritance in Armenia, to the far less amply documented dossier of Rapa Nui. One stresses there is no relationship here, *per se*; rather, a model that may help us to understand Easter Island somewhat better than other models might do. There are, to be sure, other and durable models of the experience of Rapa Nui. The standard paradigm that comes to mind is the Cargo cult of the late-19th-century to post-World War II South Pacific: much as a Melanesian islander might construct a model of an airplane, hoping by sympathetic magic to bring back an American flier with his gifts of tinned meat and chocolate bars, the Rapanui could have invented RR to attract the mana of the Spaniards, with their ships, their wealth, and their power. There are certainly other Cargo phenomena on the island; and at many points the methodology and parameters of the Cargo cult are relevant and useful. But a characterization of this sole phenomenon of Polynesian writing *only* in the terms of the Cargo cult would miss the point, perhaps as surely as would the dismissal of Movsēs Xorenac'i, with his rich store of native genealogy and mythography, as an erudite but historically unreliable synthesizer.⁴¹ RR was more sophisticated than simple magic emulation, nor was it so much an outward-directed act of sympathetic magic as an artistic, spiritual, and scholarly project whose purpose was the preservation and perpetuation, against impossible odds, in a time of severe social dislocation, of a whole culture. The Armenian model would seem a useful additional one, to help us to understand the sophistication, magnitude, and genius (and tragedy) of RR on Rapa Nui.⁴²

⁴¹ See the important new preface by Prof. Robert Thomson to the revised reprint of his epochal English translation, Thomson 2006b, ix-xvii.

⁴² Thomas Merton, the great American Catholic monk, mystic, theologian, and poet, died in 1968 in Thailand during a trip to South and Southeast Asia. His spiritual journey in the path of Our Lord Jesus Christ had taken him far from the parochialism of the Western Church and the conservatism of dogma, to learn about Buddhism, to bear witness to the evils of racism at home and colonialism abroad, to listen to indigenous voices. He

I began this research by merely intending to look at the Armenian MS “hieroglyphs” and RR and set the issue to rest. But research cannot follow a predetermined course: not only must the evidence shape our conclusions, but our very argument sometimes will follow a road less taken. So I learned that RR was more than a corpus of strange symbols on inanimate boards: it was the embodiment also of the brave and ingenious attempts of the vivid, ever-versatile Rapanui in the wake of oblivion and destruction to create books in which they clung to the beautiful shapes of the RR glyphs. It is poignant that they could not even read these any longer, and had to resort to photographs of boards and lists by foreign savants. But they added to the books Latinized hymns and lists in their language, too— perhaps seeking thereby to unite the living voices of the texts they believed to have been recorded once in RR script, to the now mute glyphs. And as one examined the record, the energetic, tragic figure of the chief and teacher Nga'ara emerged; and there was the true heart of my story. Not a moai, but a man. He was so like my own Maštoc', whose fate could so easily have been like his; and then one saw the


began a cycle of poems, *The Geography of Lograire*, the first volume of which was published posthumously. The mythical, global, imaginal realm was not culled from Arthurian epic but constructed from the real surname, Des Loges, of the medieval French vagabond poet François Villon. The *loges* were to evoke the lonely, simple huts of foresters. Lograire embraces Melanesia and there are poems about Miklukho-Maklai in the cycle and Biblical paraphrases in the language of the Cargo cult, which Merton explained in a letter to a friend dated 27 February 1968— shortly before his untimely death. It is worth quoting here at length: “A Cargo movement is a messianic or apocalyptic cult movement which confronts a crisis of cultural change by certain magic and religious ways of acting out what seems to be the situation and trying to get with it, controlling the course of change in one's own favor (group) or in the line of some interpretation of how things ought to be. In some sense Marxism is a kind of Cargo cult. But strictly speaking, Cargo cults are means by which primitive and underprivileged people believe they can obtain manufactured goods by an appeal to supernatural powers (ancestors, spirits, etc.) and by following a certain constant type of pattern which involves a) a complete rejection and destruction of the old culture with its goods and values b) adoption of a new attitude and hope of immediate Cargo, as a result of and reward for the rejection of the old. This always centers around some prophetic personage who brings the word, tells what is to be done, and organizes the movement. Though all this may seem naïve and absurd to western ‘civilized’ people, I, in common with some of the anthropologists, try to spell out a deeper meaning. Cargo is relevant to everyone in a way. It is a way in which primitive people not only attempt by magic to obtain the goods they feel to be unjustly denied them, but also and more importantly a way of spelling out their conception of the injustice, their sense that basic human relationships are being ignored, and their hope of restoring the right order of things. If they want Cargo it is not only because they need material things but because Cargo will establish them as equal to the white man and give them an identity as respectable as his. But if they believe in Cargo it is because they believe in their own fundamental human worth and believe it can be shown this way” (Merton 1969, 148-149).

project, and the genius, of Maštoc' as it were with new eyes, taking nothing for granted and imagining how he performed his task, how he created a school, and what the writers of the Golden Age set down for posterity. And without him the dark waters might have risen over the snowy crown of Ararat and there would have been no Armenian book printed in 1512, or 2012. But there is, there is Sevak and Charents, and we look forward to another five hundred years of printed books, digital books, unimaginable media of the future but in a familiar alphabet that has been our ark and our time machine for sixteen centuries. And Rapa Nui ceased to be an impossibly remote, grassy, windswept hill where vast statues like denizens of another world stare into emptiness. It became a place I came to know, to love in its incomparable beauty and strangeness, of massacre and starvation, of near extinction, of human creativity, versatility, and resurrection, of a culture returning to and rejoicing in life. It became us: for *no* man is an island, whether in the mountains or on the sea; all are a single Rapanui *tainā*, an Armenian *ětanik'*, a human family.

APPENDIX

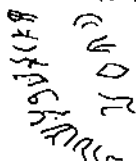

Pattern: $X_3 Y Z$ (= X copulates with) Y [and generates] Z :

Rapanui cosmological hymn of Ure Va'e Iko, Atua Mata Riri.


manu 'bird' ika 'fish' ra'a 'sun'
 + man [1] [there] issues
 'hand' > man 'all'
 ↓
ki 'ai ki roto 'o
 'cohabits with'
 [phallus glyph
ure]

Fischer's hypothetical
decipherment.

The 'signatures' of Rapanui wiki
on 1770 Spanish 'treaty':



 ← tangata
manu
 'bird-man'

Armenian hieroglyphs (հռնդիպք 'signs') from mediaeval
MSS and Rapanui rongorongo parallels:

ւոյդ զ 'nation' ~ RR 22 komari 'vulva' զ

ւիդմւոյր զ 'transient' զ

ւոմւոյր զ 'morning' ~ RR 21, 40-41 զ (զ) զ

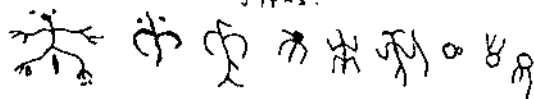
դրմւոյր Վ 'paradise' ~ RR 125 զ զ զ

հռնդիպք զ 'horn' ~ RR 76 զ 'penis'

հռնդիպք զ 'magical' ~ RR 86-88 զ
համաթիւր
 'flower'

ւոյր զ 'love' ~ RR 89 զ զ

Some Armenian petroglyphs:



Arm. text in 5th-cent. uncials (Երկաթագիր)

Երկաթե Երկին
 Երկաթե Երկիր
 Երկաթե Եր Ծովն Ծիրանի
 Երկին Ի Ծովն Ռեւեր ու Երկին ... Եր
 Եր ԶԿԱՐԱՐԻԿԱՆ ԵԶԵՔՆԻԿ
 ԸՆԴ ԵԶԵՔԱՆ ՓՈՂ ԾՈՒԽ ԵԿԱՆԵՐ
 ԸՆԴ ԵԶԵՔԱՆ ՓՈՂ ԲՈՑ ԵԿԱՆԵՐ
 Եր Ի ԲՈՑՈՅՆ ՎԱԶԵՐ
 ԽԱՐՏԵԱՅ ՊԱՏԱՆԵԿԻԿ
 ՆԱ ՀՈՒՐ ՀԵՐ ՌԵՎԵՐ
 ԲՈՑ ՌԵՎԵՐ ՄԱՐՈՒԽ
 Եր ԱԶԿՈՒՆԲՆ ԷԻՆ ԱՐԵՔԱԿՈՒՆԲ:

name Կարթագը
 possibly encoded
 acrophonically

42 words; 26 repeated.

'Labored heaven
 Labored earth
 Labored too the sea *golden
 The labor in the sea had
 Also the little red reed
 Along the reed's shaft smoke rose
 Along the reed's shaft flame rose
 And out of the flame ran
 A blond little youth
 He fire hair did have
 Flame had he a beard
 And his little eyes were little suns.'

Colors:

Ըրանի	*golden
կարմիր	light red
(box, hur)	(fire, flame)
առեան	blond
(aregahn)	(sun-erb)
(cux)	(smoke)

Moses Xorenac'i, History of the Armenians (Պատմութիւն Հայոց)
 Hymn of the birth of the god Vahagn (Վր. Վառժապառ)

Rapanni colors: 'blue' meuna (lit. 'sea'); crimson mea mea (lit. 'fish gills');
 'grey' 'shu' shu (lit. 'mist'); 'pink' henga henga (lit. 'bright sky');
 'red' ura ura (lit. 'flame'); yellow tona mamari (lit. 'egg yolk')



Fig. 1. Rongorongo board.



Fig. 2. Moai on Rano Raraku, Rapa Nui.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- AAL *Annual of Armenian Linguistics. Cleveland, Ohio*
 B *Bazmavep. Venice.*
 BM *Banber Matenadarani. Erevan.*
 BEH *Banber Erevani Hamalsarani. Erevan.*
 E *Ējmiacin. Mother See of the Armenian Apostolic Church, Vałaršapat.*
 HA *Handes Amsoreay. Vienna.*
 JSAS *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*
 LHG *Lraber hasarakakan gitut'yunneri. Erevan.*
 MSS *Münchener Studien zur Sprachwissenschaft. München.*
 PBH *Patma-Banasirakan Handes. Erevan.*
 PG *Patrologiae cursus completus. Series Graeca. Accurante J.P. Migne. Paris.*
 REArm *Revue des études Arméniennes. Paris.*

ABAEV, VASILIJ IVANOVIČ

- 1958-89 *Istoriko-étimologičeskij slovar' osetinskogo jazyka* (Historical-Etymological Dictionary of the Ossetian Language). Moscow.
 1978 "Armeno Ossetica". *Voprosy jazykoznanija* 6, 45-51.

ABASEAN, GRIGOR

Girk' patčarac'. Patčar layn ew nurb greanc', areal i harc'n srboc' ew i vardapetac', ew i mi hawak'eal ew hogac'eal mec rabunapetin Grigori, ordoy Abasay (The Book of Causes. The causes of wide and subtle writings taken from [the works] of the holy fathers and doctors of theology, and gathered together and provided by the great teacher Grigor, the son of Abas). (12th -13th c. Unpublished text).

ABEGHIAN, ARTASCHES

- 1936 *Neuarmenische Grammatik; Ost- und Westarmenisch, mit Lese-stücken und einem Wörterverzeichnis.* Berlin, Leipzig.

ABEGHIAN, MANUK

- 1899 *Der armenische Volksglaube.* Leipzig.

ABELEAN, MANUK

- 1940 *Gusanakan žotovrdakan tater, hayrenner yev antuniner (uraxut'yan, siru, harsanik'i, ororoc'i, lac'i)* (Poet-Performers' folk poetry - taghs, hayrens and antunis, poems of joy, love, wedding, lullabies, wailing songs). Erevan.
 1959 *Hayoc' hin grakanut'yan patmut'yun* (History of Ancient Armenian Literature). Beirut.
 1985 *Erker* (Works). Vol. 8. Erevan.

ABELYAN, MANUK (ed.)

- 1941 *Koriwn. Vark' Maštoc'i* (Koriwn. The Life of Maštoc') Erevan.

ABRAAM KRETAC'I

- 1973 Abraam Kretac'i. *Povestvovanie*. Kritičeskij tekst, perevod na russkij jazyk, predislovie i kommentarii N. K. Korganjana (*History*. Critical text, Translation into Russian, Foreword and Commentary by N.K. Korganjan). Erevan.

ABRAHAMYAN, A. G. (ed.)

- 1940 *Anania Širakac'i. Tiezeragitut'iwn ew tomar* (Anania Širakac'i. Cosmology and Calendar). Erevan.
 1944 *Anania Širakac'u matenagrut'yuně* (The Works of Anania Širakac'i). Erevan.
 1956 *Hovhannēs imastasiri matenagrut'yuně* (The Works of Yovhannēs Imastasēr). Erevan.
 1973 *Hayoc' gir ev grč'ut'yun* (Armenian script and writing), Erevan.

ABULAŽE, ILIA

- 1973 *Žveli kartuli enis leksiķoni* (Slovar' drevnegruzinskogo jazyka. Dictionary of the Old Georgian Language). Tbilisi.

AČAREAN, HRAČ'EAY (see also: AČARYAN, ADJARIAN)

- 1898 "Haykakank' 10-14" (Armeniaca 10-14). *B* 56, 370-372.
 1902 *T'urk'erēni azdecut'iwně hayerēni vray ew t'urk'erēnē p'oxaʔeal baʔerē Pōlsi hay žoʔovrdakan lezuin mēj hamematut'eamb Vani, Łarabaʔi ew Nor-Naxiʔewani barbaʔnerun* (The Influence of Turkish on Armenian and the Turkish Loanwords in the Colloquial Armenian Language of Constantinople, compared with the Dialects of Van, Karabagh and Nor Naxiʔewan). Vaʔaršapat.
 1913 *Hayerēn gawaʔakan baʔaran* (Provincial'nyj slovar' armjanskago jazyka. Armenian Dialect Dictionary). T'iflis.
 1940 *K'nnut'iwn Nor-Julayi barbaʔi* (Study of the New Julfa Dialect). Erevan.

AČARYAN, HRAČ'YA (see also: AČAREAN, ADJARIAN)

- 1940-51 *Hayoc' lezvi patmut'yun* (History of the Armenian Language) 2 Vols. Erevan.
 1941 "K'nnut'iwn Polsahay barbaʔi" (Study of the Dialect of the Armenians from Constantinople). *Erevani Petakan Hamalsarani Gitakan ašxatut'yunner* 19, 19 - 250.
 1947 *K'nnut'yun Hamšeni barbaʔi* (Study of the Hamšen Dialect). Erevan.
 1952 *K'nnut'yun Vani barbaʔi* (Study of the Van Dialect). Erevan.
 1953 *K'nnut'yun Aʔtiali barbaʔi* (Study of the Aʔtial Dialect). Erevan.
 1961 *Liakatar k'erakanut'yun hayoc' lezvi* (Complete Grammar of the Armenian language), vol. 4b. Erevan.
 1972 *Hayoc' anjnannuneri baʔaran* (Armenian Prosopographical Dictionary), 5 vols. Beirut (Reprint of Erevan 1942-1962 edition).
 1984 *Hayoc' grerē* (The Armenian Letters). Erevan.
 2003 *K'nnut'yun Kilikiayi barbaʔi* (Study of the Cilicia Dialect). Erevan.

ADİL

- 1964-87 *Azərbaycan dilinin izahlı lüğəti* (Tolkovij slovar' azerbajdzanskogo jazyka. Explanatory Dictionary of the Azeri Language). Bakı.

ADJARIAN, H. (see also: AČAREAN, AČARYAN)

- 1909 *Classification des dialectes arméniens*. Paris.

ADLER, A. (ed.)

- 1928-1935 *Suidae lexicon* (Lexicographi Graeci 1.1-1.4). Leipzig.

ADONC, N.

- 1915 *Dionisij Frakijskij i armjanskije tol'kovateli* (Dionysius Thrax and the Armenian Commentators). Petrograd.

ADONC', N.

- 1911 "Tork' astuac hin Hayoc'" (Tork' God of the Ancient Armenians). *Yušarjan*. Vienna, 389-394.

ADONTZ, N.

- 1970 *Denys de Thrace et les commentateurs arméniens*. Louvain (Translation by R. Hotterbeex of the Russian edition, Petrograd 1915).

ADZINBA, Z. I. & T. G. ALANIJA

- 2001 *Lekarstvennye rastenija flory Abxazii* (Medicinal Plants among the Flora of Abkhazia. Suxum.

AIS

- 1928-1940 Jaberg, K. - J. Jud (Hrsg.), *Sprach- und Sachatlas Italiens und der Südschweiz*. Zofingen.

AKINEAN, NERSĒS

- 1904 "Nonnosi meknut'iwnc' Grigor Astuacabani hing čaric'" (Nonnos' Commentaries on Five Discourses by Grigor the Theologian), *HA* 18, 139-146, 165-173.
- 1907a "Grigor ordi Abasea hefinak patčarac' groc'" (Grigor Son of Abas Author of the Book of Causes). *HA* 21, 132-135.
- 1907b "Patčarac' girk'" (The Book of Causes). *HA* 21, 228-235, 271-274.
- 1910 *Zak'aria eps. Gnuneac' ew iwr taterē* (Zak'aria, Bishop of Gnunik' and His Poems). Vienna.
- 1920 *Gawazanagirk' kat'otikosac' Alt'amaray* (Listing of the Catholicoi of Alt'amar). Vienna.
- 1921 *Hing panduxt talasac'ner* (Five Poets in Exile). Vienna.
- 1922 *Matenagrakan hetazōtut'iwnner: k'nnut'ewn ew bnagir* (Literary Studies: Criticism and Original Texts). Vienna.
- 1936 *Movsēs G. Tat'ewac'i* (Movsēs III Tat'ewac'i). Vienna.
- 1947 "Prokl' Diadoxosi Šalkap' astuacabanakank'" (Proclus Diadoxos' Elements of Theology). *HA* 61, 134-159.
- 1951 *Simeon Plnjahanec'i ew ir t'argmanut'iwnnerē vrac'erēnē* (Simeon Plnjahanec'i and his Translations from Georgian). Vienna.
- 1956 *Nersēs Lambronac'woy keank'n ew grakan vastaknerē* (Nersēs Lambronac'i's Life and Literary Works). Vienna.

- 1958 *Grigoris A. kat'otikos Altamarc'i keank'n ew k'ert'uacnerě* (Catholicos Grigoris I of Alt'amar's Life and Poetic Works). Vienna.
- AKINIAN, H. NERSES.
 1938 "Die handschriftliche Überlieferung der armenischen Übersetzung des Alexanderromans von Pseudo-Kallistenes". *Byzantion* 13, 201-206.
- AKTUŇ, HULKI
 1990 *Türkçenin büyük argo sözlüğü (tanıqlarla)* (Great Dictionary of Turkish Argot [with Attestations]). İstanbul.
- AŁABEKYAN, MELADA A.
 1979 "Hay italyan bařayin zugabanut'yunner" (Armenian-Italic Lexical Parallels). *Hayoc' lezvi hamematakan k'erakanut'yan harc'er*. Erevan, 23-127.
- AŁAYAN, ĖDUARD B.
 1954 *Metru barbařě* (The Melri Dialect). Erevan.
 1974 *Bařak'nnakan ew stugabanakan hetazotut'yunner* (Lexicological and Etymological Studies). Erevan.
 1976 *Ardi hayereni bac'atrankan bařaran* (Explanatory Dictionary of Contemporary Armenian). Erevan.
 1986 *Aknarkner hayoc' tomarneri patmut'yan* (Essays in the History of Armenian Calendars). Erevan.
- Album* see GRABAR 1946
- Alessandro Magno*
 1995 *Alessandro Magno, Storia e Mito*. Milan.
- ALIŠAN, H. ŁEWOND
 1876 *Assises d'Antioche = Ansiz Antiok'ay* (Crusader Law Code), translated by Smbat Sparapet. Text with French translation. Venice.
 1893 *Sisakan. Teřagrut'iwn Siwneac' ařxarhi* (Sisakan. Geography of Siwnik'). Venice.
 1895 *Haybusak kam haykakan busabařut'iwn* (Haybusak or Armenian Plant Onomastics). Venice.
 1901 *Hayapatum* (Armenian History). Venice.
 1921 *Huřikk' hayreneac' hayoc'* (Memories from the Armenian Fatherland). Venice.
- ALLEN, T. W.
 1912 *Homeri Opera*. Oxford.
- ALTENDORF, H.-D.
 1957 *Untersuchungen zu Severian von Gabala*. Tübingen.
- AMALYAN, H. M.
 1966 *Miřnadaryan Hayastani bařaranagrakan huřarjannerě 10-15 dd.* (Monuments of Medieval Armenia's Lexicographical Monuments, 10th-15th Centuries). Erevan.

- 1975 *Baigirk' Hayoc'* (Armenian Dictionaries). Erevan.
- AMATUNI, SAHAK VARDAPET
1912 *Hayoc' bař u ban* (Armenian Folklore). Vałarřapat.
- AMBROSE
1896-1897 *Sancti Ambrosii Opera pars prima et pars altera*. Vienna.
- AMIRDOVLAT'
1990 Vardanjan, S. A., *Amirdovlat Amasiaci. Nenuřnoe dlja neučeř. Perevod s armjanskogo jazyka i kommentarij* (Amirdovlat Amasiac'i. Superfluous for the Ignorant. Translation from the Armenian and Commentary). Moscow.
- AMIT, DAVID & MICHAEL E. STONE
2002 "Report on the Survey of a Medieval Jewish Cemetery in Eghegis, Vayots Dzor Region, Armenia". *Journal of Jewish Studies* 53, 66-106.
- ANANIKIAN, MARDIROH H.
1964 "Armenian mythology". Canon John Arnott MacCulloch and George Foot Moore (eds.), *The Mythology of all Races* (in 13 vols.); vol. 7. New York, 1-100, 363-371, 379-397, 435-440 + plates I-VI.
- ANASYAN, H.
1959 *Haykakan Matenagitut'yun* (Armenian Bibliography) Vol. 1. Erevan.
- ANDRANIK
1900 *Tērsim: řanaparhordut'iwn ew tetagrut'iwn* (Dersim: Journey and Topography). T'iflis.
- ANDREASYAN, T.
1967 *Svediayi barbařē (K'ist'inēgi lezun)* (The Svediya Dialect. The Language of K'ist'inēg). Erevan.
- ANDRIOTIS, N. P.
1971² Ἑτυμολογικὸ Λεξικὸ τῆς Κοινῆς Νεοελληνικῆς (Etymological Dictionary of the New Greek Standard Language). Thessaloniki.
- ANTOSYAN, S.
1961 *Kesariayi barbařē* (The Dialect of Kesayira). Erevan.
- ARAK'EL DAWRIŽEC'I
1990 Xanlaryan, L.A. (ed.), *Arak'el Dawrižec'i. Girk' patmut'eanc'* (Arak'el Dawrižec'i. Book of Histories). Erevan.
- ARAK'EL SIWNEC'I
1741 "Arak'el vardapeti asac'eal nerbolean, ař k'ař hřetorn ew Tiezeraloys vardapeti mecn Grigor Tat'ewac'i ařakert Yōhannu koxik koč'ec'eloy" (Eulogy Composed by the vardapet Arak'el on the Excellent Orator and Ecumenical Teacher, the Great Grigor Tat'ewac'i, Pupil of Yohan Known as Koxik). Grigor Tat'ewac'i 1741, 716-719.

- AREVŠATJAN, S. S. & A.S. MATEVOSJAN
 1984 *Gladzorskij universitet - centr prosveščanja srednevekovoj Armenii.* (The University of Gladzor: Centre of Education of Medieval Armenia). Erevan.
- AREVŠATYAN, S.
 1960 *Davit' Anyatt'. Sahmank' imastasirut'ean* (Davit' the Invincible. Definitions of Philosophy). Erevan.
- ARUTJUNJAN, N. V.
 2001 *Korpus urartskix klinoobraznyx nadpisej* (Corpus of Urartean Cuneiform Inscriptions). Erevan.
- ARS
 1984 *Armjansko-russkij slovar'* (*Hay-řuseren bařaran* Armenian-Russian Dictionary). Erevan.
- ARZOUMANIAN, Z.
 1982 *History of Lewond.* Philadelphia.
- ASBAGHI, ASYA
 1988 *Persische Lehnwörter im Arabischen.* Wiesbaden.
- ASE
 1976- *Azərbaycan Sovet Ensiklopediyası* (Encyclopedia of Soviet Azerbaijan). Bakı.
- ASOLIK (STEP'ANNOS TARONAC'I)
 1885 *Patmut'iwn tiezerakan* (Universal History). St. Petersburg.
- AUBINEAU, M.
 1966 *Gregoire de Nysse. Traité de la virginité.* Paris.
- AUCHER, J. B. (AWGEREAN, M.)
 1826 *Philonis Iudaei Paralipomena armena. Libri videlicet quatuor in Genesin, Libri duo in Exodum. Sermo unus de Sampson. Alter de Jona. Tertius de tribus angelis Abraamo apparentibus.* Venice.
 1914 "Nmuř mē azgayin manrankarč'ut'ean ew hnagrut'ean aruesti (An Example of National Miniature Painting and Paleography)". *Bazmavēp* 72, 193-208 and 241-251.
- AVAGYAN, S. M.
 1978 *Arčak* (Arčak). Hay azgagrut'yun ew banahyusut'yun: nyut'er ew usumnasirut'yunner (Armjanskaja étnografija i fol'klor: materialy i issledovaniya. Armenian Ethnography and Folklore: Materials and Studies), Vol. 8. Erevan.
- AVAGYAN, S. A.
 1973 *Vimakan arjanagrut'yunneri hnč'yunabanut'yun* (X-XIV dd.) (The Phonology of Inscriptions on Stone. Erevan.
- AVDALBEGYAN, M. (ed.)
 1958 *Xač'atur Keč'ařec'i, 13-14 dareri* (Xač'atur Keč'ařec'i, 13th-14th Centuries). Erevan.
 1963 *Grigoris Ařtamarc'i XVI d.* (Grigoris Ařt'amarci 16th Cent.). Erevan.

- AVDOYAN, L.
1993 *Pseudo-Yovhannēs Mamikonean: The History of Tarōn*. Atlanta, GA.
- AWETIKEAN, H. G.
1827 *Grigori Narekac'woy erkrord matean čarič* (The Second Book of Discourses by Grigor Narekac'i). Venice.
- AZÉMA, Y.
1955 *Théodore de Cyr. Correspondence I*. Paris.
- BADER, FRANÇOISE
1993 "Formes de la racine *dei- 'briller avec rotation'". *Bela Brogyanyi & Reiner Lipp* (eds.), *Comparative-Historical Linguistics: Indo-European and Finno-Ugric: Papers in Honor of Oswald Szemerényi*, 3. Amsterdam, Philadelphia, 3-59.
- BAILEY, HAROLD W.
1986 "Astuvāk 'powerful'". *South Asian studies* 2, 65-67.
- BALDASARYAN, Ē. M.
1970 "Erznkayi haykakan išxanut'yuně XIII-XIV darerum" (The Armenian Rule over Erzinka in the XIIIth-XIVth Century). *LHG* 2 (321), 36-44.
- BAŔNASYAN, Ĵ.
2006 "Hayoc' hin amsanunneri cagman harc'i šurj" (Concerning the Origin of the Ancient Armenian Months' Names). *International Conference dedicated to the 1600th anniversary of the Armenian Letters Creation (Yerevan, September 12-17, 2005): Collection of Papers*. Erevan, 343-348.
- BARBEL, J.
1963 *Gregor von Nazianz. Die fünf theologischen Reden*. Düsseldorf.
- BART'IKYAN, H. M.
2002, 1-2 *Hay-byuzandakan hetazotut'yunner* (Studia armeno-byzantina). 2 vols. Erevan.
- BART'IKYAN, H. & TER-ŁEWONDYAN, A.
1973 *Agat'angelosi mi norahayt hunaren xmbagrut'yun (Ōk'ridayi vark'ě)*. (A Newly Discovered Greek Redaction of Agathangelos [The Oxrid Life]) Transl. by Hrač' Bart'ikyan, introd. by Aram Ter-Łewondyan. E, fasc. 3, 36-42 and fasc. 7, 32-40. (Reprinted in Bart'ikyan 2002, Vol. 1, 291-306.)
- BARXUDARYAN, SEDRAK GEWORGI
1960 *Corpus Inscriptionum Armenicarum. Divan hay vimagrut'yan*. Vol. 2. Erevan.
1963 *Mijnadaryan hay čartarapetner ew k'argorc varpetner* (Medieval Armenian Architects and Master Stonecutters) Erevan.
1967 *Corpus Inscriptionum Armenicarum. Divan hay vimagrut'yan*. Vol. 3. Erevan.
- BAUHIN, JOHANN
1650-1651 *Historia plantarum universalis, nova, et absolutissima, cum consensu et dissensu circa eas*. 3 vols. Yverdon.

- BAYTOP, TURHAN
 1997 *Türkçe bitki adları sözlüğü. İkinci baskı* (Dictionary of Turkish Plant Names. Second edition). Ankara.
 1999 *Türkiyede bitkiler ile tedavi (geçmişte ve bugün). İkinci baskı* (Medicinal Cure with Plants in Turkey [Past and Present] Second edition). İstanbul.
- BECK, EDMUND
 1959 *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrsers Hymnen De Nativitate (Epiphania)* (CSCO 186; Syr. 82). Louvain.
 1964 *Des Heiligen Ephraem des Syrsers Paschahymnen* (CSCO, 248-249; Syr. 108 (Text) -109 (Translation). Louvain.
- BECK, H. G.
 1969 "Antike Beredsamkeit und byzantinische Kallilogia". *Antike und Abendland* 15, 91-101.
- BEDEVIAN, ARMENAG K.
 1936 *Illustrated Polyglottic Dictionary of Plant Names in Latin, Arabic, Armenian, English, French, German, Italian and Turkish Languages, Including economic, medicinal, poisonous and ornamental plants and common weeds*. Cairo.
- BEEKES, ROBERT S.P.
 1995 *Comparative Indo-European Linguistics. An Introduction*. Amsterdam, Philadelphia.
- BELLWOOD, PETER
 1978 *The Polynesians: Prehistory of an Island People*. London.
- BENEDICTUS, P. & S.E. ASSEMANUS
 1737-1743 *Sancti Patris nostri Ephraem Syri Opera Omnia. Syriace et Latine*, I-III. Rome.
- BLÄSING, UWE
 1992 *Armenisches Lehngut im Türkkeitürkischen am Beispiel von Hemşin*. Amsterdam, Atlanta.
 1998 "Armeno-Turcica: Etymologische Untersuchungen anhand von Materialien aus dem Hemşingebiet". *Studia Turcologica Cracoviensia* 5, 41-63.
 2001 "Ein Beitrag zu den Bezeichnungen von Farnen (Pteropsida) im Kaukasus und Anatolien". *Studia Etymologica Cracoviensia* (6), 19-78.
- BLOCH, E.
 2002 "Hemlock Poisoning and the Death of Socrates: Did Plato Tell the truth?", in T.C. Brickhouse & N.D. Smith (eds.), *The Trial and Execution of Socrates: Sources and Controversies*. Oxford, 255-278.
- BLOCK, D. I.
 1997 *The Book of Ezekiel. Chapters 1-24*. Grand Rapids, Michigan - Cambridge, U.K.

- BOERIO, G.
1856² *Dizionario del dialetto veneziano*. Venice (repr. Florence, 1993).
- BOGOLJUBOV, M. N.
1989 "Iranskie nazvanija utrennej zvezdy" (Iranian Names for the Morning Star). *Voprosy jazykoznanija* 4, 88-91.
- BOLOGNESI, GIANCARLO
1965 "Incontro di culture nell'antico Oriente indoeuropeo". *Annuario dell'Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Anno accademico 1963-1964*. Milan, 143-165.
1970 "Giacomo Leopardi recensore e critico di testi armeni". *Leopardi e l'Ottocento. Atti del II Convegno internazionale di studi leopardiani. Recanati 1-4 ottobre 1967*. Florence, 65-79; reprinted in Bolognesi 1998, 3-23.
1982 "Traduzioni tardo-antiche ed alto-medioevali in Medio Oriente". *Processi traduttivi: Teorie ed applicazioni. Atti del Seminario su 'La traduzione', Brescia 19-20 novembre 1981*. Brescia, 11-38.
1983 "Calchi armeni di parole greche", *Scritti linguistici in onore di Giovan Battista Pellegrini*. Pisa, 1307-1313.
1984 "Aspetti lessicali e semantici dell'interferenza nei contatti interlinguistici tra l'armeno, l'iranico e il greco". *Diacronia sincronia e cultura. Saggi linguistici in onore di Luigi Heilman*. Brescia, 3-19.
1985 "L'influsso lessicale greco sull'armeno". *Scritti linguistici e filologici per Carlo Alberto Mastrelli*. Pisa, 87-99.
1986 "Armeniaca. Emprunts iraniens et calques grecs en arménien", in M. Leroy et F. Mawet (eds.) *La place de l'arménien dans les langues indo-européennes*. Louvain, 1-15.
1990a "Grecismi velati da apparenze armene" (in *Scritti in onore di Alberto Grilli*). *Paideia* 45, 23-30.
1990b "Parole armene di forma ma greche di spirito". *Abruzzo. Rivista dell'Istituto di Studi Abruzzesi. Scritti offerti a Ettore Paratore ottuagenario*, 23-28 (1985-1990), 317-322.
1992 "Sur les emprunts de sens au grec: les dénominations de la prose en arménien, en grec et en latin", in J. A. C. Greppin (ed.), *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Armenian Linguistics. Cleveland State University. Cleveland, Ohio September 14-18, 1991*. Delmar, NY, 37-47.
1994 "Giacomo Leopardi e l'armeno. Le Annotazioni sopra la Cronaca d'Eusebio". *Lingua e stile di Giacomo Leopardi. Atti dell'VIII Convegno internazionale di studi leopardiani (Recanati, 30 settembre - 5 ottobre 1991)*. Florence, 349-365, reprinted in Bolognesi 1998, 63-84.
1998 *Leopardi e l'Armeno*. Milano.
- BONNARD, É. (ed.)
1977 *Saint Jérôme: Commentaire sur S. Matthieu 1 (Livres I-II). Texte latin, introduction, traduction et notes*. Paris.

- BORETZKY, NORBERT & BIRGIT IGLA
 1994 *Wörterbuch Romani-Deutsch-Englisch für den südosteuropäischen Raum, mit einer Grammatik der Dialektvarianten*. Wiesbaden.
- BRADLEY, H.
 1920 “‘Cursed hebenon’ (or ‘hebona’)”. *Modern Language Review* 15, 85-87.
- BRENTJES, B.
 1991 “Armenian Tombstones and Turkish Adaptations in the 14th, 15th and 16th Centuries”, in B.L. Zekiyan (ed.), *Atti dei quinto simposio internazionale di arte Armena*. Venice, 159-168.
- BRITAIN, D.
 2004 “Dialect and Accent”. *Soziolinguistik, Internationales Handbuch. HSK 3.1. 1. Teilband*. Berlin u.a.
- BROCK, SEBASTIAN
 1983² *The Harp of the Spirit. Eighteen Poems of Saint Ephrem*, (enlarged ed.) (Studies Supplementary to Sobornost, 4)
 1991 *L'œil de lumière. La vision spirituelle de saint Éphrem. Suivi de La Harpe de l'Esprit*. Trad. Didier Rance (Spiritualité orientale, 50). Abbaye de Bellefontaine.
 1997 *A Brief Outline of Syriac Literature* (Mōrān ‘Eth’ō, 9; Baker Hill, Kottayam.
 1998 “The Peshitta Old Testament. Between Judaism and Christianity,” *Cristianesimo nella Storia* 19, 483-502.
- BROCK, SEBASTIAN P. & SIMON HOPKINS
 1992 “A Verse Homily on Abraham and Sarah in Egypt: Syriac Original with Early Arabic Translation,” *Le Muséon* 105, 87-146.
- BROCKELMANN, CARL
 1995² *Lexicon Syriacum*. Hildesheim - Vaduz.
- BROSSET, M. (ed.)
 1864 *Histoire de la Siounie par Stéphannos Orbélian*. St. Petersburg.
- BRUBAKER, R.
 2005. “The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora”. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28 (1), 1-19.
- BSĚ
 1950 *Bol’shaja Sovetskaja Ėnciklopedija*. Vtoroe izdanie (Great Soviet Encyclopedia. Second Edition). Moscow.
- BUCHTHAL, H.
 1957 *Miniature Painting in the Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem*. Oxford.
- BUNDY, DAVID
 2000 “Vision for the City: Nisibis in Ephrem’s Hymns on Nicomedia,” in R. Valantasis (ed.), *Religions of Late Antiquity in Practice*, (Princeton Readings in Religion Series). Princeton, 189-206.
 2002 “Bishop Vologese and the Persian Siege of Nisibis in 359 C.E.: A Study in Ephrem’s Memre on Nicomedia,” *Encounter* 63.1-2, 55-63.

BURCHARD, CHRISTOPH

- 1990-1991 "More about the Armenien Text of Joseph and Aseneth". *JSAS* 5, 65-80.
- 1996 *Gesammelte Studien zu Joseph und Aseneth*. Leiden, New York, Cologne.
- 1996a "Zur armenischen Übersetzung von Joseph und Aseneth", in Burchard 1996, 103-137.
- 1996b "Neues von Joseph und Aseneth auf armenisch", in Burchard 1996, 139-159.
- 1996c "Joseph und Aseneth 25-29 auf armenisch", in Burchard 1996, 93-102.
- 1999 "Character and Origin of the Armenian Version of Joseph and Aseneth", in Calzolari Bouvier, Kaestli, Outtier 1999, 73-90.
- 2010 *A Minor Edition of the Armenian Version of Joseph and Aseneth*. With an Index of Words by Joseph J.S. Weitenberg. Leuven.

BURCHARD, C., C. BURFEIND, U.B. FINK

- 2003 *Joseph und Aseneth kritisch herausgegeben*. Leiden - Boston.

BURDE, C.

- 1974 *Hethitische medizinische Texte*. Wiesbaden.

BUSCHHAUSEN, H. H.

- 1976 *Die illuminierten armenischen Handschriften der Mechitaristen-Congregation in Vienna*. Vienna.

BUSCHHAUSEN, HEIDE & HELMUT, EMMA KORCHMASJAN

- 2009 *Armenische Buchmalerei und Baukunst der Krim. Tafeln*. Erevan.

CALZOLARI, VALENTINA & JONATHAN BARNES (eds)

- 2009 *L'oeuvre de David l'Invincible* (Commentaria in Aristotelem Armeniaca - Davidis Opera). Leiden - Boston.

CALZOLARI BOUVIER, VALENTINA, J.-D. KAESTLI, BERNARD OUTTIER (eds.)

- 1999 *Apocryphes arméniens. transmission - traduction - création - iconographie*. Lausanne.

CAMPBELL THOMPSON, R.

- 1949 *A Dictionary of Assyrian Botany*. London.

CANIVET, P.

- 1958 *Théodore de Cyr. Thérapeutique des maladies helléniques*. Paris.

Č'ARENČ', ELIŠE

- 1969 *Komitas: poem*. Erevan.

CAVENAGO-BIGNAMI MONETA, S.

- 1993³ *Manuale di gemmologia*. Milan.

CHANTRAINE, PIERRE

- 1968-1980 *Dictionnaire étymologique de la langue grecque*. Paris.

CHD

- 1980- Güterbock, Hügo G. & Harry A. Hoffner, Theo P.J. van den Hout (eds.), *The Hittite Dictionary of the Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago*. Chicago. (Electronic version, 1989-).

- CHITTY, D. J.
1966 *The Desert a City: An Introduction to the History of Egyptian and Palestinian Monasticism under the Christian Empire.* Oxford.
- CHRISTMAN, A. R.
2005 "What Did Ezekiel See?" *Christian Exegesis of Ezekiel's Vision of the Chariot from Irenaeus to Gregory the Great.* Leiden - Boston.
- CHURCHILL, WILLIAM & HIPPOLYTE ROUSSEL
1912 *Easter Island: The Rapanui Speech and the Peopling of South-east Polynesia.* Washington, D.C.
- CIACKIAK, E. (see also ĴAXIAXEAN)
1829 *Nuovo dizionario italiano-armeno-turco.* Venice.
- CLARKE, E.G., A.O.,
1984 *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on the Pentateuch: Text and Concordance.* Hoboken, New Jersey.
- Č'OLAK'EAN, YAKOB
1986 *K'esapi barbařē* (The Dialect of Kesap). Aleppo (repr., with add. Erevan 2009).
- COLSON, WHITAKER & MARCUS
1929-62 see under Philo
- COULIE, B.
(1994) *Répertoire des manuscrits arméniens. Census of Armenian Manuscripts. Liste des sigles utilisés pour désigner les manuscrits.* (Leiden). http://aiea.fltr.ucl.ac.be/AIEAfr/Outils_files/Sigles.pdf
- COURTONE, Y.
1966 *Saint Basile. Lettres.* Paris.
- COVAKAN (ARK'EPISKOPOS NORAYR POLAREAN)
1995² *Grigor Narekac'u Nerbotner* (The Panegyrics of Grigor Narekac'i). Jerusalem.
- COWE, S. PETER
1994-1995 "Armenological Paradigms and Yovhannēs Sarkawag's 'Discourse on Wisdom' - Philosophical Underpinning for an Armenian Renaissance?" *REArm* 25, 125-156.
1995 "Models for the Interpretation of Medieval Armenian Poetry", in J. J. S. Weitenberg (ed.), *New Approaches to Middle Armenian Language and Literature.* Leiden, 29-45.
1996 "Aspects of the Translation and Redaction Process of the Alexander Romance in Armenian", in D. Sakayan (ed.) *Acts of the 5th International Conference on Armenian Linguistics.* Delmar, NY, 245-261.
1997 "Medieval Armenian Literary and Cultural Trends (Twelfth-Seventeenth centuries)", in R.G. Hovannisian (ed.) *History of the Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times.* New York. I, 293-325.

- 1997b "Elisē's 'Armenian War' as a Metaphor for the Spiritual Life", in J.-P. Mahé & R.W. Thomson (eds.) *From Byzantium to Iran. Armenian Studies in Honour of Nina G. Garsoïan*. Atlanta, 341-359.
- CPG
- 1974-87 Geerard, M. *Clavis Patrum Graecorum*. Turnhout.
- Č'UGAZSYAN, BABKEN L.
- 1963 *Hay-iranakan grakan aīnč'ut'yunner (V-XVIII dd.)* (Armeno-Iranian Literary Relations (5th-18th Centuries). Erevan.
- 1980 *Bžškarān jioy ew aīhasarak grastnoc' (ŽG dar)* (Book of Cures for Horses and Beasts of Burden in General). Erevan.
- DAK
- 1968-72 Tryjarski, E. (ed.), *Dictionnaire arméno-kiptchak d'après trois manuscrits des collections viennoises*. Warsaw.
- DAL', VLADIMIR
- 1903-1909 *Tolkovyj slovar' živogo velikoruskogo jazyka*. Tret'e, ispravlennoe i značitel'no dopolnennoe izdanie pod redakcieju prof. I.A. Boduēna-de-Kurtenē (Explanatory Dictionary of the Living Great-Russian Language. Third, Corrected and Considerably Expanded Edition under Redaction of Prof. Baudouin de Courtenay). St Petersburg, Moscow.
- DALALYAN, TORK'
- 2006 "Drvagner hay-alanakan dic'anvanakan aīnč'ut'yunneric'" (Extracts from the Armenian-Alan Connections in Names of Divinities. *Hay žotovrdakan mšakuyt'*. Erevan, Vol 13, 44-54.
- DALMAN, GUSTAV H.
- 1967 *Aramäisch-Neuhebräisches Handwörterbuch zu Targum, Talmud und Midrasch* (Reprographischer Nachdruck der Ausgabe Göttingen 1938). Hildesheim.
- DANIELYAN, T.
- 1967 *Malatiayi barbařē*. (The Malatya Dialect) Erevan.
- DANKOFF, ROBERT
- 1995 *Armenian Loanwords in Turkish*. Wiesbaden.
- DAVT'YAN, K. S.
- 1966 *Leinayin Łarabati barbařayin k'artezē*. (Dialect Atlas of Mountainous Karabagh) Erevan.
- DE DURAND, G.
- 1968 "Une somme arménienne au XIV^e siècle", *Études d'histoire littéraire et doctrinaire*, 4^e série. Montreal.
- DE GROOT, M. & P. VAN MOORSEL
- 1977-1978 "The Lion, the Calf, the Man and the Eagle in Early Christian and Coptic Art". *BABESCH* 52-3, 233-245 (reprinted in Paul P. V. van Moorsel, *Called to Egypt. Collected Studies on Painting in Christian Egypt*. Leiden, 2000).

- DE JONGE, HENK JAN & JOHANNES TROMP (eds.)
2007 *The Book of Ezekiel and its Influence*. Aldershot.
- DE LAAT, M.
2009 *Words out of Wood: Proposals for the Decipherment of the Easter Island Script*. Delft.
- DE LAMBERTERIE, CHARLES
1992 "Fiançailles arméniennes et germaniques". *REArm* 23, 91-119.
- DE LIBERA, A. & A.-PH. SEGONDS
1998 *Porphyre: Isagoge, Greek & Latin Lesetext, with Translation, Introduction & Notes*. Paris.
- DE VAAN, MICHIEL
2008 *Etymological Dictionary of Latin and the other Italic languages*. Leiden, Boston.
- DELI
1979-1988 Cortelazzo, M. & P. Zolli (eds), *Dizionario etimologico della lingua italiana*, 5 vols. Bologna.
- DER NERSESSIAN, SIRARPIE
1963 *Armenian Manuscripts in the Freer Gallery of Art*. Washington, D.C.
1973 *Etudes byzantines et arméniennes. Armenian and Byzantine Studies*. 2 volumes. Volume I, Textes; Volume II, Planches. Louvain.
1973a "La peinture arménienne au VIIe siècle et les miniatures de l'évangile d'Etchmiadzin", in Der Nersessian 1973 I, 525-532.
1973b "La bible d'Erznka de l'an 1269: Jérusalem no. 1925", in Der Nersessian 1973 I, 603-609.
1973c "Le peintre Minas et ses oeuvres", in Der Nersessian 1973 I, 695-700.
1973d "An Armenian Gospel of the fifteenth Century", in Der Nersessian 1973 I, 683-694.
1973e *Armenian Manuscripts in the Walters Art Gallery*. Baltimore, http://www.thedigitalwalters.org/01_ACCESS_WALTERS_MANUSCRIPTS.html
1978 *Armenian Art*. London.
- DER NERSESSIAN, SIRARPIE (jointly prepared for publication with SYLVIE AGÉMIAN)
1993 *Miniature Painting in the Armenian Kingdom of Cilicia from the Twelfth to the Fourteenth Century* (Dumbarton Oaks Studies 31). 2 volumes, Volume I, text; Volume II, illustrations. Washington, D.C.
- DER NERSESSIAN, SIRARPIE & ARPAG MEKHITARIAN
1986 *Armenian Miniatures from Isfahan*. Brussels.
- DIELS, H. & W. KRANZ
1951 *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*. Berlin.
- DJAHUKIAN, GEVORG B. (see also DŽAUKJAN, ĴAHUKYAN)
1985 "Die archaischen Schichten armenischer Dialektwörter". Ursula Pieper, Gerhard Stickel (eds.), *Studia linguistica diachronica et*

- synchronica: Werner Winter, sexagenario anno MCMLXXXIII, gratis animis ab eius collegis, amicis, discipulisque oblata.* Berlin, 151-160.
- DMITRIEVA, LJUDMILA V.
1972 "Nazvanija rastenij v tjurkskix i drugix altajskix jazykax" (Plant Names in Turcic and Other Altaic Languages). *Očerki sravnitel'noj leksikologii altajskix jazykov*.
- DOERFER, GERHARD
1963-75 *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen*. 4 Bände. Wiesbaden.
- DONABÉDIAN, PATRICK
1980 "Le Tympan du monument à deux Xaç'k'ars à Elegs". *REArm* 14, 393-413.
- DROST-ABGARYAN, ARMENUHI & HERMANN GOLTZ
1996 "'Heute erschien uns der Höchste thronend das Wort auf der Wortlose Krippe'. Übersetzung der Hymnen zur Festzeit von Astuacayaytnut'iwn", in M. Schneider & W. Berschin (Hrsg.) *Ab oriente et occidente. Gedenkschrift für Wilhem Nyssen*. St. Ottilien, 73-101.
- DRUMMOND, J.
1888 *Philo Judaeus, or The Jewish-Alexandrian Philosophy in its Development and Completion*. London (reprinted Amsterdam 1969).
- DS
1963-82 *Türkiye'de halk ağzından derleme sözlüğü* (Compilatory Dictionary of the Vernacular in Turkey). Ankara.
- DUM-TRAGUT, J.
2005 *Kilikische Heilkunst für Pferde. Das Vermächtnis der Armenier. Kommentar - Übersetzung - Glossar*. Hildesheim - Zürich - New York, Olms Presse.
- DUNKEL, G. E.
1991 "Vater Himmels Gattin". *Die Sprache* 34, 1-26.
- DURAND, J., IOANNA RAPTI & D. GIOVANNONI (eds.)
2007 *Armenia sacra : Mémoire chrétienne des Arméniens (IV^e-XVIII^e siècle)* Paris.
- DUREAN, ELIŠĚ. P.
1933 *Hayoc' hin krōnē kam haykakan dic'abanut'iwn* (The Ancient Religion of the Armenians or Armenian Mythology). Jerusalem.
- DÜRKS, G.
1922 "Eine fälschlich dem Irenäus zugeschriebene Predigt des Bischofs Severian von Gabala". *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche* 21, 64-69.
- DURNOVO, LIDIJA A.
1957 *Kratkaja istorija armjanskoj živopisi* (Brief History of Armenian Painting). Erevan.

- DURRELL, M.
2004 "Sociolect". *Soziolinguistik: ein internationales Handbuch zur Wissenschaft von Sprache und Gesellschaft. Handbücher zur Sprache- und Kommunikationswissenschaft* 3.1. 1. Teilband. Berlin.
- DŽANGIDZE, VENERA T.
1980 "Gruzinskaja leksika v dialektax tureckogo jazyka" (Georgian Lexicon in Dialects of the Turkish Language), *Izvestija Akademii Nauk Gruzinskoj SSR, Jazyka i Literatury*, 95-104.
- DŽAUKJAN, GEORG BEGLARI (see also DJAHUKIAN, ĴAHUKYAN)
1985 "Urartskie zaimstvovanija v armjanskom jazyke" (Urartian Loanwords in Armenian). *Kul'turnoe nasledie Vostoka: problemy, poiski, suždenija* (The Cultural Inheritance of the East: Problems, Investigations, Opinions). Leningrad, 364-372.
- EDWARDS, ROBERT W.
1988 "Hamšen: An Armenian Enclave in the Byzantine-Georgian Pontos. A Survey of the Literary and Non-Literary Sources". *Le Muséon* 101, 403-442.
1993 "Settlements and Toponymy in Armenian Cilicia". *REArm* 24, 181-249.
- EICHNER, H.
1986 "Neue Wege im Lydischen I: Vokalnasalität vor Nasalkonsonanten". *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung* 99, 203-219.
- EILERS, WILHELM
1971 "Iranisches Lehngut im Arabischen". *Actas; IV congresso de estudos árabes e islâmicos, Coimbra - Lisboa 1 a 8 de setembro de 1968*, Leiden, 581-660.
1976 "Sinn und Herkunft der Planetennamen." *Bayerische Akademie der Wissenschaften: Philosophisch historische Klasse. Sitzungsberichte* 1975.5. München.
- ELIŠĚ
1836 *Srboy horn meroy Elišēi vardapeti Matenagrut'iwink'* (Writings of Our Holy Father Elišē). Venice.
1859 *Matenagrut'iwink'* (Writings). Venice.
- EMIN, M.
1853 *Yovhannēs Drasxanakerc'i. Patmut'iw n Hayoc'* (Yovhannēs Drasxanakerc'i. History of the Armenians). Moscow. (reprinted Tiflis 1912, Delmar, NY 1980).
1864 *Recherches sur le paganisme arménien* (transl. from Russian by M. A. de Stadler). Paris.
- EREN, HASAN
1999 *Türk dilinin etimolojik sözlüğü* (Etymological Dictionary of the Turkish Language). Ankara.
- ERVINE, ROBERTA R.
1988 "Yovhannes Erznkac'i Pluz. Compilation of Commentary on Grammar". Columbia University Ph.D. Dissertation.

ËSSJA I

- 1974 *Étimologičeskij slovar' slavyanskix jazykov. Praslavyanskij leksičeskij fond. Vypusk 1 (*A-besëdlivъ)* Pod redakciej O.N. Trubačeva (Etymological Dictionary of the Slavonic Languages. The Common Slavonic Lexical Stock. Edited by O.N. Trubačev. Volume 1). Moscow.

ËSSJA II

- 1975 *Étimologičeskij slovar' slavyanskix jazykov. Praslavyanskij leksičeskij fond. Vypusk 2 (*bez-bratrъ).* Pod redakciej O.N. Trubačeva. Moscow (Etymological Dictionary of the Slavonic Languages. The Common Slavonic Lexical Stock. Edited by O.N. Trubačev. Volume 2). Moscow

ËSSJA III

- 1976 *Étimologičeskij slovar' slavyanskix jazykov. Praslavyanskij leksičeskij fond. Vypusk 3 (*bratrъсь-*сърку).* Pod redakciej O.N. Trubačeva. (Etymological Dictionary of the Slavonic Languages. The Common Slavonic Lexical Stock. Edited by O.N. Trubačev. Volume 3). Moscow.

EUSEBIO DI CAESAREA

- 1818a J. Aucher (ed.), *Eusebii Pamphilii / Caesariensis Episcopi / Chronicon Bipartitum / nunc primum ex Armeniaco textu in Latinum conversum / adnotationibus auctum / Graecis fragmentis exornatum / opera / P. Jo: Baptistae Aucher Ancyrani / monachi Armeni et doctoris Mekhitaristae / Pars I. / Historico-Chronographica / Pars II. / Chronicus Canon / Venetiis / Typis coenobii PP. Armenorum in insula S. Lazari / MDCCCXVIII / Superiorum permissu /.*
- 1818b J. Zohrab ed A. Mai, *Eusebii Pamphilii / Chronicorum Canonum / libri duo / Opus ex Haicano codice / a doctore Iohanne Zohrabo / Collegii Armeniaci Venetiarum Alumno / diligenter expressum et castigatum / Angelus Maius et Iohannes Zohrabus / nunc primum coniunctis curis / latinitate donatum / notisque illustratum / additis Graecis reliquiis ediderunt / Mediolani / regiis typis / MDCCCXVIII.*

EUSEBIUS

- 1956, 1982-3² K. Mras (Hrsg.) *Die Praeparatio Evangelica*, 2 vols. (Eusebius Werke, 8) Berlin.

EZNIK

- 1959 Mariès, Louis & Charles Mercier (eds). *Eznik. De Deo. Edition critique du texte arménien. Traduction française.* Paris.

FÄHNRIICH, HEINZ

- 1986 *Kurze Grammatik der georgischen Sprache.* Leipzig.

FEDOROVA, IRINA KONSTANTINOVNA

- 2001 "Govoryaščie doščički" s ostrova Paskhi: *Dešifrovka, čtenie, perevod* ("The Talking Boards' from Easter Island: Decipherment, Reading, Translation"), St. Petersburg.

- FERRERO, E.
1991 *Dizionario storico dei gerghi italiani. Dal Quattrocento a oggi.* Milan.
- FISCHER, STEVEN ROGER
1997 *Rongorongo: The Easter Island Script. History, Traditions, Texts,* Oxford.
2005 *Island at the End of the World: The Turbulent History of Easter Island.* London.
- FISCHER, STEVEN ROGER ed.
1993 *Easter Island Studies: Contributions to the History of Rapanui in Memory of William T. Mulloy.* Oxford.
- FORTSON, BENJAMIN W.
2010 *Indo-European Language and Culture: an introduction* (2nd edition). Chichester, U.K.
- FRANKE, WOLFGANG
1997⁶ *Nutzpflanzenkunde; Nutzbare Gewächse der gemäßigten Breiten, Subtropen und Tropen. 6., neubearbeitete und erweiterte Auflage.* Stuttgart, New York.
- FREEDMAN, H.
1977 *The Midrash Rabbah, New edition, I. Genesis.* London
- FRIEDRICH, J.
1954, 1966² *Entzifferung verschollener Schriften und Sprachen.* Berlin.
1960 *Hethitisches Keilschriftlesebuch.* Heidelberg.
- FRIEDRICH, J. & A. HEUBECK
1969 *Altkleinasiatische Sprachen.* Leiden.
- FRISK, HJALMAR
1960-1972 *Griechisches etymologisches Wörterbuch.* Heidelberg.
- FURNÉE, EDZARD J.
1972 *Die wichtigsten konsonantischen Erscheinungen des Vorgriechischen, mit einem Appendix über den Vokalismus.* The Hague, Paris.
- GABIKÉAN, KARAPET
1952 *Baṛgirk' Sebastahay gawaṛalezui* (Dictionary of the Regional Language of the Armenians from Sebastia). Jerusalem.
- GABRIÉLEAN, M. S.
1912 *Aknay gawaṛabarbaṛë* (The Regional Dialect of Akn). Vienna.
- GAGR
1973 N.A. Baskakov. *Gagauzko-russko-moldavskij slovar'* (Gagaus-Russian-Moldavian Dictionary). Moscow.
- GAISFORD, T.
1823 *Poetae minores Graeci, vol. 2 (Scholia ad Hesiodum). Scholia in Hesiodi scutum scholia paraphrastica Pediasimi et exegesis Joannis Tzetzae.* Leipzig.

- GAMKRELIDZE, T. V. & V.V. IVANOV
 1984 *Indoevropskij jazyk i indoevropejcy: rekonstrukcija i istoriko-tipologičeskij analiz prajazyka i protokul'tury*. With a preface by R. Jakobson. Tbilisi.
 1995 *Indo-European and the Indo-Europeans: a Reconstruction and Historical Analysis of a Proto-Language and a Proto-Culture*. Part 1. *The text*. Berlin, New York (Translation of Gamkrelidze and Ivanov 1984).
- GARSOÏAN, NINA G.
 1982 "The Iranian Substratum of the Agathangelos Cycle", in Garsoïan, Mathews and Thomson 1982, 151-174. Reprinted in Garsoïan 1985, XII.
 1984 Ps. P'awstos, *Buzandaran Patmut'iwnek' (The Epic Histories) also known as Patmut'wn Hayoc' (History of Armenia) attributed to P'awstos Buzandac'i. A Facsimile Reproduction of the 1883 St. Petersburg Edition*. Delmar, NY.
 1985 *Armenia between Byzantium and the Sassanians*. London.
 1989 *The Epic Histories Attributed to P'awstos Buzand (Buzandaran Patmut'iwnek')*. Translation and Commentary. Cambridge, MA.
 2003-2004 "L'Histoire attribuée à Movses Xorenac'i: que reste-t-il à en dire?" *REArm* 29, 29-48.
- GARSOÏAN, NINA G. & THOMAS F. MATHEWS & ROBERT W. THOMSON (eds.)
 1982 *East of Byzantium: Syria and Armenia in the Formative Period*. Washington, D.C.
- GAT'ËRČEAN, Y.
 1897 *Srbazan pataragamatoyc'k' hayoc' (Holy Missals of the Armenians)*. Vienna.
- GDLI
 1961 ss. Battaglia, S. (a c.), *Grande dizionario della lingua italiana*. Turin.
- GEBAUER, J.
 1903 *Slovník staročeský*. (Old Czech Dictionary) I: A-J. Prague.
- GELZER, H.
 1896 "Zur armenischen Götterlehre". *Berichte über die Verhandlungen der Königlich sächsischen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig: Philologisch-historische Classe*. Bd. 48, 99-148.
- GENAUST, HELMUT
 1996 *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der botanischen Pflanzennamen*. Dritte, vollständig überarbeitete und erweiterte Auflage. Basel, Boston, Berlin.
- GERSHEVITCH, ILYA
 1985 *Philologia Iranica*, ed. N. Sims-Williams, Wiesbaden.
- GEVORGYAN, V. P. (ed.)
 1964 *Hovasap' Sebastac'i. Banastetcut'yunner (Yovasap' Sebastac'i. Poems)*. Erevan.

- GIGINEIŠVILI, I. & V. TOPURIA & I. KAVTARAŽE
 1961 *Kartuli dialektologia I. Kartuli enis k̄ilota mok̄le ganxilva; tekst̄ebi, leksiķoni* (Gruzinskaja dialektologija I. Kratkij obzor dialektov gruzinskogo jazyka; teksty, slovar'. Georgian Dialectology I. Brief Survey of the Dialects of the Georgian Language; Texts, Dictionary). Tbilisi.
- GILR
 1980 A. A. Kerimova & A. K. Mamedzade & V. S. Rastorgueva, *Giljansko-russkij slovar* (Gilani-Russian Dictionary). Moscow.
- Girk' ayb
 1675 *Girk' aybubenik' Ew kerp usaneloy zlezun italakan očiw K'erakanut'ean: Aylew kanonk' omank' Astetabašxakank' vasn pahpaneloy zařořjut'iwn marmnoy* (Abecedarium and Means to Learn the Italian Language by Manner of Grammar. Further, some Astrological Laws Concerning the Maintenance of Health of the Body). Marseille.
- Girk' T't'oc'.
 1901 *Girk' T't'oc'* (Book of Letters). Tblisi.
- GIROD, R.
 1970 *Origène. Commentaire sur l'évangile selon Matthieu*. Paris.
- GOREZ, J. (ed.)
 1966 *De Abrahamo*. (Les Œuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie). Paris.
- GOULET, R.
 1987 *La philosophie de Moïse: essai de reconstruction d'un commentaire philosophique préphilonien du Pentateuque*. Paris.
- GRABAR, ANDRÉ
 1946 *Martyrium. Recherche sur le culte des reliques et l'art chrétien antique* (with Album). Paris.
- GREENBERG, MOSHE
 1983 *Ezekiel 1-20* (Anchor Bible 22). Garden City, N.Y.
- GREPPIN, JOHN A. C.
 1975 *Classical Armenian nominal suffixes: a historical study*. Vienna.
 1983 "An Etymological Dictionary of the Indo-European Components of Armenian". *B* 131, 235-323.
 1992 "Mediterranean Botanical Loanwords in Classical Armenian". *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Armenian Linguistics*. Delmar, NY, 61-75.
- GRIGOR SKEWRAC'I
 1854 *Grigori Skewrac'woy nerbolean i Surbn Nersēs Lambronac'i* (Grigor Skewrac'i's Eulogy of St. Nersēs Lambronac'i). Venice.
- GRIGOR TAT'EWAC'I
 1741 *Girk' k'arozut'ean or koč'i amañan hator* (Book of Preaching Called Summer Volume). Constantinople.

- GRIGOREAN, M. (ed.)
 1988 *Step'annos Siwnec'i. Meknut'iwn Č'oric' Awetaranč'ac'* (Step'annos Siwnec'i. Commentary on the Four Gospels). Athens.
- GRIGORYAN, A.
 1957 *Hay barbařagitut'yun* (Armenian Dialectology). Erevan.
- GRIGORYAN, G.
 1960 "P'ilon Alek'sandrac'u ařxatut'yunneri meknut'yunnerě" (The Commentaries on Philo of Alexandria's Works). *BM* 5, 95-116.
- GURNEY, O. R.
 1977 *Some Aspects of Hittite Religion*. Oxford.
- GUSMANI, ROBERTO
 1960 "Concordanze e discordanze nella flessione nominale del licio e del luvio". *Rendiconti* (Istituto Lombardo Accademia di Scienze e Lettere. Classe di Lettere, Scienze Morali e Storiche) vol. 94, 497-512.
 1964 *Lydisches Wörterbuch*. Heidelberg.
 1980, 1982, 1986 *Ergänzungshefte zum Lydischen Wörterbuch* 1-3. Heidelberg.
- GÜTERBOCK, H. G. & H. A. HOFFNER & TH. VAN DEN HOUT (eds.)
 1980- see CHD
- GYOZALYAN (GELUNI), G. M.
 2001 *Musa leřan azgagrut'yuně* (The Ethnography of Musa Leř). (Compiled and edited by Verřine Svazlyan). Erevan.
- YŁONTI, A.
 1984 *Kartul kilo-temata řitqvis řona, Meore gamocema* (Dictionary of Georgian Dialects. Second Edition). Tbilisi.
- HAAS, O.
 1940 "Das armenische Pluralzeichen -k". *HA* 54, 96-106.
- HAAS, V.
 1994 *Geschichte der hethitischen Religion*. Leiden, New York, Köln.
- HAB
 1926-1935 H. Ačarıyan, *Hayerēn armatakan bařaran* (*Ėtimologičeskij korennoj slovar' armjanskogo jazyka*. Etymological Dictionary of the Armenian Language). Erevan (printed edition, Erevan 1971-1979).
- HACIKYAN, AGOP J., & G. BASMAJIAN & E.S. FRANCHUK & N. OUZOUNIAN (eds)
 2002 *The Heritage of Armenian Literature*. Volume 2. Detroit.
- HAJNAL, I.
 2000 "Der adjektivische Genitivausdruck im Luwischen", in Ofitsch, Michaela & Christian Zinko (Hrsg.) *125 Jahre Indogermanistik in Graz. Festband anlässlich des 125 jährigen Bestehens der Forschungsrichtung "Indogermanistik" an der Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz*. Graz, 159-184.

- HAKOBYAN, G. A.
1974 *Nerk'in Baseni azgagrut'yuně ew banahyusut'yuně* (Ethnography and Folk-lore of Nerk'in Basen). Erevan.
- HAKOBYAN, H.
1991 *The Medieval Art of Astsakh*. Erevan.
- HALPERIN, DAVID J.
1988 *The Faces of the Chariot: Early Jewish Responses to Ezekiel's Vision*. Tübingen.
- HAMAM AREWELC'I
1994 Mxit'ar k'ahanay Saribekyan (ed). *Hamam Arewelc'i. Meknut'iwn Ařakac'* (Hamam Arewelc'i. Commentary on Proverbs). Erevan.
- HAMBARJUMYAN, V. G.
2002 "Hndevropakan armati tarberakaynut'yuně ew hayeren astuac baři cagumn u tipabanut'yuně" (Variants of the Indoeuropean Root and the Origin and Typology of the Armenian Word 'astuac' [god]). *PBH* (3), 242-260.
2002a *Hayeren Astvac baři cagumn u tipabanut'yuně* (The Origin and Typology of the Armenian Word 'astuac' [god]). Erevan.
- HAMP, ERIC P.
1984 "Remarks on astuac". *AAL* 5, 87-89.
- HANCOCK, IAN.
1987 "Contributo armeno alla lingua romani". *Lacio Drom, rivista bimestrale di studi zingari* 23, 4-10.
1995 "On the Migration and Affiliation of the Dômba: Iranian Words in Rom, Lom and Dom Gypsy". *Romani in Contact: The History, Structure, and Sociology of a Language*, Amsterdam, Philadelphia, 29-51.
- HANEYAN, A. N.
2001 "Hay barbaınerum 'ciacan' haskac'ut'yan baıanvanumneri hogewor-mřakut'ayin arřek'ě" (The Spiritual-Cultural Meaning of the Designation of the Term 'ciacan' ['rainbow'] in the Armenian Dialects), in Sargis Harut'yunyan & Aram K'alant'aryan (eds.), *Hayoc' srberě ew srbavayrerě: akunk'nerě, tıperě, pařtamunk'ě* (Armenian Saints and Sacred Places: Sources, Types, Worship). Erevan, 109-113.
- HANOT, AURÉLIE
2003 "La section consacrée à Grégoire de Nazianze dans le Liber Caasarum de Grégoire Abasean". (Diss. Louvain-la-Neuve).
- HARL, M.
1966 see under Philo
- HARRISON, K. DAVID
2010 *The Last Speakers*, Washington, DC.
- HARUT'YUNYAN, S. L.
1987 "Hndevropakan tařaç'ap'ut'yan mi k'ani ařanjnahatkut'yunneri drseworumnerě hay hin banastetřcut'yan ew banahyusut'yan

- mej" (The Manifestation of Some Peculiarities of Indoeuropean Metrics in Ancient Armenian Poetry and Folklore). *PBH* 4, 48-60.
- HARVEY, W. (ed.)
1857 *Irenaeus of Lyons. Adversus Haereses*. Cambridge.
- HAUDRY, JEAN
1982 "Les trois cieux". *Etudes indo-européennes* 1: 23-48.
1987 "Le nom indo-européen du 'ciel-diurne'". *LALIES: Actes des sessions de linguistique et de littérature*, 5: 31-46
1988 "The cosmic religion of the Indo-Europeans". In Mohammad Ali Jazayery and Werner Winter (eds.) *Languages and Cultures: Studies in Honor of Edgar C. Polomé*, Berlin - New York - Amsterdam, 225-233.
- HAUENSCHILD, INGEBORG
1993 "Krimtatarische Pflanzennamen", *Ural-Altaische Jahrbücher* N. F. 12, 147-178.
- HDF
1985-1986 Harut'yunyan, L.V. & S.L. Harut'yunyan (eds). *Hayastani dendrofloran (Dendroflora Armenii. Dendroflora of Armenia)* I-II. Erevan.
- HEGI, GUSTAV
1927 *Illustrierte Flora von Mitteleuropa*. Band V,3. Munich.
- HERCHER, R.
1864 *Claudii Aeliani De natura animalium libri xvii: Varia historia: Epistolae Fragmenta*. Leipzig.
- HEUBECK, A.
1953 "Ἐστφεδιος - Ἀσπενδος et Asitawandas ou Azitawadda d'Azitawandi: l'origine de l'arménien astuac, 'Dieu'". *La nouvelle Clío* 5, 322-325.
1953a "Ἀσπενδος". *Beiträge zur Namenforschung* 4, 122-125.
1959 *Lydiaka*. Erlangen.
- HEWSEN, ROBERT H.
1984 "Artsrunid House of Sefedinian: Survival of a Princely Dynasty in Ecclesiastical Guise". *JSAS* 1, 123-137.
2001 *Armenia. A Historical Atlas*. Chicago.
- HEYERDAHL, THOR
1975 *The Art of Easter Island*, New York.
- HEYERDAHL, T. AND E.N. FERDON, JR.
1965 *Reports on the Norwegian Archaeological Expedition to Easter Island and the Eastern Pacific, Vol. II, Miscellaneous Papers*, Monographs of the School of American Research and the Kon-Tiki Museum 24.2, Santa Fe, NM.
- HILMARSSON, JÖRUNDUR G.
1983 "Armenian astuac 'god'". *AAL* 4, 5-15.

HLBB

- 2001-2012 A. Sargsyan et al. (eds.), *Hayoc' lezvi barbařayin bařaran*. Vol. 1, 2001 (a-z); vol. 2, 2002 (ē-c); vol. 3, 2004 (k-č); vol. 4, 2007 (m-č'); vol. 5, 2008 (p-s); vol. 6, 2010 (v-p'); vol. 7, 2012 (p'-f). Erevan.

HOFFNER, JR., HARRY A. & MELCHERT, H. CRAIG

- 2008 *A Grammar of the Hittite Language* (2 vols.). Winona Lake, IN.

HOFFNER, HARRY

- 1974 *Alimenta Hethaeorum. Food Production in Hittite Asia Minor*. New Haven.

HOLL, K.

- 1933 *Epiphanius. Bände 1-3: Ancoratus und Panarion*. Leipzig.

HOLST, JAN HENRIK

- 2009 *Armenische Studien*. Wiesbaden.

HORLEY, PAUL & GEORGIA LEE

- 2012 "Easter Island's Birdman Stones in the Collection of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Cambridge, Massachusetts," *Rapa Nui Journal* 26.1 (May 2012), 5-20.

HOUWINK TEN CATE, P. H. J.

- 1961 *The Luwian Population Groups of Lycia and Cilicia Aspera during the Hellenistic Period*. Leiden.

HOVSEP'YAN, G.

- 1994 *Step'anos Siwnec'i. Meknut'iwn Č'oric' Awetaranč'ac'* (Step'anos Siwnec'i. Commentary on the Four Evangelists) Erevan.

HOVSEP'YAN, H.

- 2009 *Ļaradati hayerē*. Vol. 1: Azgagrut'yun (ed. by Suren Hobosyan); Vol. 2: Banahyusut'yun (ed. by Svetlana Vardanyan and Ėst'er Xemč'yan) (The Armenians of Ļaradał. Vol. 1: Ethnography; Vol. 2: Folklore). Erevan.

HP

- 1958 Varmič'yan, A.M. & H.X. Dilanyan & A. B. Sanalyan. *Hayastani ptulnerē, hator I; korizavorner (Plody Armenii, T. I; kostočkovye porody)* (Fruits of Armenia. Vol. 1: Drupaceous species). Erevan.

HÜBSCHMANN, HEINRICH

- 1897 *Armenische Grammatik. Erster Teil. Armenische Etymologie*. Leipzig; Hildesheim, New York (1972³)

HUNT, TERRY & CARL LIPO

- 2011 *The Statues that Walked: Unraveling the Mystery of Easter Island*, New York.

IACOBINI, A.

- 2000 *Visioni dipinte. Immagini della contemplazione negli affreschi di Baouît*. Rome.

IHM, C.

- 1960 *Die Programme der christlichen Apsismalerei vom vierten bis zum achten Jahrhunderts*. Wiesbaden.

ISHKOL-KEROVPIAN, K.

- 1986 "Mythologie der vorchristlichen Armenier". *Wörterbuch der Mythologie* (ed. By Hans Wilhelm Haussig). Abteilung 1: Die alten Kulturvölker. Band 4: Götter und Mythen der kaukasischen und iranischen Völker. Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta (pp. 59-160 + tables I-VI).

IVANOV, V. V.

- 1961 "Iz istorii indoevropskoj leksiki klinopisnogo xetetskogo jazyka" (From the History of the Indo-European Lexicon of Cuneiform Hittite). *Peredneaziatskij sbornik* (1): 292-332 (English summary: 592-594).
- 1965 *Obščeeindoevropskaja, praslavjanskaja i anatolijskaja jazykovye sistemy: sravnitel'no-tipologičeskie očerki*. (The Common Indo-European, Common Slavonic and Anatolian Linguistic Systems: Comparative-Typological Essays) Moscow.
- 1982 "K étimologii nekotoryx migracionnyx kul'turnyx terminov" (On the etymology of some migratory cultural terms). *Étimologija* 1980. Moscow.

IZMAILOVA, TATIANA

- 1967 "L'iconographie du cycle des fêtes d'un groupe de codex arméniens d'Asie Mineure". *REArm* N.S. 4, 125-166.

ÎZOLÎ, D.

- 1987 *Ferheng kurdî-tirkî (Türkçe-kürtçe)* (Kurdish-Turkish Dictionary). Den Haag.

ĴAHUKYAN, GEVORG BEGLARI (See also DJAHUKIAN, DŽAUKJAN)

- 1970 *Hayerenē ew hndevropakan hin lezunerē* (Armenian and the Ancient Indo-European Languages). Erevan.
- 1972 *Hay barbaṛagitut'yan neracut'yun: vičakagrakan barbaṛagitut'yun* (Introduction to Armenian Dialectology: Statistical Dialectology). Erevan.
- 1986 "Haykakan šertē urartakan dic'aranum" (The Armenian Layer in the Urartean Pantheon). *PBH* 1, 43-58.
- 1987 *Hayoc' lezvi patmut'yun: naxagrayin žamanakašrjan* (History of the Armenian Language: The Period Preceding Writing). Erevan.
- 1988 "O sootnošenii xajasskogo i armjanskogo jazykov" (About the Relationship between the Hattic and Armenian Languages). 1. *PBH* 1, 60-79; 2. *PBH* 2, 68-88.
- 1988a "Urarterenē ev hayerenē". In B. N. Aṛak'elyan, G. B. Ĵahukyan, G. X. Sargsyan (eds), *Uratu-Hayastan*. Erevan, 127-168.
- 1990 "Hayereni anhayt cagman baṛarmatnerē" (The Roots of Unknown Origin in Armenian). *PBH* 2, 62-77.
- 1992 "Lezvakan nor tvyalner hayoc' naxak'ristoneakan kroni ew havatalik'neri masin" (New Linguistic Data about Pre-Christian Armenian Religion and Beliefs). *PBH* 1, 14-27.
- 1997 *Barbaṛayin erewuyt'ner haykakan hišatakarannerum* (Dialect features in Armenian colophons). Erevan.

- 1998 "Hin hayereni verĵacanc'neri cagumě" (The Origin of the Ancient Armenian Suffixes). *Hayoc' lezvi hamematakan k'erakanut'yan harc'er* 2. Erevan, 5-48.
- 2000 "Hayereni ast armatě" (The Armenian Root 'ast'). *BEH* 1, 28-29.
- JANSON, A.G.P.
1998 *De Abrahamcyclis van Efre de Syriër*. (Ph.D. dissertation Leiden).
- JANSON, A.G.P. & L. VAN ROMPAY
1993 *Efre de Syriër. Uitleg van het Boek Genesis* (Christelijke Bronnen, 5) Kampen.
- ĴAXĴAXEAN, MANUĒL VARDAPET (see also: CIAKCIK)
1837 *Bařagirk' hay-italakan* (Dizionario Armeno-Italiano). Venice.
- JENSEN, HANS
1959 *Altarmenische Grammatik*. Heidelberg.
- JEREJIAN, ARMEN V.
1953 "The H – zero alternation in Classical Armenian". *Word* 9, 146-151.
- JEŠINA, P. JOSEF
1886 *Románi Čib oder die Zigeuner-Sprache* (Grammatik, Wörterbuch, Chrestomatie). Dritte vermehrte Auflage (1. deutsche Ausgabe). Leipzig.
- JORDAN, H.
1913 *Armenische Irenaeusfragmente*. Leipzig.
- JOSEPH, BRIAN
1992 *Armenian Reduplicated Nouns mamul, mamuř, and mamur. Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Armenian Linguistics*. Delmar, NY, 101-114.
- JOYCE, PAUL M.
2009 *Ezekiel. A Commentary* (Library of Hebrew Bible / Old Testament Studies, 482). New York and London.
2011 "Ezekiel", in Michael Lieb, Emma Mason, Jonathan Roberts and Christopher Rowland (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook to the Reception History of the Bible*. Oxford, 65-76.
- JUNKER, HEINRICH F.
1965 *Persisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch*. Leipzig.
- JUSTI, F.
1895 *Iranisches Namenbuch*. Marburg. (Reprinted in 1963, Hildesheim).
- KAHLE, P. & SOMMER, J. F.
1927 *Die lydisch-aramäische Bilingue*. Weimar.
- KAIBEL, G.
1887-1890 *Athenaei Naucratae deipnosophistarum libri xv*. Leipzig.
- KAMESAR, ADAM
1994 "The Evaluation of the Narrative Aggada in Greek and Latin Patristic Literature," *Journal of Theological Studies*, NS 45, 37-71.

- KAMPOURI-VAMVOUKOU, M.
 2000 "To 'mythistorima toy Alexandroy' i o Pseudo Kallisthenis kai oi apeikoniseis toy se Byzantina Xeirografa" (The 'Alexander Romance' and Pseudo-Kallisthenes and its Representation in Byzantine Manuscripts). *Apieroma sti mnimi toy Sotiri Kissa, Elleniki etaireia slavikon meleton*, Thessalonica, 101-133.
- KAPANCJAN, GRIGOR A. (see also: ŁAPANC'YAN, GRIGOR A.)
 1956, 1975 *Istoriko lingvističeskie raboty* (Historical-linguistic Works). 2 Vols. Erevan.
- KARAPETYAN, DONARA M. (ed.)
 1993 *Asar Sebastac'i, Girk' bžškakan arhesti* (Asar Sebastac'i. Book of the Art of Healing). Erevan.
- KARIMI, HADI
 1995 *Plants of Iran; Scientific, English and Persian Names*. Tehran.
- KARST, JOSEF (JOSEPH)
 1901 *Historische Grammatik des Kilikisch Armenischen*. Strassburg (= 1970: Photomechanischer Nachdruck. Berlin.)
 2002 *Kilikyan hayereni patmakan k'erakanut'yun* (Historical Grammar of Cilician Armenian. Modern Armenian translation of Karst 1901 by Dmitri Alivnyak). Erevan.
- KBo
 1919-23 Figula, H.H. (ed.) *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*. III. Erste Hälfte; zweite Hälfte. Berlin
 1963 Güterbock, Hans Gustav (ed.) *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*. XIV. Berlin
 1967 Otten, Heinrich (ed.) *Keilschrifttexte aus Boghazköi*. XIII. Berlin.
- KEEL, OTHMAR
 1977 *Jahwe-Visionen und Siegelkunst: Eine neue Deutung der Majestätsschilderungen in Jes 6, Ez 1 und 10 und Sach 4*. Stuttgart.
- KENDALL, BRIDGET & ROBERT W. THOMSON
 1983 *Definitions and Divisions of Philosophy by David the Invincible Philosopher*. Chico, CA.
- KEUCHGERIAN, ARMINE (see also: K'YOŠKERYAN)
 1996 "Gregory of Tat'ew and the New Version of his Commentary on the Psalms". *St Nersess Theological Review* 1, 181-189.
- KÉVORKIAN, RAYMOND H.
 1986 *Catalogue des «Incunables» arméniens (1511/1675) ou Chronique de l'imprimerie arménienne*. Genève.
- KIMBALL, S. E.
 1999 *Hittite Historical Phonology*. Innsbruck.
- KIRCHMEYER, J.
 1960 "L'homélie acéphale de Sévérien sur la croix dans le Sinaiticus gr. 493". *Analecta Bollandiana* (78): 18-23.

- KIRK, G. S.
1950 "The Michigan Alcidas Papyrus; Heraclitus Fr. 56D; The Riddle of the Lice". *Classical Quarterly* 44, 149-167.
- [KIWLĒSĒREAN], BABĠĒN AT'ORAKIC' KAT'OLIKOS
1961 *C'uc'ak jeragrac' Łalat'ioy azgayin Matenadarani Hayoc'*, (Catalogue of the Manuscripts of the Armenian National Library of Galata). Antelias.
- K'TWP'ELEAN, A.
1883 *Erek'lezuean bařagirk' tařkerĕn-hayerĕn-gařtierĕn handerj hamařōt k'erakanut'eamb ōsmanean barbařoy* (Trilingual Dictionary Turkish-Armenian-French with a Brief Grammar of the Ottoman Dialect). Vienna.
- KLOEKHORST, ALWIN
2008 *Etymological Dictionary of the Hittite Inherited Lexicon*. Leiden, Boston.
- KNOROZOV, YURII, ed.
1982 *Zabytye sistemy pis'ma. Ostrov Paskhi, Velikoe L'yao, Indiya: Materialy po deshifrovke* (Forgotten Systems of Writing. Easter Island, Great Lao, India: Materials on Decipherment). Moscow.
- KOCHAROV, PETER
2009 "Dr.-arm. *cirani cov* 'bagrjanoe more': k voprosu proisxořdenija poĕtičeskogo ĕpiteta" (Classical Armenian *cirani cov* 'purple sea': on the question of the origin of a poetic epithet), *Indoev-ropejskoe jazykoznanie i klassičeskaja filologija* - XIII. (Indo-European Comparative Linguistics and Classical Philology XIII). St Petersburg, 302-311.
- K'OČ'ARYAN, GAYANE
2001 "Dvin amroc'-sravayrĕ Hayoc' darji naxōrein" (Dvin: an Armenian Palace and Sacred Place on the Eve of the Conversion of the Armenians). *Hayoc' srberĕ ew sravayrerĕ: akunk'nerĕ, tiperĕ, pařtamunk'ĕ* (Armenian Saints and Sacred Places: Sources, Types, Worship). Erevan, 289-296.
- KOEHLER, L. & W. BAUMGARTNER
1967-95 *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexikon zum Alten Testament*. Leiden.
- KORIWN. See ABELYAN 1941.
- KORIWN, MAMBRĒ, DAWIT' ANYALT'
1833 *Koriwn vardapet, MambrĒ Verc'anoř, Dawit' Anyalt', Matenagrut'iwkn'*. Venice.
- KOSSIAN, ARAM V.
1994 "An Anatolian-Armenian parallel". *AAL* 15, 63-65.
- KOSTANDYAN, D. M.
1979 *Erznkayi barbařĕ* (The Dialect of Erznka). Erevan.

- KOSTANEANC', K.
 1898 *Grigoris Attamarc'in ew iwr talere* (Grigoris Attamarc'i and his Tal Poems). Tiflis.
- KORXMAZIAN, ÈMMA M.
 1978 *Armjanskaja miniatjura Kryma: XIV-XVII vv* (Armenian Miniature [Painting] from the Crimea: XIVth-XVIIth c.). Erevan.
- KOUYMIJAN, DICKRAN
 1992-1993 "Armenian Iconography: A New Approach". *JSAS* (6): 201-222. (published 1995)
 1999 "L'Iconographie de l'Histoire d'Alexandre le Grand dans les manuscrits arméniens", in L. Harf-Lancner & C. Kapplet & F. Suard (eds.), *Alexandre le Grand dans les littératures occidentales et proche-orientales. Actes du Colloque de Paris, 27-29 novembre 1997*. Nanterre, 95-112.
 2007 "Les illustrations du Roman d'Alexandre et autres textes profanes", in C. Mutafian (ed.) *Arménie: la magie de l'écrit*. Paris-Marseille, 164-172.
 2007b "Recueil de textes sur la fondation et l'histoire de l'Église arménienne. Illuminations d'Arménie", in V. Calzolari (ed.), *Arts du livre et de la pierre dans l'Arménie ancienne et médiévale*. Geneva, 164-171.
 2008 "The Intrusion of East Asian Imagery in Thirteenth Century Armenia: Political and Cultural Exchange along the Silk Road", in Forêt, P. & A. Kaplony (eds.), *The Journey of Maps and Images on the Silk Road*. Leiden, 119-133, pls. 112-119.
 forthcoming "Jerusalem Manuscript No. 473, History of Alexander the Great Dated 1536: Remarks on Its Iconography", Proceedings, *Armenian Art History and Culture (10th – 20th Century)*, conference Jerusalem, July 2011.
- KOVACS, J. & CHR. ROWLAND & R. CALLOW
 2004 *Revelation*. Malden - Oxford- Carlton.
- Köylerimiz
 1933 *Dahiliye Vekâleti Mahallî İdareler Umum Müdürlüğü, Köylerimiz*. Köy kanunu tatbik olunan ve olunmayan köy isimlerini alfabe sırasile gösterir (Our Villages. General Directorate of Locality Administration, Ministry of the Interior. Village Law Code Presenting Applicable and Non-Applicable Names in Alphabetical Order). Istanbul.
- KR
 1960 K.K. Kurdoev. *Kurdsko-russkij slovar'. Ferhenga Kurdî-Rûsî*. Moskva
- KRUISHEER, DIRK
 1998 "Ephrem, Jacob of Edessa, and the Monk Severus. An Analysis of Ms. Vat. Syr. 103, ff. 1-72," *Symposium Syriacum VII*, ed. R. Lavenant (Orientalia Christiana Analecta, 256) Rome, 599-605.

- KÜHNEL, B.
1992 "Das Kreuz mit Christus und den vier Wesen, ein nubisches Motiv und sein Bildkreis". *Oriens Christianus* 76, 186-226.
- KURDIAN, H.
1975 "C'uc'ak hayerēn jēragrac' Manč'estri Čan Raylēnts Matenadaranin" (Catalogue of Armenian Manuscripts in the John Rylands Library in Manchester). *Sion* 49, 199-201.
- K'YOSKERYAN, ARMINE (ed.) (see also: KEUCHGUERIAN)
2000 *Grigor Tat'ewac'i. Sołomoni Ařakneri Meknut'awnē* (Grigor Tat'ewac'i. Commentary on the Proverbs of Solomon). Erevan.
- LA PORTA, SERGIO
2001 "The Theology of the Holy Dionysius," Volume III of Grigor Tat'ewac'i's Book of Questions: Introduction, Translation, and Commentary, Harvard University. PhD Thesis.
- LABOV, WILLIAM
1971 *The Study of Language in its Social Context*. Berlin.
2001 *Principles of Linguistic Change. Vol. 2. Social Factors*. Oxford.
- LADNER, G. B.
1992 *Handbuch der frühchristlichen Symbolik. Gott Kosmos Mensch*. Stuttgart; Zürich.
- LALAYAN, E.
2004 *Erker*, vol. 3 (Borč'alui gavar) (Works, vol. 3 [The Province of Borč'alu]). Erevan.
- LANGLOIS, VICTOR
1868 *Chronique de Michel le grand*. Venice.
- ŁAP'ANC'YAN, GRIGOR A. (See also KAPANCJAN, GRIGOR A.)
1945 *Ara Geřec'ki pařtamunk'ē* (The Worship of Ara the Handsome). Erevan.
1947 *Xajasa – kolybel' armjan: ētnogenez armjan i ix načal'naja istorija* (Hayasa - Cradle of the Armenians: the Ethnogenesis of the Armenians and their Earliest History). Erevan.
2008 *Antip gorcer* (Unpublished Works). Erevan.
- ŁARIBYAN, A. S.
1953 *Hay barbařagitut'yun* (Armenian Dialectology). Erevan.
1958 *Hayereni norahayt barbařneri mi nor xumb* (A Recently Found New Group of Armenian Dialects). Erevan.
1982 *Edesiayi barbařē* (The Dialect of Edessa), in *Hayereni barbařagitakan Atlas* (Atlas of Armenian Dialectology). Erevan.
- LAROCHE, E.
1979 "L'inscription Lycienne". *Fouilles de Xanthos*, vol. 6, 49-127.
- LAUFER, BERTHOLD
1919 *Sino-Iranica. Chinese Contributions to the History of Civilization in Ancient Iran*. Chicago.

ŁAZARYAN, ĖUBEN SEROBI

- 1981 *Busanunneri hayeren-latineren-fuseren-angleren-franserengermaneren bařaran* (Armjano-latinsko-russko-anglo-francuzskoneckij slovar' nazvanij rastenij. Armenian-Latin-Russian-English-French-German Dictionary of Plant Names). Erevan.

ŁAZINYAN, A. (ed.)

- 1971 *Ařak'el Baliřec'i* (Ařak'el Baliřec'i). Erevan.

LEBON, I.

- 1933a *Severi Antiocheni liber contra impium grammaticum: orationis tertiae pars posterior*. Textus. Louvain.
1933b *Severi Antiocheni liber contra impium grammaticum: orationis tertiae pars posterior*. Versio. Louvain.

LEEuw VAN WEENEN, A. DE

- 2000 "Automatische morphologische Analyse am Beispiel des Klassisch-Armenischen", in Chr. Hardmeier et alii (eds.), *Ad Fontes! Quellen erfassen - lesen - deuten. Was ist Computerphilologie?* Amsterdam, 81-97.

Lehmann, Henning J.

- 1975 "Per piscatores. Orsordawk'. Studies in the Armenian version of a collection of homilies by Eusebius of Emesa and Severian of Gabala" (Thesis). Aarhus.
1982 "Severian of Gabala: New Identification of Texts in Armenian Translation". in T.J. Samuelian (ed.), *Classical Armenian Culture*. s.l., 113-124.
1986 "Severian of Gabala: Fragments of the Aucher Collection in Galata MS 54", in D. Kouymjian (ed.), *Armenian Studies (Études arméniennes) in memoriam Hařg Berbérian*. Lisboa, 477-487.
1995 "The noble art of abbreviation. In the light of some texts attributed to Severian of Gabala", in S. Dietz (ed.) *Proceedings of the Danish Institute at Athens*. I, 221-227.
2008 *Students of the Bible in 4th and 5th Century Syria. Seats of Learning, Sidelights and Syriacisms*. Aarhus.

LEHMANN, WINFRED P.

- 1986 *A Gothic Etymological Dictionary* (based on the 3rd ed. of Feist's dictionary). Leiden.

Leksika

- 1997 *Sravnitel'no-istoričeskaja grammatika tjurkskix jazykov. Leksika* (Comparative-Historical Grammar of the Turkic Languages. Lexicon). Moscow.

LELOIR, LOUIS

- 1953 *Saint Éphrem. Commentaire de l'évangile concordant* (CSCO 137 / Arm. 1). Louvain.
1967 *Citations du Nouveau Testament dans l'ancienne tradition arménienne I A, L'évangile de Matthieu, I-XII*. Louvain.

- LEO (ԱՐԱԿ'ԷԼ BABAXANYAN)
1966-1973 *Erkeri žotovacu* (Collected Works). 10 vols. Erevan.
- LEONE, P. A. M.
1968 *Ioannis Tzetzae Historiae*. Napoli.
- LEOPARDI, GIACOMO
1969 *Scritti filologici (1817-1832)*, a cura di G. Pacella e S. Timpanaro. Firenze.
- LEROY, F. J.
1967 *L'homilétique de Proclus de Constantinople*. Città del Vaticano.
- LEWIS, CHARLTON T. & CHARLES SHORT
1966 *A Latin Dictionary*. Oxford. (Reprint of the first edition, 1879)
- ŁEWOND
1887 Ezean, K. (ed.) *Łewond. Patmut' iwn* (Łewond. History). St. Petersburg.
- LEYLOYAN-YEKMALYAN, ANNA
2009 *L'art du livre au Vaspurakan. XIVe-XVIe siècles. Étude des manuscrits de Yovannēs Xizanc'i*. Paris - Louvain.
- LIDDELL, HENRY GEORGE & ROBERT SCOTT
1953 *A Greek-English Lexicon*. Oxford. (Reprint of the ninth edition, 1940)
- LIÉVIN DE HAMME, F.
1876, 1897 *Guide-indicateur des sanctuaires et lieux historiques de la Terre-Sainte*. Louvain.
- LISIC'YAN, S. D.
1969 *Zangezuri hayerë* (The Armenians of Zangezur). Erevan.
- LKŽ
1969 *Lietuvių kalbos žodynas* (Dictionary of the Lithuanian Language). II: C-F. Vilnius. (Second edition)
- LOLLINI, F.
2005 "Alessandro il Grande come Cristo in due manoscritti armeni". *La Rivista di Engramma* 39 (febbraio) http://www.egramma.it/egramma_v4/rivista/saggio/39/039_lollini.html
- LÖW, IMMANUEL
1881 *Aramaeische Pflanzennamen*. Leipzig.
- MAAS, P. & C. A. TRIPANIS
1970 *Sancti Romani Melodi cantica: cantica dubia*. Berlin.
- MACKENZIE, DAVID NEIL
1971, 1986² *A Concise Pahlavi Dictionary*. London.
- MACLER, FRÉDÉRIC
1927 "Les traducteurs arméniens ont-ils connu et utilisé l'hébreu?" *HA* 41, 609-616.
1928 *L'Enluminure arménienne profane*. Paris.
- MACURA, PAUL
1982 *Russian-English Botanical Dictionary*. Columbus, OH.

MAHÉ, JEAN-PIERRE

- 1992a "Entre Moïse et Mahomet: Réflexions sur l'historiographie arménienne". *REArm* 23, 121-153.
- 1992b "Une légitimation scripturaire de l'hagiographie: La Préface de Koriwn (443) à la Vie de Maštoc', inventeur de l'alphabet arménien". *De Tertullien aux Mozarabes. Mélanges offertes à Jacques Fontaine*. Paris, Tome I, 29-43.
- 1994 "Un dieu guerrier à la campagne: l'exemple du Vahagn arménien". *Comptes rendus de l'Académie des inscriptions & belles-lettres*, 779-804.
- 2005-2007 "Koriwn, La Vie de Maštoc', traduction annotée". *REArm* 30, 59-97.

MAHER, MICHAEL

- 1992 *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan; Genesis* (The Aramaic Bible, IB). Collegeville, MN.

MAIR, A. W.

- 1928 *Oppian. Halieutica. Oppian, Colluthus, Tryphiodorus*. London and New York.

MAKSODIAN, KRIKOR H.

- 1987 *Yovhannēs Draxanakertc'i. History of Armenia*. Atlanta, GA.

MALLORY, J. P. & ADAMS, D. Q. (eds.)

- 1997 *Encyclopedia of Indo European Culture*. London, Chicago.
- 2006 *The Oxford Introduction to Proto-Indo-European and the Proto-Indo-European world*. Oxford.

MALXASEANC', STEP'AN

- 1955-1956 *Hayerēn bac'atrankan bařaran* (Armenian Explanatory Dictionary). Beirut. (Reprint of the edition Erevan 1944)

MANANDIAN, H.A.

- 1902 "Die Scholien zu fünf Reden des Gregor von Nazianz", Herausgegeben von A. Manandian, *Zeitschrift für armenische Philologie*, Erster Band, drittes Heft, 220-272.
- 1928 *Hunaban dproc'ē ew nra zargac'man šrjannerē* (The Hellenising School and the Periods of its Development). Vienna.

MANCINI LOMBARDI, SARA, AND PONTANI, PAOLA (eds)

- 2011 *Studies on the Ancient Armenian Version of Philo's Works*. Leiden.

MANESSY-GUITTON, JACQUELINE

- 1987 "Les noms du roi en hittite". *Georges Dumézil in memoriam I. Études indo-européennes* 6.21-24, 25-42.

MAQAŠVILI, A.

- 1961 *Botaniķuri leksikoni mcnareta saxelnodebani* (Botaničeskij slovar' nazvanija rastenij. Botanical Dictionary of Plant names). Tbilisi.

MARANCI, CHRISTINA

- 2003-2004 "Word and Image in the Armenian Alexander Romance". *JSAS* 13, 19-28.

- MARIÈS, LOUIS & CHARLES MERCIER (eds)
 1961 *Hymnes de Saint Ephrem conservées en version arménienne. Texte arménien, traduction latine et notes explicatives* (Patrologia Orientalis, 30/1) Paris.
- MARR, N. JA.
 1911 “Bog Σαβάζιος u armjan” (The God Sabazios among the Armenians). *Izvestija Imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk, S.-Peterburg* (Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg). Series 6, vol. 5.1, 759-774.
 1912 “Θρακο-armjanskij Sabađios-aswai i svanskoe božestvo oxoty” (The Thraco-Armenian Sabađios-aswai and the Svan God of the Hunt). *Izvestija Imperatorskoj Akademii Nauk, S.-Peterburg* (Bulletin de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St.-Pétersbourg). Series 6, vol. 6.2, 827-830.
- MARROU, H.-I., M. HARL, C. MONDÉSERT & C. MATRAY
 1960-1970 *Clement d'Alexandrie. Le pédagogue*. Paris.
- MARTIROSYAN, HRACH KAYOSIKI
 2010 *Etymological Dictionary of the Armenian Inherited Lexicon*. Leiden, Boston.
- MARX, B.
 1939 “Severiana unter den Spuria Chrysostomi bei Montfaucon-Migne”. *Orientalia Christiana Periodica* 5, 281-367.
 1940 *Procliana: Untersuchungen über den homiletischen Nachlass des Patriarchen Proklos von Konstantinopel*. Münster i.W.
- MARZELL, HEINRICH
 1943-79 *Wörterbuch der deutschen Pflanzennamen*, mit Unterstützung der Preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften bearb. von Heinrich Marzell, unter Mitwirkung von Wilhelm Wissmann et al. Leipzig.
- MATASOVIĆ, RANKO
 2004 *Gender in Indo-European*. Heidelberg.
 2009 *Etymological Dictionary of Proto-Celtic*. Leiden, Boston.
- MAT'EVOSYAN, A. S.
 1988 *Hayeren jeŋagreri hišatakaranner E-ŽB dd* (Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts. 5th-12th Centuries). Erevan.
- MATHEWS, EDWARD G.
 1996, 1997 (published in 1999) “Armenian Hymn IX, *On Marriage*, by Saint Ephrem the Syrian,” *JSAS* 9, 55-63.
- MATHEWS, EDWARD G. (ed.)
 1998 *The Armenian Commentary on Genesis Attributed to Ephrem the Syrian* (CSCO, 572 (text), 573 (translation) / Arm. 23-24. Louvain.
- MATHEWS, EDWARD G. & JOSEPH P. AMAR
 1994 *St. Ephrem the Syrian. Selected Prose Works* (The Fathers of the Church, 91). Washington D.C.

- MATHEWS, THOMAS F.
 1982 "The Genesis Frescoes at Alt'amar". *REArm* 16, 245-257. Reprinted in Mathews 1995, X.
 1982a "The Early Armenian Iconographic Program of the Ējmiacin Gospel (Erevan, Matenadaran MS 2374, olim 229)", in Garsoïan, Mathews, and Thomson 1982, 199-215. Reprinted in Mathews 1995, VII.
 1995 *Art and Architecture in Byzantium and Armenia. Liturgical and Exegetical Approaches*. Aldershot.
 1999² *The Clash of Gods*. Princeton. (Revised edition)
- MATHEWS, THOMAS F. & AVEDIS K. SANJIAN
 1991 *Armenian Gospel Iconography. The Tradition of the Glajor Gospel*. Washington, D.C.
- MATIKEAN, H. A. V.
 1920 *Krōni cagumě ew dic'abanut'iwn: ěst hamematakan krōnagitut'ean* (The Origin of Religion and Mythology: According to Comparative Religion.) Vienna.
- MAX, PRINZ VON SACHSEN
 1929 *Nerses von Lambron, Erzbischof von Tarsus, Erklärung des Versammlers*. Leipzig.
- MAYRHOFER, MANFRED
 1992-2001 *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindischen*. Heidelberg.
- MCCALL, GRANT
 1981 *Rapanui: Tradition and Survival on Easter Island*. Honolulu.
- MCVEY, KATHLEEN
 1989 *Ephrem the Syrian. Hymns* (The Classics of Western Spirituality). New York & Mahwah.
- ME
 1923-32 *K. Mühlenbachs Lettisch-deutsches Wörterbuch*. Redigiert, ergänzt und fortgesetzt von J. Endzelin. Riga.
- MEILLET, ANTOINE
 1913 *Altarmenisches Elementarbuch*. Heidelberg.
 1936 *Esquisse d'une grammaire comparée de l'arménien classique*. Vienna.
- MEIN, ANDREW & PAUL M. JOYCE
 2011 *After Ezekiel. Essays on the Reception of a Difficult Prophet*. London - New York.
- MELCHERT, H. CRAIG
 1991 "The Lydian Emphasizing and Reflexive Particle -ś/-is*". *Kadmos* 36, 131-142.
 1992 "The Third Person Present in Lydian". *Indogermanische Forschungen (KZ)* 97, 31-54.
 1993 *Cuneiform Luvian Lexicon*. Chapel Hill, NC.
 1994 *Anatolian Historical Phonology*. Amsterdam.

- MELIKIŠVILI, G. A.
 1979 "K čteníju odnogo mesta v letopisi urartskogo carja Argišti I" (On the Reading of a Passage in the Chronicle of the Urartean King Argišti I). *Peredneaziatskij sbornik* 3, 171-176.
- MELVILLE, HERMAN
 1964 *Moby Dick or The Whale*, New York.
- MĒRASEAN, A.
 1774 *Hamāṛōt K'erakanut'iwn Arareal italakan, haykakan, ew tačkakan lezuaw* (A Brief Grammar of the Italian, Armenian, and Turkish Languages). Venice.
- MERIGGI, P.
 1980 *Schizzo grammaticale dell'anatolico*. Rome.
- MERTON, THOMAS
 1969 *The Geography of Lograire*, New York.
- MÉTRAUX, ALFRED
 1940 *Ethnology of Easter Island*, Bishop Museum Bulletin 160, Honolulu, Hawaii. Reprinted 1971.
- MEYER, GUSTAV
 1893 "Türkische Studien I. Die griechischen und romanischen Bestandteile im Wortschatze des Osmanisch-Türkischen". *Sitzungsberichte der Akademie der Wissenschaften* (128) I. Abhandlung. Wien.
- MHB
 1987-1992 Łazaryan, Ė.S. & H.M. Avetisyan (eds.) *Mijin hayereni baġaran* (Middle Armenian Dictionary). 2 volumes. Erevan.
- MICHAEL THE SYRIAN
 1870 *Mixayēli Patriark' Asorwoy Žamanakagrut'iwn* (Chronicle of Michael Patriark' the Syrian). Jerusalem.
 1871 *Žamanakagrut'iwn Teaġn Mixayeli* (Chronicle of Lord Michael). Jerusalem.
- MIK'AYELYAN, V.
 1964 *Ėrimi haykakan gaġut'i patmut'yun* (History of the Armenian Colony of the Crimea). Erevan.
- MKRTČ'YAN, M. (ed.)
 1973 *Nersēs Šnorhali. Oġb Edesioy* (Nersēs Šnorhali. Lament on Edessa). Erevan.
- MKRTČJAN, N. A.
 1983 *Substratnye nazvaniya rastenij v armjanskom jazyke* (Substrate Plant Names in Armenian). Erevan.
- MKRTSCHJAN, N.
 1974 "Neue hethitisch-armenische lexikalische Parallelen". *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, 22.1-4, 313-319.
- MNAC'AKANYAN, A. Š.
 1971 "Mijnadaryan sirergeri norahayt andranik žoġovacun ev hayreni harc'e" (The First Collection of Medieval Love Songs Recently

- Discovered and the Question of the 'Hayrēns'). *Ējer hay žotovrđi patmut'yan ev banasirut'yan* (Pages from Armenian History and Philology). Erevan: 96-126.
- 1983 *Nataš Hovnat'an. Tašer* (Nataš Hovnat'an. Taš Poems). Erevan.
- MNM
- 1980-1982 Tokarev, S.A. (ed.-in-chief). *Mifi Narodov Mira. Ėnciklopedija*. (Myths of the Peoples of the World. Encyclopedia). 2 Vols. Moscow.
- MONTGOMERY, M.
- 1920 "'Cursed hebenon' (or 'hebona')". *Modern Language Review* 15, 304-306.
- MOREL, C. (ed.)
- 1986 *Grégoire le Grand: Homélie sur Ézéchiél 1* (Livre I). Texte latin, introduction, traduction et notes. Paris.
- MOSSAY, J. avec la collaboration de GUY LAFONTAINE
- 1980 *Grégoire de Nazianze. Discours 20-23*. Paris.
- MRAS, KARL
- 1982-1983³ See under Eusebius.
- MURADYAN, GOHAR
- 2015 *David the Invincible's Commentary on Porphyry's Isagoge. Old Armenian Text with the Greek Original, an English Translation, Introduction and Notes*. Brill.
- MURADYAN, H. D.
- 1982 *Hayoc' lezvi patmakan k'erakanut'yun*, vol. 1. *Hnč'yunabanut'yun*. (Historical Grammar of the Armenian Language. Vol. 1. Phonology) Erevan.
- MURADYAN, KIM
- 1994 "Dawt'ay vardapeti Patčar Pahoc'n groc' i Barslē kargeloc'n asac'eal i hmtut'iwn varžolac'" (David Vardapet's Cause of the Writings on the Fast Composed by Basil, Pronounced for the Skills of Those Being Educated). *Ganjasar* 5, 169-201.
- MURAV'EV, S. N.
- 1983 *Geraklit Ėfesskij. Priloženie v kn. Tit Lukrecij Kar. O prirode veščej*. (Heraclitus of Ephesus. Appendix to Titus Lucretius Carus *On the Nature of Things*) Moscow.
- MURRAY, ROBERT
- 1989 "A Marriage for All Eternity: The Consecration of a Syrian Bride for Christ," *Sobornost / Eastern Churches Review* 11, 65-69.
- MUTAFIAN, CLAUDE (ed.)
- 1999 *Roma-Armenia*. Rome.
- MXIT'AREANC', A.
- 1901 *P'šrank' širaki ambarneric'* (Titbits from the Storehouses of širak). Moscow, Alek'sandrapol.

- NARKISS, B. & M. E. STONE
 1979, 1980 *Armenian Art. Treasures of Jerusalem*. Jerusalem 1979; New Rochelle, NY 1979; Oxford 1980.
- NAWASARDEANC', TIGRAN
 1890 *Hay žotovrdakan hēk'iat'ner* (Armenian Folk Tales), vol. 6. Tiflis.
- NBHL
 1836-1837 Awetikean, H. G. & H. Xač'atur Siwrmēlean, H. Mkrtič' Awgerean *Nor bağirk' haykazean lezvui* (New Dictionary of the Armenian Language). Venice.
- NBHL
 1979-1981 *Nor bağirk' haykazean lezui* (Novyj slovar' drevnearmjanskogo jazyka. New Dictionary of the Armenian Language). Erevan. (Reprint of the edition Venice 1836-1837.)
- NERISSIAN, VARAG
 1984 "Medieval Armenian Poetry and Its Relation to Other Literatures". V. Oshagan (ed.) *Review of National Literatures: Armenia*. New York, 93-120.
- NERISSIAN, VREJ
 2001 *Treasures from the Ark*. London.
- NERSOYAN, H. J.
 1986 "'An Encomium of the Holy Cross of God' by David the Invincible Philosopher", in Sanjian, Avedis K. (ed.) *David Anhaght' The 'Invincible' Philosopher*, Atlanta, Georgia, 81-100.
- NEU, ERICH
 1974 *Der Anitta Text*. Wiesbaden.
 1980 "Die hethitischen Verben des Kaufens und Verkaufens". *Die Welt des Orients* 11, 76-89.
- NEUMANN, G.
 1958 "Hethitische Etymologien II". *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung* 75, 221-225.
 1969 *Lykisch*. Köln, Leiden.
- NEUSS, W.
 1912 *Das Buch Ezechiel in Theologie und Kunst bis zum Ende des 12. Jahrhunderts*. Münster.
- NIKOLAYEV, S. L., S. A. STAROSTIN
 1994 *A North Caucasian Etymological Dictionary*. Moscow.
- NOACK, C.
 2000 *Gottesbewußtsein. Exegetische Studien zur Soteriologie und Mystik bei Philo von Alexandrien*. Tübingen.
- NÖLDEKE, THEODOR
 1977 *Kurzgefasste Syrische Grammatik*. Darmstadt. (Nachdruck der zweiten, verbesserten Auflage von 1898).
- OETTINGER, NORBERT
 1978 "Die Gliederung des anatolischen Sprachgebietes". *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung* 92, 74-92.

- 1979 *Die Stammbildung des hethitischen Verbuns*. Nürnberg.
- OLSEN, BIRGIT ANNETTE
1999 *The Noun in Biblical Armenian*. Berlin, New York.
- ÖLJIXUTAG, N.
1983 "Bügd Nayramdax Mongol Ard Ulsun guurst urgamlun latin-mongol-oros neriin tol'" (A Latin-Mongolian-Russian Dictionary of the Vascular Plants of the Mongolian People's Republic), *Ulsun ner tomyoonu komissun medee* (Bulletin of the National Terminological Commission), No 129-133, Ulaanbaatar.
- ÖNLER, ZAFER
1990 "14. ve 15. yüzyıl Anadolu Türkçesi botanik terimleri" (Botanic Terms in 14th-15th Century Anatolian Turkish). *Journal of Turkish Studies* 14, 357-392
- ORBELI, I. A.
2002 *Izbrannye trudy v dvux tomax* (Selected Works in Two Volumes), vol. 2. Erevan.
- ORBELIANI, SULXAN-SABA
1966-1993 *Leksiķoni kartuli* (Georgian Dictionary). Tbilisi.
- ORENGO, ALESSANDRO
1997 "Le grammatiche e i dizionari armeni della lingua italiana, compilati in armeno, stampati durante i secoli XVII e XVIII", in N. Awde (ed.), *Armenian Perspectives. 10th Anniversary Conference of the Association Internationale des Etudes Arméniennes*. Richmond: 201-214, 398-403.
2003 *I prestiti armeni nella romani*. Pisa.
- OSKEAN, H.
1963 *C'uc'ak hayerēn jeragrac' Mxit'arean matenadaranin i Vienna* (Catalogue of the Armenian Manuscripts in the Mekhitarist Library in Vienna). Vienna.
- OTTEN, H.
1950 "Die Gottheit Lelvani der Boğazköy Texte". *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 4, 119-140.
- OTTEN, H. & V. SOUČEK
1969 *Ein althethitisches Ritual für das Königspaar*. Wiesbaden.
- OUTTIER, BERNARD
1983 "Le cycle d'Adam à Alt'amar et la version arménienne du commentaire de S. Ephrem sur la Genèse". *REArm* 18, 589-592.
- PALLAS, PETER SIMON
1760 *De infestis viventibus intra viventia* (Dissertatio medica inauguralis). Leiden.
1771-1776 *Reise durch verschiedene Provinzen des Rußischen Reichs*. St. Petersburg.
1776-1801 *Sammlung historischer Nachrichten über die Mongolischen Völkerschaften*. St. Petersburg.
1784-1788 *Flora Rossica seu stirpium Imperii Rossici per Europam et Asiam indigenarum descriptiones et icones*. St. Petersburg.

- 1786-1789 *Linguarum totius orbis vocabularia comparativa; augustissimae cura collecta. Sectionis primae, linguas Europae et Asiae complexae*. St. Petersburg.
- 1795 *Tableau physique et topographique de la Tauride*. St. Petersburg.
- 1799-1801 *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise in die südlichen Statthaltschaften des russischen Reichs in den Jahren 1793 und 1794*. Leipzig.
- 1811-1831 *Zoographia Rosso-Asiatica*. St. Petersburg.
- PAŠAYAN, S.
1964 *Svediayi barbari jevabanut'yuně* (Morphology of the Svedia Dialect). Erevan.
- PATKANEAN, KEROP'Ē
1884 *Č'ap'aberakank'* (Verse). St. Petersburg.
- PATKANOV, KEROP'E.
1869 *Xronografičeskaja istorija, sostavlennaja ocom Mxitarom, vardapetom Ayrivanskim* (Chronographical History, Compiled by Father Mkhitar, vardapet of Ayrivank). St. Petersburg.
- PATRUBÁNY, LUKAS V.
1897 "Beiträge zur armenischen Ethnologie". *Ethnologische Mitteilungen aus Ungarn* 5 (1896), 139-153.
- PAULY
1938 *Paulys Real-Encyclopädie der Classischen Altertumswissenschaft*. Neue Bearbeitung. Stuttgart.
- PAWLOWSKI, IVAN JAKOVLEVIČ
1911 *Russisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch*. 1-2 Riga (Dritte vollständig neubearbeitete berichtigte und vermehrte Auflage. Leipzig 1974)
- PAYNE-SMITH, J. (ed.)
1957 *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary: Founded upon the Thesaurus Syriacus of R. Payne Smith*. Oxford.
- PEDERSEN, HOLGER
1904 "Hin hayerēn lezui šeště" (Stress in Ancient Armenian). *HA* 18, 131-133 (German transl. in Pedersen 1982, 3-7).
1906 "Zur Akzentlehre". *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung* 39, 235-243. (Reprinted in Pedersen 1982, 103-111).
1945 *Lykisch und Hittitisch*. Copenhagen.
1982 *Kleine Schriften zum Armenischen* (hrsg. von Rüdiger Schmitt). Hildesheim, New York.
- PESH.
1977 *The Old Testament in Syriac, I.1. Genesis – Exodus*, ed. The Peshitta Institute, Leiden. Leiden.
- PETIT, FRANÇOISE
1978 *Philon d'Alexandrie. Quaestiones in Genesim et in Exodum: fragmenta graeca*. Paris.
1995 *La chaîne sur la Genèse. Édition intégrale, III. Chapitres 12 à 28* (Traditio Exegetica Graeca, 3). Louvain.

PETIT, FRANÇOISE, LUCAS VAN ROMPAY & JOS J.S. WEITENBERG

- 2011 *Eusèbe d'Émèse. Commentaire de la Genèse. Texte arménien de l'édition de Venise (1980). Fragments grecs et syriaques. Avec traductions.* Louvain.

PETROSYAN, ARMEN

- 1997 *Arami aṛaspelē hndevropakan aṛaspelabanut'yan hamatek'stum ew hayoc' azgacagman xndirē* (The Myth of Aram in the Context of Indo-European Mythology and the Problem of Armenian Ethnogenesis). Erevan.
- 2002 *The Indo European and Ancient Near Eastern Sources of the Armenian Epic.* Washington DC.
- 2002a "Urartakan glxavor astvacneri eṛyakē ew petut'yan išxoṭ vernax-avi cagman xndirē" (The Threesome of Urartean Main Dieties and the Problem of the Origin of the State's Ruling Upper Class). *PBH* 2, 243-270.
- 2006 *Hayoc' azgacagman harc'er* (Questions of Armenian Ethnogenesis). Erevan.
- 2006a "Tir ew Maštoc': dprut'yan astvacē ew greri stelcolē" (Tir and Maštoc': The God of Writing and the Creator of Letters. *International Conference dedicated to the 1600th anniversary of the Armenian letters creation (Yerevan, September 12-17, 2005). Collection of papers.* Erevan, 41-53.
- 2007 "State Pantheon of Greater Armenia: Earliest Sources". *Aramazd: Armenian Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 2, 174-201.
- 2009 "The 'Eastern Hittites' in the South and East of the Armenian Highland?" *Aramazd: Armenian journal of Near Eastern studies* 4.1, 63-72 and 177-178.
- 2010 "Ciacanē hayoc' patkerac'umnerum" (The Rainbow in Armenian Imagination). *PBH* 3, 198-219.

PETROSYAN, EZNIK EPISKOPOS. & ARMEN TER-STEP'ANYAN

- 2002 *S. Grk'i hayeren meknut'yunneri matenagitut'yun* (Bibliography of Armenian Commentaries on Holy Scripture). Erevan.

PETROSYAN, SUREN

- 2005 *Haykakan žayrapatkerner* (Armenian petroglyphs). Erevan.

PHILO

- 1929-62 Colson, F. H. & R. Marcus & G. H. Whitaker. *Philo of Alexandria* in Ten Volumes (and Two Supplementary Volumes). Cambridge, Mass.
- 1966 M. Harl (ed.) *Philon Quis rerum divinarum heres sit. Les Œuvres de Philon d'Alexandrie.* Volume 15. Paris.

PIDEJIAN, K.

- 2007 "A Musicological Study of the Hymn to St. Hrip'simē and Her Companions, *Anjink' Nuirealk'*" . *St Nersess Theological Review* 12, 83-139.

PISANI, VITTORE

- 1950 "Studi sulla fonetica dell'armeno. I. Palatalizzazioni ed esiti di s + gutturale; esiti delle semivocali". *Ricerche linguistiche* 1/2, 165-193.
 1961 "Der Gott als 'Verteiler' und armenisch astuac". *HA* 75, 549-562.

PLETERŠNIK, M.

- 1894 *Slovensko-nemški slovar* (Slovenian-German Dictionary). I: A-O. Ljubljana.

PLINIUS

- 1949-1962 *Pliny, Natural History*. Cambridge, MA.

POKORNY, JULIUS

- 1949-1959 *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. 2 Bände. Bern, Munich.

POLAREAN, NORAYR EPISKOPOS

- 1971 *Hay groṭner* (Armenian Writers). Jerusalem.
 1972 *Mayr c'ucac jeṛagrac' Srboc' Yakobeanc'* (Main Catalogue of the Manuscripts of Sts James). Vol. 6. Jerusalem.

POLAREAN, NORAYR EPISKOPOS (ed.)

- 1974 *Grigor Aknerc'i. Patmut'iwn T'at'arac'* (Grigor Aknerc'i. History of the Tatars). Jerusalem.

POŁOSYAN, A. M.

- 1965 *Hadrut'i barbarë* (The Dialect of Hadrut). Erevan.

POPP ȘERBOIANU, C. J.

- 1930 *Les Tsiganes. Histoire, Ethnographie, Linguistique, Grammaire, Dictionnaire*. Paris.

PRATI, A.

- 1968 *Etimologie venete*. A cura di G. Folena e G. Pellegrini. Venice, Rome.

PRINCE MAX

- 1929 see Max, Prinz von Sachsen

PRINZING, GÜNTER. & ANDREA B. SCHMIDT (Hrsg.)

- 1997 *Das Lemberger Evangeliar. Eine wiederentdeckte armenische Bilderhandschrift des 12. Jahrhunderts*. Wiesbaden.

PUHVEL, JAAN

- 1984 *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*. Volume 1-2. Berlin, New York.
 1987 *Comparative Mythology*. Baltimore and London.
 1991 *Hittite Etymological Dictionary*. Volume 3. Berlin, New York.

RAYFIELD, DONALD

- 2010 *The Literature of Georgia: A History*. London.

REDHOUSE

- 1968 *New Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*. Istanbul.

REDHOUSE, SIR JAMES W.

- 1890 *A Turkish and English Lexicon*. Constantinople. Reprint Istanbul 1978.

- RENOUX, CHARLES
 1975 *Memre sur Nicomédie. Édition des fragments de l'original syriaque et de la version arménienne. Traduction française, introduction et notes.* (Patrologia Orientalis, 37/2-3) Turnhout.
 1978 "Irénee de Lyon, Nouveaux fragments arméniens de l'*Adversus Haereses* et de l'*Epideixis*". (Patrologia Orientalis 39/1). Turnhout.
- RESTLE, M.
 1967 *Die byzantinische Wandmalerei in Kleinasien.* Recklinghausen.
- RIEKEN, E.
 1999 *Untersuchungen zur nominalen Stammbildung des Hethitischen* Wiesbaden.
- RIGGS, E.
 1847 *Vocabulary of Words Used in Modern Armenian but not found in the Ancient Armenian Lexicons.* Smyrna.
- RK
 1957 Farizov, I.O. *Russko-kurdsij slovar' (Ferhenga ûrisî-kurmancî)* (Russian-Kurdish Dictionary). Moscow.
- ROBINSON, ANDREW
 2012 *Cracking the Egyptian Code: The Revolutionary Life of Jean-François Champollion.* New York.
- ROBINSON, E.
 2006 *Biblical Researches in Palestine and in the Adjacent Regions. A Journal of Travels in the Year 1838.* Ann Arbor (reprint).
- ROSE, V.
 1886 *Fragmenta varia. Aristotelis qui ferebantur librorum fragmenta.* Leipzig. (repr. Stuttgart 1967).
- ROSENBERG, J.
 1989 "Jeremiah and Ezekiel", in Robert Alter & Frank Kermode (eds.), *The Literary Guide to the Bible.* London, 184-206.
- ROSS, D. J. A.
 1963 "Olympias and the Serpent: The Interpretation of a Baalbek Mosaic and the Date of the Illustrated Pseudo-Callisthenes". *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 26, 1-21.
 1985 *Studies in the Alexander Romance.* London.
 1988 *Alexander Historiatus, a Guide to Medieval Illustrated Alexander Literature.* Frankfurt am Main.
- ROSTIŠVILI, NATELA
 1978 *Ingilouri leksikoni (Slovar' ingilojskogo dialekta. Dictionary of Ingilo).* Tbilisi.
- ROTH, L. & M. DAUNDERER & A. KORMANN
 1994 *Giftpflanzen - Pflanzengifte.* Hamburg. 4., überarbeitete Auflage.
- ROUSSEAU, A. & L. DOUTRELEAU (ed.)
 1974 *Irénee de Lyon: Contre les heresies. Livre III. Édition critique. 2. Texte et traduction.* Paris.

ROUTLEDGE, KATHERINE

1919 *The Mystery of Easter Island*. London (repr. New York 2005).

ROWLAND, CHRISTOPHER

2002 *The Open Heaven. A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity*. Eugene, Oregon (original edition London 1982).

2007 "Wheels within Wheels". *William Blake and the Ezekiel's Merkabah in Text and Image* (The Père Marquette Lecture in Theology, 2007). Milwaukee, Wisconsin.

2010 *Blake and the Bible*. New Haven and London.

RSA II

1962 *Rečnik srpskohrvatskog književnog i narodnog jezika* (Dictionary of the Serbo-Croatian Literary and Vernacular Language). II: bogoljub-Vržogrnici. Belgrade.

RSA XVI

2001 *Rečnik srpskohrvatskog književnog i narodnog jezika* (Dictionary of the Serbo-Croatian Literary and Vernacular Language). XVI: nokat-odvrzivati. Belgrade.

RUNIA, D. T.

1988 "Naming and Knowing: Themes in Philonic Theology with Special Reference to the *De mutatione nominum*", in R. van den Broek, T. Baarda and J. Mansfeld (eds.), *Knowledge of God in the Graeco-Roman World*. Leiden, 83-89.

1990 *Exegesis and Philosophy: Studies on Philo of Alexandria*. London

RUSSELL, JAMES R.

1987 *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*. Cambridge.

1989 "Carmina Vahagni", *Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 32, 317-330. Reprinted in Russell 2004, No 29 (357-70).

1992-1993 "An Armeno-Persian Love Poem of Grigoris Aght'amarts'i". *JSAS* (6), 99-105. Reprinted in Russell 2004, No 41 (501-507).

1994 "On the Origins and Invention of the Armenian Alphabet," *Le Muséon* (107), 317-333. Reprinted in Russell 2004, No 45 (565-581).

1994a "On the Name Mashtots," *AAL* 15, 67-78. Reprinted in Russell 2004, No 48 (597-608).

1996-97 "Polyphemos Armenios," *REArm* 26, 25-38. Reprinted in Russell 2004, No 58 (757-770).

1997 "The Four Elements and the Cross in Armenian Spirituality, with an Excursus on the Descent in Merkavah Mysticism", *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 4, 357-379. Reprinted in Russell 2004, No 62 (851-878).

2001 "The Sceptre of Tiridates". *Le Muséon* (114), 187-215. Reprinted in Russell 2004, No 79 (1135-1163).

2004 *Armenian and Iranian Studies* (Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies, 9), Cambridge, Mass.

2012 "Magic Mountains, Milky Seas, Dragon Slayers, and Other Zoroastrian Archetypes," *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* 22, Ann Arbor, MI, 1-21.

- 2013 "On An Armenian Magical Manuscript (Jewish Theological Seminary, New York, MS 10558)," *Proceedings of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities* 8, no 7, 105-192.
- SAFAREAN, H. HAMAZASP
1884 *Busabanut'iwn i pēts azgayin dproc'ac'* (Plant Science for the Use of National Schools). Venice.
- ŠAHNAZAREAN, KARAPET VARDAPET (ed.)
1910 *Step'annos Ōrbelean. Patmut'iwn nahangin Sisakan* (Step'annos Ōrbelean. History of the Region of Sisian). Tblisi.
- SANJIAN, AVEDIS K.
1976 *A Catalogue of Medieval Armenian Manuscripts in the United States*. Los Angeles.
- ŠARAKAN
1936 *Šarakan hogewor ergoc' surb ew utlap'ai' ekelec'woys hayastaneayc'* (Hymnal of Spiritual Songs of the Holy Orthodox Church of Armenia). Jerusalem.
- ŠARAKNOC'
1853 *Šarakan hogewor ergoc' surb ew utlap'ai' ekelec'woys Hayastaneayc'* (Hymnal of Spiritual Songs of the Holy Orthodox Church of Armenia). Constantinople, reprinted New York 1986.
- SARGIS ŠNORHALI
1828 *Meknut'iwn eōt'anc' t't'oc' kat'utikeayc'. Arareal eranelwuyw Sargsi šnorhalic' Vardapeti' hayoc' imastasiri ew k'aj hřetori* (Commentary on the Seven Catholic Epistles Composed by the Blessed Sargis, Gifted Vardapet, Armenian Philosopher and Skillful Rhetorician). Constantinople.
- SARGISEAN, YARUT'IWN K'HN. (ALEWOR)
1932 *Balu: ir sovoruyt'nerě, krt'akan u imac'akan vičakě u barbařě* (Balu: its Customs, Educational and Intellectual Situation, and Dialect). Cairo.
- SARGSEAN, B.
1894 "Prokl imastasiri astuacabanakan šalkapac' haykakan t'argmanut'ean xndirn u matenadaranis t'iw 1123 grcagri gałtnik'n" (The Problem of the Armenian Translation of Proclus the Philosopher's Elements of Theology and the Secret of Our Library's Manuscript No 1123). *B* 42, 122-130, 310-328.
- SARHAD
1994 Š.L. Xač'ikyan (ed.) *Šahvelu ordi Sarhadi hašwemateaně* (The Account Book of Sarhad son of Šahveli). Erevan.
- SAVON, H.
1977 *Saint Ambroise devant l'exégèse de Philon le Juif*. Paris.
- SBH
1979 J. F. Mackevič. *Sloŭnik belaruskix havorak paunočnaja-zaxodnjaj Belarusi* (Dictionary of the Belorussian Dialects of North-Western Belarus'). I: A-H.. Minsk.

- SCHALANSKY, JUDITH
 2010 *Atlas of Remote Islands: Fifty Islands I Have Never Set Foot On and Never Will*, New York.
- SCHENKL, C.
 1896-1897 see under Ambrose
- SCHINDLER, JOCHEN
 1975 "L'apophonie des thèmes indo-européens en -r/n". *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris* 70, 1-10.
- SCHMIDT, ANDREA B.
 1997 "Die Kolophone des Evangeliers", in Prinzing & Schmidt 1997, 93-105.
- SCHMIDT, KARL HORST
 1980 "Armenian and Indo-European", in John E.C. Greppin (ed.) *Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Armenian Linguistics (11-14 July 1979)*. Delmar, NY, 35-58.
- SCHMITT, RÜDIGER
 1972-1974 "Die Erforschung des Klassisch Armenischen seit Meillet (1936)". *Kratylos* 17, 1-68.
 1981 *Grammatik des Klassisch Armenischen mit sprachvergleichenden Erläuterungen*. Innsbruck
 1983 "Iranisches Wortgut im Armenischen". *REArm* 17, 73-112.
- SCHOLEM, GERSCHOM
 1960 *Jewish Gnosticism, Merkabah Mysticism, and Talmudic Tradition*. New York.
 1995 "Merkabah Mysticism and Jewish Gnosticism", in *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism*. New York, 40-79.
- SCHOENE, ALFRED (ed.)
 1875 *Eusebi Chronicorum liber prior. Armeniam versionem latine factam ad libros manuscriptos recensuit H. Petermann. Graeca fragmenta collegit et recognovit Appendices Chronographicas Sex adiecit A. Schoene*. Berlin
- SCHRIJVER, PETER C. H.
 1991 *The Reflexes of the Proto-Indo-European Laryngeals in Latin*. Amsterdam, Atlanta.
 1995 *Studies in British Celtic Historical Phonology*. Amsterdam, Atlanta.
 1999 "On Henbane and early European Narcotics". *Zeitschrift für celtische Philologie* 51, 17-45.
- SCHRÖDER, J. J.
 1711 *Aramean Lezuin Ganj: Hoc est: Thesaurus Linguae Armenicae Antiquae et Hodiernae*. Amsterdam.
- SCHULTZ, ERNST GUSTAV
 1845 *Jerusalem. Eine Vorlegung von Dr E.G. Schultz. Mit einem Plane gezeichnet von Kiepert*. Berlin.

SCHÜTZ, EDMOND

- 1980 "The Stages of Armenian Settlements in the Crimea". *Transcaucasica II* (Quaderni del Seminario di Iranistica, Uralo-Altaistica e Caucasologia dell'Università degli Studi di Venezia, 7), Venice, 116-135. (Reprinted in: Edmond Schütz, *Armeno-Turcica: selected studies*. Bloomington, 1998, XV)

SEBĒOS

- 1979 Georg Abgaryan (ed.) *Sebēos. Patmut'iwn* (Sebēos. History). Erevan.

SEETZEN, ULRICH JASPER

- 1854-1859 Ulrich Jasper Seetzen's Reisen durch Syrien, Palästina, Phönicien, die Transjordan-Länder, Arabia Petraea und Unter-Aegypten, herausgegeben und commentirt von F. Kruse in Verbindung mit dr. Hinrichs, G.F.H. Müller und mehreren andern Gelehrten. Berlin.

SEGAL, A. F.

- 1977 *Two Powers in Heaven: Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*. Leiden.

SEGERT, STANISLAV

- 1990⁴ *Altaramäische Grammatik mit Bibliographie, Chrestomathie und Glossar*. Leipzig.

SEVAK, PARUYR

- 1973 *Erkeri žotovacu* (Collected works), Vol. 4. Erevan.

SHIRINIAN, ERNA MANEA (See also: ŠIRINJAN, M.Ē., ŠIRINYAN, Ē.M., & ŠIRINYAN, M.)

- 2001 "Translations from Greek in Armenian Literature". *Eikasmos* 12, 229-240.
- 2001a "A Comparison of Literary Methods and Genres in Byzantine and Armenian Literature". *XXe Congrès International des Études Byzantines, Pré-Actes, III. Communications Libres*. Paris.
- 2001-2002 "Reflections on the 'Sons and Daughters of the Covenant' in Armenian Sources", *REArm* 28, 261-285.
- 2003 "Traduzioni dal greco nella letteratura armena". Anna Sirinian, Sara Mancini Lombardi, Loris Dina Nocetti (eds.) *Le scienze e le 'arti' nell' Armenia Medievale*, Bologna, 75-91.
- 2006 "A Comparative Analysis of Some Technical Terms in Armenian Sources", *Xristianskij Vostok* 4 (X), 268-316.
- 2011 "Philo and the Book of Causes by Grigor Abasean". S. Mancini Lombardi & P. Pontani (eds.) *Studies on the Ancient Armenian Version of Philo's Works*. Leiden, 103-127.

SIEGERT, FOLKER

- 1989 "Der armenische Philon: Textbestand, Editionen, Forschungsgeschichte". *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* 100, 353-369.

SIMONIAN, HOVHAN H. (ed.)

- 2007 *The Hemshin. History, Society and Identity in the Highlands of Northeast Turkey*. London, New York.

SIMONYAN, HASMIK

- 1975 *Hay miġnadaryan kafaner (10-16 dd.)* (Medieval Armenian Kafas, 10th -16th centuries). Erevan.
- 1979 "Aleksandr Makedonac'u Patmut'yan hayerēn t'argmanut'yunē ew nra xmbagrut'yunnerē" (The Armenian Translation of the History of Alexander of Macedon and its Recensions). *PBH* 1, 113-128.

SIMONYAN, HASMIK (ed.)

- 1989 *Patmut'iwn Aleksandri Makedonac'woy* (History of Alexander of Macedon). Erevan.

SIMONYAN, N. M.

- 1979 "Hay barbaġneri hndevropakan hnabanut'yunnerē" (Indo-European Archaisms in Armenian Dialects). *Hayoc' lezvi hame-matakan k'erakanut'yan harc'er* (Problems of the Comparative Grammar of the Armenian Language). Erevan, 188-248.
- 1984 "Review of Annual of Armenian linguistics vol. 4, 1983". *BEH* 3, 228-231.

ŠIPOVA, ELIZAVETA NIKOLAEVNA

- 1976 *Slovar' tjurkizmov v russkom jazyke* (Dictionary of Turkisms in Russian). Alma-Ata.

SIRINIAN, ANNA

- 1999 *Sancti Gregorii Nazianzeni opera. Versio Armeniaca, II. Orationes IV, V* Turnhout.
- 2011 "'Armenian Philo': a Survey of the Literature". S. Mancini Lombardi & P. Pontani (eds.) *Studies on the Ancient Armenian Version of Philo's Works*. Leiden, 7-44.

ŠIRINJAN, MANEA ĒRNA (See also SHIRINIAN, E.M., ŠIRINYAN, Ē.M., & ŠIRINYAN, M.)

- 2002a "Armenian Translation of (Aristotle's) *De Vitiis et Virtutibus*". *Verbum: Aristotel' i srednevekovaja metafizika* (Aristotle and Medieval Metaphysics) 6, 166-171.

ŠIRINYAN, MANYA (See also ŠIRINJAN, M.Ē. & ŠIRINYAN, Ē.M., SHIRINIAN, ERNA Manea

- 1998 "'Artak'in' ev 'nurb' greank'" ('External' and 'Subtle' Writings). *Astanak* 2, 15-45.

ŠIRINYAN, MANYA ĒRNA (See also SHIRINIAN, E.M., ŠIRINYAN, Ē.M., & ŠIRINYAN, M.)

- 2000 "Meknolakan žanri kazmavorumē ev zargac'umē Hayastanum" (The Formation of the Genre of Commentary and its Development in Armenia). *Astanak* 3, 36-64.
- 2002b "'Uxti mankunk' ev 'mankunk' ekefec'woy" (The 'Children of the Covenant' and the 'Children of the Church', *E* (8), 90-110.
- 2004 "Hayoc' greri gyutē ēst Girk' patčarac'-i" (The Invention of the Armenian Script According to the Book of Causes). *E* (7-8), 86-91.
- 2005 *K'ristoneakan vardapetut'yan antik ev hellenistakan tarrerē (haykakan ev hunakan dasakan ev byuzandakan albyurneri*

- baɫdatut'yamb*) Antique and Hellenistic Elements of Christian Teaching (Comparing Armenian, Classical Greek and Byzantine Sources). Erevan.
- 2005a "Mankunk' ezrn aylalezu albyurnerum" (The Term 'mankunk' in Foreign Language Sources). *Ējmiacin* Z, 67-86.
- SKINNER, J.
1940 *The Alexander Romance in the Armenian Historians*. Cambridge, Mass. (Unpublished thesis, Harvard University).
- SLAWSKI, S. P.
1974 *Słownik prasłowiański* (Common Slavonic Dictionary). I: A-B. Wrocław etc.
- SMITH, J.N.
2001 *A Christian's Guide to Greek Culture. The Pseudo-Nonnos Commentaries on Sermons 4, 5, 39 and 43 by Gregory of Nazianzus*. Liverpool.
- SOCRATES SCHOLASTICUS
1897 T. Tēr-Movsēsean (ed.) *Sokratay sk'olastikosi eketec'akan Patmut'iwn* (The Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus). Ējmiacin.
- SOMMER, F. & H. EHELOLF
1927-1930 *Kleinasiatische Forschungen*. Weimar.
- SOMMER, F. E. & R. PFISTER
1977 *Handbuch der lateinischen Laut- und Formenlehre. I Einleitung und Lautlehre*. Heidelberg.
- SOPHOCLES, E. A.
1957 *Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods (From B.C. 146 to A.D. 1100)*. New York.
- SPENGEL, L.
1856 *Alexander. De figuris*. Leipzig.
- SRAPYAN, ARMENUHI (ed.)
1958 *Hovhannes Erznkac'i. Usumnasirut'yun ev bnagrēr* (Hovhannes Erznkac'i. Study and Original Texts). Erevan.
1962 *Kostandin Erznkac'i. Tałēr* (Kostandin Erznkac'i. Tał Poems). Erevan.
- SRNG
1965- *Slovar' russkix narodnyx govorov* (Dictionary of Russian Vernaculars). Leningrad.
- STARKE, FRANK
1990 *Untersuchung zur Stammbildung des keilschrift luwischen Nomens*. Wiesbaden.
- STARKIE, ENID
1961 *Arthur Rimbaud*. New York.
- STEINBAUER, D.
1999 *Neues Handbuch des Etruskischen*. St. Katharina.

STEINGASS, FRANCIS

1957 *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*. London (Reprint of the First Edition 1892).

1992 *A Comprehensive Persian-English Dictionary*. New Delhi, Madras.

STEINSCHNEIDER, MORITZ

1897-1899 "Heilmittelnamen der Araber". *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 11, 259-278, 313-330; 12, 1-20, 81-101, 201-229, 319-334; 13, 75-94.

STEP'ANOS LEHAC'I

1750 *Grguk or koč'i Patčarac', or ē masn inč' i Groc' Patčarac'n Aristotēli, kam orpēs omank' karcen Prokti imastasiri* (Booklet that is Called Of Causes, which Forms Part of the *Book of Causes* of Aristotle, or as Some Contend, of Proclus the Philosopher). Constantinople.

STEMBERGER, G.

1974 "Die Patriarchenbilder der Katakombe in der Via Latina im Lichte der jüdischen Tradition," *Kairos. Zeitschrift für Religionswissenschaft und Theologie* 16, 21-33.

STEUERWALD, KARL

1972 *Türkisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch (Türkçe-Almanca Sözlük)*. Wiesbaden.

STEVENSON, K. & M. GLERUP (ed.)

2008 *Ezekiel, Daniel*. Downers Grove, Illinois.

STONE, MICHAEL E.

1981 *Signs of the Judgement, Onomastica Sacra, and the Generations from Adam*. Chico, CA.

STONE, MICHAEL E. & D. AMIT

2006 "The Second and Third Seasons of Research at the Medieval Jewish Cemetery in Eghegis, Vayots Dzor Region, Armenia", *Journal of Jewish Studies* 57, 99-135.

STONE, M. E., DICKRAN KOUYMIJIAN, HENNING LEHMANN

2002 *Album of Armenian Paleography*. Aarhus.

2006 *Haykakan hnagrut'ean albom*. Erevan.

STONE, MICHAEL E., THEO MAARTEN VAN LINT

1996-1997 "Two Unnoticed Armenian inscriptions from Noravank". *REArm* 26, 447-449.

STONE, MICHAEL E., BENJAMIN G. WRIGHT, DAVID SATRAN (eds.)

2000 *The Apocryphal Ezekiel*. Atlanta.

STONE, NIRA

1997 *The Kaffa Lives of the Desert Fathers. A Study in Armenian Manuscript Illumination*. Louvain.

STRESEMANN, E.

1962 "Leben und Werk von Peter Simon Pallas", E. Winter et alii (Hrsg.), *Lomonosov, Schlözer, Pallas; Deutsch-russische Wissenschaftsbeziehungen im 18. Jahrhundert*. Berlin, 247-257.

- SUK'IASYAN, AŠOT MURADI
 1967 *Hayoc' lezvi homanišneri ba'aran (Slovar' sinonimov armjanskogo jazyka*. Dictionary of Synonyms of the Armenian Language). Erevan.
- SUM
 1970 *Slovyuk ukrainskoji movy* (Dictionary of Ukrainian). I: A-B. Kyjiv.
- SVAZLYAN, VERŽINE GAŔNIKI
 1973 "Sargis Haykuni: kyank'n u gorcuneut'yuně" (Sargis Haykuni: Life and Work). *Hay azgagrut'yun ew banahyusut'yun: nyut'er ew usumnasirut'yunner (Armjanskaja étnografija i fol'klor: materialy i issledovanija*. Armenian Ethnography and Folklore: Materials and Studies). Erevan, Vol. 4, 5-82.
- TALAWAREAN, N.
 1909 *Hayoc' hin krōnnerě* (The Ancient Religions of the Armenians). 2nd edition, revised and supplemented. Constantinople.
- TAR
 1963-77 *XIII. yüzyıldan beri Türkiye Türkçesiyle yazılmış kitaplarından toplanan tanıklarıyla tarama sözlüğü* (Reference Dictionary of Collective Comprehensive Attestations [of Words] Used in Books in the Turkish of Turkey since the Thirteenth Century). Ankara.
- Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*
 see Clarke 1984
- TAŠEAN, Y.
 1892a *Usumnasirut'iwnk' Stoyk K'alist'enay Varuc' Ateksandri* (Studies on Pseudo-Callisthenes' Life of Alexander). Vienna.
 1892b "Prokli Diadoxosi Šalkapk' Astuacabanakank'" (Proclos Diadoxos's *Elements of Theology*). *HA* 6, 97-101, 129-133.
- TCHERAZ, MINAS
 1901 "La légende d'Alexandre le Grand chez les Arméniens". *Revue de l'histoire des religions* XLIII-XLIV, 345-351.
- TCHOBANIAN, ARCHAG
 1906 *Les trouvères arméniens*. Paris.
 1923 *La Roseraie d'Arménie*. Vol. 2. Paris.
- TĒR-MINASEAN, E. (ed.)
 1957 *Etišēi vasn Vardanay ew Hayoc' Paterazmin* (Elišē's 'On Vardan and the Armenian War'). Erevan.
- TĒR MKRTČ'YAN, E.
 1970 "Vanec'oc' harsanik'ě" (Weddings among the Armenians of Van). *Hay azgagrut'yun ew banahyusut'yun: nyut'er ew usumnasirut'yunner (Armjanskaja étnografija i fol'klor: materialy i issledovanija* Armenian Ethnography and Folklore: Materials and Studies). Erevan, Vol. 1, 143-198.
- TĒR-MKRTČ'EAN, G. & ST. KANAYEANC' (eds.)
 1909 *Agat'angelos. Patmut'iwn Hayoc'* (Agathangelos. History of the Armenians). Tiflis.

- TĒR-MKRTČ'EAN, G. & S. MALXASEAN (eds.)
 1985 *Łazar P'arpec'i. Patmut'iwn Hayoc' ew t'utt' ar Vahan Mamikonean* (Łazar P'arpec'i. History of the Armenians and Letter to Vahan Mamikonean). Delmar, NY.
- TER-MOVSESYAN, M.
 1902 *Istorija perevoda Biblii* (History of the Translation of the Bible). St. Petersburg.
- TERIAN, ABRAHAM
 1981 *Philonis Alexandrini de Animalibus: the Armenian Text with an Introduction, Translation and Commentary*. Chico, CA.
 1994 "Had the Works of Philo been Newly Discovered". *The Biblical Archaeologist* 57, 86-97.
 2007 "The Poetics of a Church and the Structure of a Hymn: The Šarakan *Anjink' Nuirealk'* by Catholicos Komitas". *St Nersess Theological Review* 12, 141-160.
- THEILER, W.
 1909-1964 "Sachweiser zu Philo". L. Cohn et al. (eds.), *Philo von Alexandria: die Werke in deutscher Übersetzung*. Bd. 7, Berlin, Breslau.
 1955 "Gott und Seele im kaiserzeitlichen Denken", in *Recherches sur la tradition platonicienne*. Vandœuvres-Genève, 69-71.
- THEODOR, J. & CH. ALBECK (eds.)
 1996² *Bereschit Rabbah mit kritischem Apparat und Kommentar*. Jerusalem.
- THEOPHRASTE
 1989 Suzanne Amigues (ed.), *Théophraste, Recherches sur les Plantes*. Tome 2. Paris.
- THIERRY, JEAN-MICHEL, PATRICK DONABÉDIAN
 1987 *Les arts arméniens*, Paris.
- THIERRY, NICOLE
 1984 "Le cycle de la creation et de la faute d'Adam à Alt'amar". *REArm* 17, 289-329.
- THOMSON, ROBERT W.
 1965 "An Armenian List of Heresies". *The Journal of Theological Studies* 16, 358-367.
 1976a *Agathangelos History of the Armenians*. Albany.
 1976b "Number Symbolism and Patristic Exegesis in some early Armenian Writers". *HA* 90, 117-138. (reprinted in Thomson 1994, VIII)
 1978 *Moses Khorenatsi. History of the Armenians* (Introduction, Translation, and Commentary on the Literary Sources). Cambridge, MA.
 1980 *Agat'angelos. Patmut'iwn Hayoc'* (Agathangelos. History of the Armenians). Facsimile of the 1909 edition with Introduction. Delmar, NY.
 1982 *History of Vardan and the Armenian War* (Translation and Commentary). Cambridge, MA.

- 1985 *Thomas Artsruni, History of the House of the Artsrunik': Translation and Commentary*. Detroit, Michigan.
- 1987 *The Armenian Version of the Works Attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite*. Leuven. 2 vols.
- 1994 *Studies in Armenian Literature and Christianity*. Aldershot.
- 1995 *A Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature to 1500 AD*. Turnhout.
- 1996 "The Writing of History: the Development of the Armenian and Georgian Traditions". In *Il Caucaso. Cerniera fra culture dal Mediterraneo alla Persia (secoli IV-XI)*. 2 vols. Spoleto, I, 493-520.
- 2000 *A Homily on the Passion of Christ attributed to Elišē*. Leuven.
- 2001a *The Teaching of Saint Gregory*. New Rochelle, NY. (Revised edition).
- 2001b *The Armenian Adaptation of the Ecclesiastical History of Socrates Scholasticus*. Leuven.
- 2005 "Saint Nerses Lambronac'i on the Psalms." *St Nersess Theological Review* 10, 23-38. (published 2006)
- 2006a *Hamam. Commentary on the Book of Proverbs*. Edition of the Armenian Text, English Translation, Notes and Introduction. Leuven.
- 2006b *Moses Khorenats'i. History of the Armenians*. Ann Arbor. (Second, revised edition).
- 2007 "Supplement to: A Bibliography of Classical Armenian Literature to 1500 AD: Publications 1993-2005". *Le Muséon* 120, 163-223.
- 2009 "Armenian Biblical Commentaries: The State of Research". *JSAS* 18, 9-40.
- TIMPANARO, S.
1978² *La filologia di Giacomo Leopardi*. Rome-Bari.
- TISCHLER, JOHANNES
1977-1994 *Hethitisches etymologisches Glossar*
I.1 (1977), 2 (1978), 3 (1980), 4 (1983), 5-6 (1990) II.7 (1991), III.8 (1991), III.9 (1993), 10 (1994). Innsbruck.
- TKMR
1968 Baskakova, N.A., B.A. Karryeva, M.J. Xamzaeva (eds.) *Turk-mensko-russkij slovar'* (Turkmen-Russian Dictionary). Moscow.
- TOBIN, T.
1983 *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation*. Washington.
- TOBLER, T.
1846 *Denkblätter aus Jerusalem*. St.Gallen, Konstanz.
- TONNEAU, R.M. (ed.)
1955 *Sancti Ephraem Syri in Genesim et in Exodum Commentarii* (CSCO, 152 / Syr. 71). Louvain.

- T'OP'Č'YAN, AĀRAM
 2001 *Movses Xorenac'u hunakan atbyurneri xndirē* (The Problem of Movses Xorenac'i's Greek Sources). Erevan.
- TOPCHYAN, ARAM
 2006 *The Problem of the Greek Sources of Movsēs Xorenac'i's History of Armenia*. Leuven - Paris - Dudley, MA.
 2010 *David the Invincible Commentary on Aristotle's Prior Analytics*. Old Armenian Text with an English Translation, Introduction and Notes. Leiden.
- TOPOROV, V. N.
 1975 *Prusskij jazyk: slovar'* (Prussian: A Dictionary). Vol. 1 [A-D]. Moscow.
- TRAHOULIA, N. S.
 1997 *The Greek Alexander Romance, Facsimile Edition of Hellenic Institute, Venice, codex Gr. 5*. Athens.
- TRAINA, GIUSTO
 1996 "Lo Pseudo-Callistene armeno. Nota introduttiva". *Ars narrandi, Scritti di narrativa antica in memoria di Luigi Pepe*. Perugia, 133-150.
- TRAINA, GIUSTO (dir.), CARLO FRANCO, DICKRAN KOUYMIJIAN, CECILIA VERONESE ARSLAN
 2003 *La Storia di Alessandro il Macedone. Codice miniato armeno del secolo XIV (Venezia, ms. San Lazzaro 424)*. Padua.
- T'REANC', R. (ed.)
 1842 *Patmut'iwn Aleksandri Makedonac'woy* (The History of Alexander of Macedon). Venice.
- TS
 1988 *Türkçe sözlük*, I-II. Yeni baskı (Turkish Dictionary. New Edition). Ankara.
- TSBM
 1977 *Tlumačal'ny sloŭnik belaruskaj movy* (Explanatory Dictionary of Belorussian). I: A-B. Minsk.
- TSCHENKÉLI, KITA
 1965-74 *Georgisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch*. Zurich.
- UHLIK, RADE
 1947 *Srpskohrvatsko-ciganski rečnik*. Romane alava. Sarajevo.
- ULUHOGLIAN, GABRIELLA
 1985 "Bibliography of Armenian Dictionaries". *Rivista di Studi Bizantini e Slavi* 5, 197-291.
 1993 *Basilio di Cesarea, Il Libro delle Domande (Le Regole)*. Louvain.
 1996 "I luoghi e i modi della trasmissione del sapere in Armenia nel V secolo". *Il Caucaso. Cerniera fra culture dal Mediterraneo alla Persia (secoli IV-XI)*. 2 vols. Spoleto, I, 521-548.

- VAN DEN EYNDE, C.
 1955 Commentaire d'Išo'dad de Merv sur l'Ancien Testament, I. Genèse (CSCO 156 / Syr. 75, translation) Louvain.
- VAN LINT, THEO MAARTEN
 1999 "Grigor Narekac'i's *Taḥ yarut'ean*. (Poem on the Resurrection). The Throne Vision of Ezekiel in Armenian Art and Literature, I", in Calzolari-Bouvier, Kaestli et Outtier 1999, 105-127.
 2000 "Appendix", in Stone, Wright, and Satran 2000, 155-58.
 2001 "Recording Kaghakatsi Armenian Speech and Traditions". *Newsletter* (Association Internationale des Études Arméniennes) No. 32, 18-23.
- VAN MOORSEL
 2000 see de Groot, M. & P. van Moorsel
- VAN ROMPAY, L. (ed. and transl.)
 1986 *Le Commentaire sur Genèse – Exode 9,32 du manuscrit (olim) Diyarbakır 22* (CSCO 483-484 / Syr. 205 (text), 206 (translation); Louvain.
- VARDANYAN, EDDA
 1998-2000 "Catalogue des manuscrits du peintre Minas (XVe s.)". *REArm* 27, 359-378.
 2003-2004 "Un Maštoc' d'ordination et de sacre royal du XVe siècle" *REArm* 29, 167-233.
- VARDANYAN, SERGEY
 2009 *Kronap'ox hamšenahayeri barbaïḗ, banahyusut'yunē ew ergarvestē: nyut'er ew usumnasirut'yunner*. (The Dialect, Folklore and Art of Singing of Converted Armenians from Hamšen: Material and Studies) Erevan.
- VARDANYAN, V. M.
 1985 *T'ovma Arcruni ew Ananun: Patmut'yun Arcruneac' tan* (T'ovma Arcruni and Anonymous [Author]: History of the House of the Arcruni). Erevan.
- VARDAZARYAN, OLGA
 2001 "Once again on the 'Book of the Causes of the Large and Subtle Writings'", Pré-actes du XXe Congrès International des Études Byzantines, (Communications libres), Collège de France, Paris, 55.
 2005 *Patčark' groc' P'iloni. Usumnasirut'yun ev bnagir* (The "Causes" of the Writings of Philo of Alexandria. Study and Text). Erevan.
 2006 *P'ilon Alek'sandrac'i hay mījnadari ėmbīnmamb* (The Medieval Armenian Reception of Philo of Alexandria). Erevan.
- VARDUMYAN, GOHAR DERENIKI
 1991 "Doxristianskie kul'ty armjan" (The pre-Christian Cults of the Armenians). *Hay azgagrut'yun ew banahyusut'yun: nyut'er ew usumnasirut'yunner* (*Armjanskaja ėtnografija i fol'klor: materi-*

aly i issledovanija. Armenian Ethnography and Folklore: Materials and Studies), Erevan. Vol. 18, 59-146 (+ illustrations).

VASMER, MAX

1964-1973 O. N. Trubačev (ed.) *Étimologičeskij slovar' russkogo jazyka* (Etymological Dictionary of the Russian Language). Moscow.

VAUX, BERT

1996 *The Karabagh Dialects (based on Grigoryan 1957)*. Cambridge, MA.

2000-01 "Hemshinli: the Forgotten Black Sea Armenians". *Journal of Armenian Studies* (6.2), 47-71.

2002 "The Armenian Dialects of Jerusalem. Armenians in Jerusalem and in the Holy Land". In Michael E. Stone, Roberta R. Ervine, Nira Stone (eds). *The Armenians in Jerusalem and in the Holy Land*. Leuven, 231-254.

VEELENTURF, KEES

1997 *Dia Brátha. Eschatological Theophanies and Irish High Crosses*. Amsterdam.

VERONESE ARSLAN, CECILIA

1992 *Tra Bisanzio e l'Armenia: le miniature del codice 424 della Biblioteca dei Padri Mechitaristi a Venezia*. (Unpublished thesis, University of Venice).

VOSTÉ, J.-M. & C. VAN DEN EYNDE (eds)

1950 *Commentaire d' Iso'dad de Merv sur l'Ancien Testament, I. Genèse* (CSCO 126 / Syr. 67) Louvain.

VUK

1898 Vuk S. Karadžić. *Srpski rječnik istumačen njemačkim i latinskim riječima*. Treće (državno) izdanje, ispravljeno i umnoženo (Serbian Dictionary with Translations in German and Latin. Third [Official] Edition, Corrected and Augmented). Belgrade.

WALDE, A., HOFMANN, J. B.

1938-1954 *Lateinisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*. Heidelberg.

WALDE, A., JULIUS POKORNY

1930-1932 *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der indogermanischen Sprachen*. Berlin, Leipzig.

WALLIS BUDGE, E. A.

1933 *The Alexander Book in Ethiopia*. London.

WATKINS, CALVERT

1974 "god" in M. Mayrhofer, W. Meid, B. Schlerath, R. Schmitt (eds.), *Antiquitates indogermanicae: Studien zur indogermanischen Altertumskunde und zur Sprach- und Kulturgeschichte der indogermanischen Völker. Gedenkschrift für Hermann Güntert*. Innsbruck, 101-110.

WATSON, PETER

2012 *The Great Divide: Nature and Human Nature in the Old World and the New*. New York.

- WEBER, S.
1927 "Bemerkungen zur palästinensischen Ortskunde aus altarmenischen Schriftstellern". *HA* 41, 817-826.
- WEHR, HANS
1968 *Arabisches Wörterbuch für die Schriftsprache der Gegenwart*. Wiesbaden (Vierte Ausgabe)
- WEISS, H. F.
1966 *Untersuchungen zur Kosmologie des hellenistischen und palästinischen Judentums*. Berlin.
- WEITENBERG, JOSEPH J. S.
1984 *Die hethitischen u-Stämme*. Amsterdam
1987 "Proto-Indo-European Nominal Classification and Old-Hittite". *MSS* 48, 213-230.
1995 "Sigmatization and Thematization in Hittite". In Theo P. J. van den Hout, Johannes de Roos (eds.) *Studio Historiae Ardens. Ancient Near Eastern Studies Presented to Philo H. J. Houwink ten Cate on the Occasion of his 65th Birthday*. Istanbul, 333-344.
- WEITZMANN, KURT
1970 *Illustrations in Roll and Codex. A Study of the Origin and Method of Text Illustration*. Princeton.
- WENDLAND, FOLKWART
1992 *Peter Simon Pallas (1741-1811). Materialien einer Biographie*. Teil 1 & 2. Berlin, New York.
- WENGER, A.
1956 "Hésychius de Jérusalem". *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* (2), 464-470.
1967 "Une homélie inédite de Sévérien de Gabala sur le lavement des pieds". *Revue des Études Byzantines* 25, 219-234.
- WEST, MARTIN L.
2007 *Indo-European Poetry and Myth*. Oxford.
- WEVERS, J.W. (ed.)
1974 *Vetus Testamentum Graecum, I. Genesis*. Göttingen (= LXX)
- WHITTAKER, J.
1992 "Catachresis and Negative Theology: Philo of Alexandria and Basilides". S. Gersh and C. Kannengiesser (eds.), *Platonism in Late Antiquity*. Notre Dame, 61-82.
- WINSTON, D.
1985 *Logos and Mystical Theology in Philo of Alexandria*. Cincinnati.
- WINTER, WERNER
1999 "Consonant Harmony in Armenian". Edgar C. Polomé & Carol F. Justus (eds.), *Language Change and Typological Variation: In Honor of Winfred P. Lehmann on the Occasion of his 83rd Birthday*. Vol. 1: *Language Change and Phonology*; vol. 2: *Grammatical Universals and Typology*. Washington, 1, 313-319.

WNT

- 1916 *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche taal*. Derde deel. Tweede stuk. C-ehem. 's Gravenhage, Leiden.

WOLF, SIEGMUND A.

- 1993 *Großes Wörterbuch der Zigeunersprache (Romani tšiw)*. *Wortschatz deutscher und anderer europäischer Zigeunerndialekte*. Hamburg (Unveränderter Nachdruck der 2. Auflage von 1987).

WOLFSON, H. A.

- 1947 (1968⁴) *Philo: Foundations of Religious Philosophy in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*. Cambridge, Mass.

WOLOHOJIAN, A. M.

- 1969 *The Romance of Alexander the Great by Pseudo-Callisthenes (Translated from the Armenian Version with an Introduction)*. New York, London.

WUTZ, F. X.

- 1915 *Onomastica Sacra (Texte und Untersuchungen)*. Leipzig.

XAČ'ATRYAN, P. M.

- 1990 "Mi arelcvac Agat'angelosi aṛaḵabanum" (An Enigma in Agat'angelos' Preface). *BEH* 1, 77-83.

XAČ'ATRYAN, V. N.

- 1967 "Xet'a-haykakan dic'abanakan ėndhanrut'yunner" (Common Elements in Hittite-Armenian Mythology). *LHG* 8, 71-79.

XAČ'ATUROVA, E. G.

- 1979 "Drevnejšie armjano indo-iranskijeazykovye kontakty" (The Oldest Armeno-Indo-Iranian Linguistic Contacts). *Hayoc' lezvi hamematakan k'erakanut'yan harc'er* (Problems in the Comparative Grammar of the Armenian Language). Erevan, 325-375.

XAČ'ERYAN, L.G.

- 1971 "Miḵnadari hay matenagitut'yan mi k'ani harc'eri šurj" (Concerning some Problems in Medieval Armenian Literature). *BM* 10, 85-102.

- 1983 *Yovhannēs Erzncac'i. Hawak'umn Meknut'ean K'erakani* (Yovhannēs Erzncac'i. Compilatory Commentary on Grammar). Los Angeles, CA.

XAČIKJAN, LEVON (see also XAČ'IKYAN)

- 2009 *Armjane v drevnej Moskve i na putjax veduščix v Moskvu*. Erevan. (Armenians in Ancient Moscow and on the Routes Leading to Moscow. Russian translation of Xač'ikyan 1980, reprinted in Xač'ikyan 1999).

XAČ'IKYAN, L. (ed.)

- 1967 *ŽE dari hayeren jeḡagreri hišatakaranner. Hator G* (15th Century Colophons of Armenian Manuscripts. Volume 3). Erevan.

XAČ'IKYAN, LEVON

- 1980 "Hayerē hin Moskvayum ev Moskva tanoł čanaparhneri vra" (Armenians in Ancient Moscow and on the Routes Leading to

- Moscow), *BM* 13, 7-107. Reprinted in in Levon Xaç'ikyan, *Aşxatut'yunner. Hator B.* Erevan, 150-240.
- XAJDAKOV, SAID MAGOMEDOVIČ
1973 *Sravnitel'no-sopostavitel'nyj slovar' dagestanskix jazykov* (Comparative-Contrastive Dictionary of the Languages of Dagestan). Moscow.
- XORENAC'I
1913 M. Abelean, S. Yarut'iwnean, eds., *Movsēs Xorenac'i. Patmut'iwn Hayoc'* (Movsēs Xorenac'i. History of the Armenians), Tiflis.
- XYNGOPOULOS, A.
1966 *Les miniatures du Roman d'Alexandre le Grand dans le manuscrit de l'Institut Hellénique de Venise.* Athens - Venice.
- Yačaxapatum Čark'*
1954 *Grigori Lusaworč'i Yačaxapatum Čark'* (Grigor the Illuminator. Stromata). Venice
- YOUNG, F. M.
1997 *Biblical Exegesis and the Formation of Christian Culture.* Cambridge.
- YOVHANNĒS
1984 L. S. Xaç'ikyan & H.D. P'ap'azyan (eds.) *Hovhannes Ter-Davt'yan Jułayec'u hašvetumarē* (The Account Book of Yovhannēs Tēr-Davt'ean from [New] Julfa). Erevan.
- YOVHANNĒS DRASXANAKERTC'I
1980 see Emin 1853.
- YOVSEP'EAN[C'], GAREGIN A. KAT'OLIKOS
1914 *T'ovma Mecop'ec'u keank'ē* (The Life of T'ovma Macop'ec'i). Vałaršapat.
1951 *Yišatakarank' jeřagrac'* (Manuscript Colophons). Antelias.
1969 *Xałbakeank' kam P'rošeank' hayoc' patmut'ean mēř* (The Xałbakeans or P'rošeans in Armenian History) - Re-edition of Vałaršapat, 1928 with additional articles 1913-1948. Antelias.
- YOVSĒP'EANC', S.
1896 *T'angaran hin ew nor naxneac'.* A. Ankanon girk' hin ktakaranac' (Museum of Ancient and Recent Predecessors. I. The Apocryphal Books of the Old Testament) Venice.
- Yušamatean*
1964 H. Yarut'iwn vrd. Hulunean & H. Matt'ēos vrd. Hačean, *Yušamatean Xotorjuri* (Memorial of Xotorjur). Vienna.
- ZANDER, ROBERT (W. ERHARDT, E. GÖTZ, N. BÖDEKER, S. SEYBOLD)
2000 *Handwörterbuch der Pflanzennamen; Dictionary of Plant Names; Dictionnaire des noms de plantes.* Stuttgart. (16th edition)
- ZÄRINÄZADÄ, H. H.
1962 *Fars dilindä Azärbayjan sözläri (Säfävilär dövrü)* (Azeri Words in the Persian Language - In the Safavid Period). Baku.

ZELLINGER, J.

1926 *Studien zu Severian von Gabala*. Münster i. W.

ZEYT'UNYAN, A. S. (ed.)

1985 *Girk' cnndoc'*. (Genesis: Critical Text). Erevan.

ŽHLBB

1969-1980 *Žamanakakic' hayoc' lezvi bac' atrakan bařaran* (Tolkovyj slovar' sovremennogo armjanskogo jazyka. Explanatory Dictionary of the Contemporary Armenian Language). Erevan.

ZIMMERLI, WALTHER

1979 *Ezekiel I: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 1-24*. Philadelphia.

ZOHRAPEAN, Y.

1805 *Astuacařunč' Matean Hin ew Nor Ktakaranac'* (The Divinely Inspired Book of the Old and New Testaments) (reprinted with Introduction by C. Cox, Delmar, NY, 1984). Venice.

Iranian in the *Hekhalot*

JAMES R. RUSSELL

Harvard University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that Zoroastrian Iran exerted a considerable influence upon the formation of Judaism, from the time of the first encounters between the Israelites and the Iranians till the end of the Sasanian period.¹ This note deals with a designation

¹ The *Cambridge History of Judaism* reasonably assigns to these relations as a *terminus post quem* the accession to power of Cyrus the Great in 559 BCE. However it is over a century since Moulton in his *Early Zoroastrianism* postulated a Median tale as the *Vorlage* of the admittedly much later tale of Tobit, which might push the date back a good century. (For some reflections on Iranica in the text see Russell, 2001, reprinted in Russell, 2004.) In a paper forthcoming in "Iran and the Caucasus", *Deuteronomy and the Medes*, I have further advanced the modest proposal that the fifth of the *Five Books of Moses*, with its prophetic and eloquent central character, its strong moral dualism, and its appeal to free choice, bears the strong imprint of Median Zoroastrianism. The scroll of *Devarim* was ostensibly rediscovered in the Jerusalem Temple in 622 BCE, exactly a decade before the Median conquest and destruction of Nineveh, the capital of the hated Assyrian oppressor (cf. Jonah and of course Tobit). Somewhat ironically the great Russian Orientalist Igor Diakonoff in his *Istoriia Midii* suggested a scenario that is in some ways the other way around: that one consider Josiah's presentation of the Levites' scroll to the thunderstruck multitude as a fair analogue to the scene of the acceptance of Zoroastrianism from the Magi by the court of the Medes at Ecbatana. We have no Median texts, only *Nebenüberlieferungen* in Old Persian that are either Median or *Gemeiniranisch*; and, with the possible exception of the structure plausibly identified by Prof. David Stronach as a fire altar at Tepe Nush-e Jan, there are no known religious monuments of the Median period either. What we do have, though, is the huge Middle Iranian religious (and other) loaned vocabulary of Armenian, much of which the late Prof. Anahit Perikhanian called, with reason, Middle Median. And the first known transcription of Kurdish, in a seventeenth-

of Heaven in the *Ma'aseh Merkabah*, the body of late antique Jewish texts that describe a *Himmelsreise der Seele*² that is termed “descent” (*yeridah*) to the Divine chariot.³ The descriptions of the tremendous distances from one palace to another, the staggering dimensions of the angels, the rivers of fire, the *hashmal*⁴ – all are intended to overawe the reader preparing to undergo the ritual of spirit travel.

century Armenian ms, is identified by the copyist as *marerēn*, “Median”. It is, fittingly for the present discussion, a translation, presumably from Armenian, of the Trisagion, possibly for use by Christian proselytes. (See Russell, 1994, repr. in AIS.) For a survey of the Iranian component in Jewish Scripture see Winston, 1966 (for the reference to which I am indebted to my colleague at the Hebrew University and good friend Prof. Michael Stone); since then, the great Iranist Prof. Shaul Shaked of the Hebrew University has shepherded into print the numerous volumes of the *Irano-Judaica* series; and the Israeli scholar Prof. Geoffrey Herman has written many illuminating studies of *Irano-Talmudica*.

² Davila (2001) compares the practitioners of Hekhalot mysticism, including R. Akiva, to the shamans of Siberia and East Asia. They practice prayer, fasting, and seclusion. They often encounter fearsome obstacles – supernatural creatures of various kinds – on their dizzying journey. They pause in the course of their narratives to describe the marvels and dangers of the upper worlds. I have suggested typological comparisons to shamanism of the spirit journeys of numerous Iranian religious figures, from the prophet Zarathustra himself to Arda Viraz, the Sasanian high priest Kartir, and the heretic Mani: see Russell, 1991, repr. in AIS. Again, the Armenian dossier is helpful: see Russell, 1984, repr. in AIS. Just as shamans carry all sorts of talismans and recite magic formulas to protect them on the spirit-road, so the Zoroastrians employed at every stage of their own trips the Avestan mantra *humata hukhta hvarshsta* «good thoughts, good words, good deeds» (see Russell, 2010). *Mutatis mutandis*, descenders to the Chariot employ as a talisman against the angels of violence the *mezuzah* (Davila, 2001, p. 175). This is the text of the credo from *Deuteronomy*, the *Shema*’ («Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One only!»), that is placed in a case with the Divine name *Shaddai* (“the Almighty”) and nailed to one’s doorpost. The same text is contained in the head and arm boxes of the *tefillin* (see below). Such usage might derive from alien shamanic or magical practices, or represent a parallel, internal development.

³ See Russell, 1997, repr. in AIS, on the idea of “descent” here.

⁴ Amber or electrum – basically, a solid substance that is, paradoxically for earth but not so for heaven, also fire. There are walls of *shayish tavor* (“pure marble”)

Shamans generally undertake their dangerous mission in order to heal a person of a physical ailment or a psychological malady (“soul loss”), or to obtain mantic information for the community or affirmation that their faith and practice are true.⁵ The main purpose of the journey is to pray with the angelic host in the presence of God: the liturgy is *grosso modo* the same as that of the *Qedushah*, “Sanctus”, that is sung in synagogues on earth. This is a hymn, derived from the visions of the Prophets Ezekiel and Isaiah, of praise. Even the ritual garb of the participants is the same as that of observant Jews down here.⁶ Another purpose of the journey was to seek the assistance of

that crash like mountainous waves, but one is cautioned not to offend by one’s ignorance and unpreparedness the hosts of heaven by exclaiming «Water, water!» Delving too deeply into such mysteries can lead to madness or worse: the Babylonian Talmud on *Hagigah* 13b describes how a student of Talmud who attempted «to expound the *hashmal*» was consumed by heavenly fire (Morrays-Jones, 2002, pp. 59-60).

- ⁵ Social and existential crisis for the Iranian people in wartime, when their fundamental beliefs are under threat, is thus the motivating situation and narrative context for the journeys of Vishtaspa, and of Arda Viraz, who takes the “*mang* (hallucinogenic drug) of Vishtaspa” to take his own trip. See Russell, 1996.
- ⁶ Thus, the Lord wears phylacteries (*tefillin*), just as we do (except on Shabbat and festivals of course). (See Swartz, 1992, p. 69 & n. 4 and 92: Sandalphon ties them for the Almighty.) Such anthropomorphic details are not unusual in the Hekhalot visions and related literature such as the *Shi’ur Qomah* (a treatise on the dimensions of the Divine body), though they are anomalous to the aniconic spirit of mainstream Judaism. *En lo demut ha-guf ve-eino guf*, «He has no semblance of the body and He is not a body», the standard prayer *Yigdal* insists, echoing the thirteen articles of faith enunciated by Maimonides. For Zoroastrians, even though the supreme God Ahura Mazda is *pad menogan menog*, «a spirit [even] among spirits», that is, transcendent, He is shown in some representations wearing the ritual girdle, the *kusti(g)*, bound with the telltale reef knot. (On the use of this girdle in Armenian see Russell, 1981, repr. in AIS.) In the Hekhalot texts the crowns in heaven have “bindings” (*qishrei ketarim*) (Davila, 2001, p. 62). This detail reminds one again of an Armeno-Iranian practice: the *pativ* (lit. “honor, dignity”) tied – again with a reef knot behind (the Armenian loan-word for this, *ashkharavand*, may be the term now

the angel Yofiel in learning and, most important, remembering *Torah*. Such a mission might seem to have something of the smell of the lucubrations of a Yeshiva student; but one must remember that in the Jewish community it was once believed that an ignorant person cannot be truly pious. God made the *Torah* two millennia before the rest of Creation, so that He might have some time to play with it; and He studies it one quarter of every day. Study is, then, no trivial pursuit.⁷

The material of the Jewish texts on ascent to Heaven has antecedents in the canonical visions of the Prophets, and in Enoch and other apocryphal literature of the inter-testamental period, and draws from Jewish liturgical prayers of the late Second Temple period and after. As we shall see presently, Middle Iranian loan-words are used for a number of key concepts and terms: these come most likely from the time after the destruction of the Temple and in no way before the first century CE. There is a brief passage, most likely from a text of the late first century, that may suggest that Jewish mystics had plotted out

lost in Iranian itself) – around the royal crown. Without it the wearer of the crown did not possess legitimacy. Davila notes that heavenly travelers had up to four crowns, which they had to display to the angelic guardians of the seventh and final palace to gain passage. Why four crowns? These can perhaps represent the four directions or the four letters of the *Tétragrammaton*; cf. the four *tsitsit* (“fringes”) of the *tallit* (“prayer shawl”), the four boxes of the head *tefillin*, and the four-armed form of the Hebrew letter *shin* often inscribed on the latter.

⁷ When I was a postgraduate student at SOAS I had a friend named David, an immensely learned and pious but quite destitute and homeless Orthodox Jew. David had keys to many London synagogues where he was welcome to kip; and mine was one of the many homes where he always found a welcome and a meal. We sometimes discoursed upon *Torah* all night – though we had no disciples, as the Sages did in the Passover *Haggadah*, to come in and tell us it was time for the morning prayer. David once wished to travel to Antwerp to discuss a point of *Torah*: cheap travel was available through the National Union of Students of the UK, but one had to be at some institution of learning to get an ID card. David went to do the needful and later showed me his document with a flourish: it recorded him as a student at the *Yeshivah shel Ma'alah*, the Academy On High. He enjoyed his trip to Belgium; perhaps he has since visited the Hekhalot as well.

a kind of road map of the ritual of ascension to the celestial palaces and the chariot. A number of early Christian authors cite fragments of the *Gospel of the Hebrews*. This is a text, now long lost, that was used, as its name suggests, by Jewish Christians such as the Ebionites⁸ and Nazoraeans who followed Jesus (though some thought him a human prophet, not a divine being). They preserved Sabbath observance and other *mitzvot* including the dietary laws of *kashrut*, and continued to venerate both the Temple itself and the city of Jerusalem by name (not the de-Judaizing euphemism “the holy city”), unlike gentile proselytes who came to deviate from that path and follow what quickly became an irreconcilably different and mostly hostile religion. The original was most likely in Hebrew or Aramaic, and it continued to be known (and deprecated by Pauline Christians) down to the end of the first millennium. Clement of Alexandria (*Stromata* v xiv 96 3) cites this passage from it: «*Ison gar toutois ekeina dynatai: ou pausetai ho zētōn, heōs an eurēi: eurōn de thambēthēsetai, thambētheis de basileusei, basileusas de epanapausetai.*» («For equal to these, those he can do: the seeker will not cease till he finds. Finding, then, he will marvel; having marvelled, he will reign as a king; having reigned, he will rest.») A. F. J. Klijn, who studied minutely this and parallel passages, notes that its rhetorical structure is that of a *skhēma lexeōs* (*figura elocutionis*) or *klīmax* (*gradatio*).⁹ I would suggest that the very literary terminology gives away the practical side of the passage: it is

⁸ This means probably “the poor”, to whom Jesus in his Sermon on the Mount in Matthew (following Psalm 37) promises the inheritance of the world, rather than the followers of a man named Evyon, cf. the designation by Zarathustra of his followers as *dregu-*, “poor (in spirit)”: the Sasanian high priest was *driyōšān jādagōw*, “advocate [= *paraclete*!] of the poor” (i.e., the believers); and as Prof. Nina Garsoian pointed out, the designation by P’awstos of the fourth-century Armenian Christian patriarch as *jadagov zrkeloc*, “advocate of the deprived” is a calque upon the Sasanian title. Muslim Persian *darvīš* is a later reflex of the term, acquiring new, Sufi associations with its Arabic parallel *faqīr*, a term dignified in the Qur’an with its Abrahamic and Iranian precursors.

⁹ Klijn, 1992, p. 5 and pp. 47-51.

a schema, a map – and a ladder to climb with its rungs the stages of the praxis of ascent (cf. the Hebrew and Arabic usages of *sullam*, and of Arabic *mi'rāj*, the latter drawn perhaps from Christian Ethiopic mystical literature). The seeker, be he a student or a seasoned mystical sage, expends effort without rest in prayer and *ascesis*, and finds – that is, he is successful in performing the heavenly journey. Upon arrival above he experiences wonder at the vision of the otherworld, with its awesome gulfs, magnificent chambers that seem to be both stone and water at once, the rivers of fire, the winged beings, the vast spans of the bridges. Then, upon arrival in the seventh palace, the traveller is crowned (cf. Greek *basileuō*, “reign as king”). There, too, in that seventh, Sabbatical chamber, he descends to the Chariot, and is granted rest. So it is possible tentatively to suggest that the Jewish Jesus presented in this text might have been an early adept of the practice that the Rabbinic texts of the *Hekhalot* and *Ma'aseh Merkabah* elaborate. He seems further to assert that others can perform the ascent, too.

The overall praxis of the journey, to the stages of which the passage cited from the *Gospel of the Hebrews* may laconically (and perhaps cryptically) allude, is called by the Iranian loan *raz*, lit. “secret” (the Hebrew for a secret is *sod*);¹⁰ the traveller's goal in heaven is called overall the *pardes*, “Paradise”, also an Iranian loan, here perhaps another term for *gan 'eden*, “the Garden of Eden”, which is a common Jewish designation of the afterlife. God himself sits behind a curtain called *pargod*,¹¹ also an Iranian loan (the veil of the earthy Temple

¹⁰ On *raz* and its use with respect in particular to dream visions (cf. Arm. *eraz*), see Russell, 1992; on the Iranian parallels of Arm. dream visions see Russell, 1988-89, both repr. in *AIS*.

¹¹ The common Armenian word for a curtain, *varagoyr*, derives from the same or a closely similar term in Middle Iranian that gives us the loan *pargod* in Hebrew. The late tenth-century Armenian mystical theologian St. Gregory of Narek composed a cycle of 95 devotional and meditational prayers, the *Matean olbergut'ean* (Book of Lamentation) that can be divided into three parts: successive portions of the liturgy or procession through the chambers of a church to the altar – a kind of Christianized Merkabah journey. The 33rd

is called by the Hebrew term *parokhet*).¹² Why should Iranian loan-words replace well-known ones in Hebrew – the *lashon qodesh* (“sacred tongue”)! – in the terminology of the Merkabah vision? One possible reason is that the Merkabah texts were composed at a time, and in a milieu, when and where Jews used Iranian terminology often and abundantly, in magic and lore even as in law and learning. This would be the Talmudic era, especially in Parthian and Sasanian Babylonia but in the Land of Israel, too. Might we then also find some significant *calques* of Iranian terms in the Merkabah literature? I would suggest there is one such possible case, of some interest.

In *Ma'aseh Merkabah* (para. 551 in Schäfer 1981), R. Akiva beholds the knot of the *tefillin* of the Almighty and recites a hymn of thanksgiving for his safe journey. It is a version of the well-known daily Jewish prayer *'Alenu*, «It is [incumbent] upon us [to praise the Lord of all]». Where the canonical prayer begins in the first person plural, R. Akiva makes it starkly singular, perhaps to underscore his

chapter is to be recited by the celebrant of the Divine Liturgy, an ancient note to the text instructs, till he perceives a visible light streaming down to him. In the text we read: «*nax k'an zkaruc'anel zloycd macuac verjnum varagurid yawrinec'er, karot tirapēs, zbovandak bnut'iwns amenic' bnawic' boloric' goyic' amenayn ēic' yanēic'.*», «before constructing the liquid congealed to your final curtain you fashioned, capable in lordly fashion, the entirety of the natures of every thing that can be, the whole of existent things, of all that are from those that are not.» The liquid-solid should be the wall of the Hekhal about which one is not to exclaim *Mayyim, mayyim!*; the *varagoyr*, the *pargod*. The alliterative pair */luts-mats/* clearly plays with intention on the paradox of liquid reconciled with solid in one substance. The liturgical position of the prayer leaves little doubt that it is a heavenly vision: the light coming down is heaven meeting earth, which is needful for the celebration of the mystery of the mass itself. Armenians had access to an abundance of apocryphal literature, including *the books of Enoch* that underlie in part the *Merkabah* corpus. But the poet and mystic seems to add something personal, linguistically creative, and maybe experiential, to his text. See Russell, 1996-1997.

¹² For the difference between celestial and earthly curtains, see Orlov, 2004 (I am indebted to my colleague and friend, the great Israeli scholar of Kabbalah Prof. Moshe Idel, for this reference) and Morray-Jones, 2002, pp. 163-165.

uniquely successful position in the little band who undertook the journey says instead *‘Alai* – It is upon me! The prayer thanks God for not making us like the nations of the lands or placing us like the families of the earth, but the *‘Alai* version thanks the Lord, more pointedly and vengefully, for not making us «like the ways of the wicked» and not putting us down “like the ways of falsehood». The Iranians call non-Zoroastrians *ak-den*, “of wicked religion” or *druwand* “followers of the lie”, among other complimentary terms – the usage of the hymn, then, transcends Israelite exceptionalism to echo on a vaster scale the moral and cosmic dualism of the Mazdeans, and, indeed, of some of the apocalyptic texts found at Qumran. But wait, there’s more! as American television advertisers are wont breathlessly to exclaim. For after the completion of his altered version of the *‘Alenu*, R. Akiva adds this most unusual and original blessing: «*B’a’y’ ’dyr bħdry šyrh* (*Barukh Ata Adoshem, adir be-ħadrei shirah*)», «Blessed are You, O Lord, resplendent in the chambers of song.»¹³

The designation of heaven as “the chambers of song” in R. Akiva’s concluding blessing is unique in Jewish usage to this block of text in the Hekhalot corpus. It is not found elsewhere, to the best of my knowledge and that of the savants who answered one’s queries on the matter; nor has it a known antecedent expression in the tradition. But Gathic Avestan *garō.dəmāna-*, Younger Avestan *garō.nmāna-*, Zoroastrian Book Pahlavi *rōšn* (“luminous”) *garōdmān*, traditionally believed to mean “house of (welcoming) song”, has been the standard, common Zoroastrian term for the abode of Ahura Mazda in heaven since the beginning of the faith till now. It has a parallel in the earliest and kindred stratum of Indic tradition: Zaehner noted that in the Rig Veda, the king of the Otherworld, Yama, lives in his *māna-* of the *devas* surrounded by *gīr-*, “song”.¹⁴ So the concept of the afterlife as

¹³ Swartz, 1992, pp. 118-125. The blessing with *ħadrei shirah* is found also in para. 549, but not elsewhere.

¹⁴ Zaehner, 1961, pp. 132. One is tempted to derive from Garodman, whether as a proper name (cf. the derivation of Azarbaijan from one Adurbad, though

a place of song might well have pre-dated the Prophet Zarathustra. In the *Gathas* and later texts the term is found most frequently in the proximity of terms that mean “praise” or the like (*stūtō*, *vahmāng*, etc.). So it is reasonable to suppose that from early times Iranians imagined heaven as a place where the angelic hosts and the souls of the righteous sang songs, particularly hymns of praise to Ahura Mazda.¹⁵

I know of no Iranian in history named Gar(o)dman) or an appreciation by a Persian of the heavenly beauty of the place, the Armenian toponym of mid-late Sasanian times Gardman, Gardmanik, Gardmank', etc., cf. Turco-Pers. Gardīman *çay* (river) in the northeastern region of Utik'. *Kird-pān, “protector of the city” or the like, given the location of the place near the barbarian frontier of the Caucasus, might be a more down to earth explanation, since there are Georgian forms with final *-ban* instead of *-man*. But the Arm. attestations and forms are numerous and without such variation, which could be a regular internal development.

- ¹⁵ My friend, colleague, and former pupil Prof. Jennifer Rose alerted me to the recent tendency of some scholars to translate the term instead as “house of welcome”. The suggestion seems to have belonged originally to Prof. Karl Hoffmann, from whom Prof. Jean Kellens adopted it, adding, «Ce sens est beaucoup plus explicite et permet de rompre avec celui de ‘demeure du chant’, qui anticipe dangereusement sur des conceptions religieuses plus récentes selon lesquelles le paradis est l’endroit par excellence où l’on célèbre la divinité» (Kellens, 1974, p. 28 and n. 3). The Greek underworld of Alkestis and Admetos, of Hades and Persephone, takes in all, swallowing them greedily; and Armenians thought the earth-goddess Sandaramet the *pandoki* (i.e., Greek *pandokheion*, “receiver of all” – in later centuries and less sinisterly, the hospitable terrestrial inn, from Iranian into Arabic and all the way to Spanish *fonda*). The Middle Iranian of the House of Song becomes in Armenian, darkly, the loan *gerezman*, “tomb”. So King Tiridates, not yet converted, sarcastically asks his prisoner St. Gregory, soon to be the Illuminator of the nation, whether Christ is some *šahapet*, “tutelary spirit” of the tombs (*gerezmanac*). Why yes, He is, the saint retorts gamely, launching into another homiletic assault on the royal ears. (On these chthonic spirits see Russell, 2014-2015.) But one sees nothing in the *Gathas*, *Yasna Haptanghaiti*, or the later *Avesta* to suggest that singing, and specifically praise singing, in the Zoroastrian heaven was any sort of novelty. No danger at all there, one would think; and whose and what exactly are these undefined «more recent religious conceptions?» Prof. Kellens’ linguistic analysis and argument may be entirely correct, yet still have no direct bearing on our discussion in any case, considering that the Hekhalot texts

It was not the only activity there but given our designation of heaven it is reasonable to suppose it was the most important one.

It is only in the last three decades or so that we have had pictorial representations of that Zoroastrian heaven. They support our conviction that believers in the Good Religion conceived of Garodman as a place of song, at least in the early to mid-first millennium CE. For in the late twentieth century archaeologists began to discover Central Asian ossuaries, then funerary bas-reliefs, mainly of Sogdians, from China that portrayed Zoroastrian funerary rites, the crossing of the bridge of the separator (*Chinvat pul*) to the afterlife, scenes of that otherworld, and portrayals of Zoroastrian divinities and supernatural beings. Prof. Frantz Grenet, followed by Dr. Judith Lerner, were the pioneers in bringing these discoveries, many of which were made by Soviet researchers, to the attention of western savants. (The late Prof. Boris Marshak of the State Hermitage in Leningrad, with his studies of Sogdian frescoes from Penjikent and elsewhere, had already been enlarging our understanding of cultural complexity and cosmopolitanism in eastern Iranian culture.) These finds have changed our conception of Zoroastrianism considerably. Although the Sasanians depicted some *yazatas* in bas-relief, the more zealous priests destroyed temples with images in the round, preferring to found fire temples. Overall the religion of the Persians seemed averse to art – so much so that it was sometimes proposed that Iranian religious ideas influenced the Byzantine iconoclastic movement, perhaps through Armenia. But the Sogdian monuments, of one of which this writer was one of the early interpreters,¹⁶ present a Zoroastrian artistic culture that was rich

come from a period at least a millennium after Zarathustra, when Garodman meant for those who used the term “house of song”, even if the domicile had a welcome mat at the door.

¹⁶ I studied in 1992 the panels at an American gallery that later became holdings of a Japanese family, finally to be housed in the Miho museum (see *Chinese Archaic Bronzes, Sculptures, and Works of Art, June 2 to June 27, 1992*, J.J. Lally & Co., Oriental Art, New York 1992; *Ancient Art from the Shumei Family Collection*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York 1997.) and delivered a

and diverse in the forms it employed and the depictions of sacred beings with a standard iconography that found a place in its canons. For the present purpose, the importance of these monuments is in their portrayal of heaven, and that is without doubt shown as a house of song. One might be able to portray a man or woman singing in bas-relief, but the inherent difficulty is that a person with her mouth wide open and hands spread, might easily be misunderstood by the viewer as a damsel in distress summoning aid, not a diva. The easier shorthand, as legible to the viewer now as it was then, is to carve a musical instrument in the performer's grip. Thus we have a winged *apsara* strumming a lute while flying through an exotic and supernal ether teeming with puffy clouds, gods seated on lotuses, and gambolling *simurghs* and other fabulous beings.¹⁷ Stationary divine beings, too, play music instruments: we know they are supernatural because they stand on lotuses – another handy and easily understood symbol of divinity borrowed from India (and used by the Sasanians, too, in the depiction of the god Mithra at Taq-e Bostan; Christians of the Far East situated the Cross on a lotus, using the same symbolic

lecture, "Zoroastrianism and the Northern Qi Panels," at Harvard in March 1994; and at the University of California, Berkeley, a month later. The lecture was published in the *zs* (= *Zoroastrian Studies*) *Newsletter*, Vol. xvii No. 4, Dec. 1996-Vol. xviii No. 1, Mar. 1997, Bombay (Mumbai). At Harvard, Wheeler Thackston observed that the general composition of some of the scenes suspiciously resembled the miniatures in Islamic Persian manuscripts, to which one replied that the latter did not arise by parthenogenesis, given the rather limited artistic endowments of the conquering Arabs. At Berkeley, Prof. David Stronach declared that the panels were fakes – too good to be true – and that I had been the innocent dupe of an unscrupulous dealer in antiques. But he later accepted in a gracious personal letter that I had been right all along, and apologized for any offense he might have caused. At this remove I can only look back with warmth and gratitude at having had the opportunity to know both those giants of scholarship.

¹⁷ On the east side of the Wirkak sarcophagus, for instance, a winged divinity in the sky of Heaven (on the far side, that is, of Chinvat bridge) is playing a lute: see Shenkar, 2014, p. 348, pl. 162.

language¹⁸). To flip around the Hermetic dictum, As below, so above: on the right half of a double panel from the Miho funereal couch reliefs, a four-armed goddess, probably the Sogdian Nana, looks down at two *bodhisattva*-like beings who are playing musical instruments; and below them are musicians and a female dancer.¹⁹

But given the limitations of pictorial art, how do we know there was singing involved, not just instrumental music? Traditionally, there had to be; and there is no reason to think that the joys of the Mazdean heaven were more restricted than, or appreciably different from, the ones of a happy life below. At the princely and royal courts of ancient Iran and Armenia, the ubiquitous minstrel (*gōsān*, Arm. L-w *gusan*) both played a stringed instrument and also sang to its accompaniment everything from artful praises of his noble employer (if he meant to keep his job) to romances and epics. His patron and the latter's guests sat on their couches, propped up by stacks of pillows, and feasted, and lovely dancers in revealingly diaphanous silken robes often entertained them, too. If *razm*, war, was one half of a ruler's life, then *bazm*, feasting, was the other. I like to hear Greek while I eat, burps the *nouveau riche*, manumitted slave Trimalchio in the *Satyricon*. Manners were probably more decorous on the far side of the Euphrates frontier, but there still had to be lyrics to the music.

The soul of a deceased Zoroastrian chants the *Gathas* for three days before rising to judgment: the cheerful *Ushta* hymn if he has been good; or, if he was wicked, the plaintive *Kam nemoi zam*, a sort of Iranian precursor to the American spiritual «O sinner man, where you gonna run to?» It is likely mortal travellers to the otherworld chanted the mantric *Humata*, *hukhta*, *hvarshata* to power their way. Songs of a sort, then, with lyrics. But although it seems beyond doubt that heavenly minstrels up there sing praise songs and strum lutes, we do not know what tunes exactly were being sung in the Luminous House of

¹⁸ On this image of Mithra and its adoption as that of the Prophet Zarathustra in later tradition, see Russell, 2016.

¹⁹ Juliano and Lerner, 2001, p. 309 and fig. J.

Song, and we have no words. In this respect we are more fortunate in the neighbouring Chambers of Song of Israel, where the angelic chorus, led by Metatron, intone the *Qedushah*. There are musical instruments, too: in 2 *Enoch* 18.8-9, the celestial Watchers (*Egregoroi*, *Trin*) are bidden to perform the liturgy before God, and «four trumpets trumpeted in unison with a great sound, and the Watchers burst into singing in unison. And their voice rose in front of the Lord, piteously and touchingly.»²⁰ Alas, we know all too well what the trumpets probably looked like, too: long, slender, golden – they are shown ahead of the great Temple menorah as part of the plunder of Jerusalem, in the bas-relief on the infamous Arch of Titus.²¹ There were harps and other instruments played in the Temple; and choruses of Levites daily sang the Psalms. The Zoroastrian heaven, then, might have mirrored the usages of the royal court; the Jewish one definitely reflected those of the Temple.

So is the term *ḥadrei shirah* a calque on *Garodman*? A case can be made, when one considers how common is the latter; how rare, the former expression. It is a sound working principle in determining vectors of cultural influence to assign priority to a phenomenon that is commonplace in one tradition, but unusual, in another. The culture where it is commonplace is the transmitter; the one where it is unusual, the receiver. But there is no need of a baldly essentialist assertion of one-way transmission, either; and such a simplistic picture would in any case most likely be misleading, since no culture is

²⁰ Orlov, 2004, p. 21.

²¹ It is a monument to barbarism, a model for the later art (as it were) of fascism. After Israel lost the war of 66-74 CE, the Romans dispersed Jewish prisoners to various cities to be thrown to wild beasts or be forced to fight each other as gladiators. *Ou thriambēsomai*, «I will not be marched in a triumph», Cleopatra said, knowing the humiliations that lurked ahead of Actium, as she committed suicide rather than be taken prisoner; many of our ancestors, on Masada, chose to die as free men rather than live as Roman slaves. A stubborn lot, the Jews. May the Temple be rebuilt, speedily and in our days. Masada shall not fall again.

a *tabula rasa*. It is evident besides that the Hekhalot were conceived of houses of song from the start and R. Akiva did not need to know Parthian to describe them thus, to give them such a name. But in the Land of Israel, where tradition tells us that if you saw an Arsacid cavalry mount hitched to a post, you were to look with eager hope for the footsteps of the Messiah, Iranian ideas were in the air. And farther east, in Dura-Europos, Iranian images were on the very walls of the synagogue. Iranian words sounded good to the ear; and awareness of the term Garodman might have served as a helpful nudge towards the coining of a term for which there was already internal justification aplenty.

And then there is the matter of the architecture of heaven. There are roads, rivers of fire, and bridges. Often the paths of heaven (*shvilei shamayim*) and the bridges are confused.²² It is as though they were a new element superimposed on the earlier landscape, but without a clear idea of their function. Angels stand on them, or on roads, and challenge wayfarers. All this sounds very much like the Zoroastrian *Chinvat pul*, where if you are accounted righteous (as Kartir was, so he even depicted it in bas-relief), you meet your *Daēnā*, the lovely maiden who is the embodiment of your religious virtues in life. If you have been a sinner, the bridge narrows, a horrid hag clutches you in her withered arms, and down you plunge to the pit of hell, there to be mocked and abused by the evil spirit Ahreman and his pandemonium. The Zoroastrian bridge is an integral and logical part of the whole scheme of transit to the afterlife; while for Enoch, the Midrash *Mishle*, but especially the Hekhalot texts, the bridges are perhaps not so much afterlife as afterthought. Perhaps somebody heard about the Mazdean span of the separator and liked the idea; so, a borrowing again?

I do not know. One simple explanation of these bridges might be that Second Temple Jerusalem – then as now a hilly place – had them, in particular the famous one that spanned the valley between

²² Swartz, 1992, p. 71.

the western wall of the Temple Mount and the district where the high priests lived (now the Jewish and Armenian Quarters). Archaeology and other antiquarian pursuits are extremely important; but for a continuously living religion that addresses the entirety of real life, as Judaism does, they are secondary. In the early nineteenth century the Hasidic master R. Nachman of Breslov did something else, then, with these bridges. He inverted them: he took the celestial bridge and brought it solidly down to earth, making of it a lucid metaphor of man's life span. Then he changed it from a visionary image of shock and awe to be negotiated by an adept, into an existential condition for the *shtetl* Jew to encounter and make his way across in piety and joy. Rav Nachman's bridge is to be crossed, not in a state of trance buttressed by esoteric learning and magical preparation, but with faith and trust. He bade his followers: «*Kol ha-'olam kullo gesher tsar me'od, ve-ha-'iqqar lo le-hitpahed klal*», «All the world in its entirety is a very narrow bridge, and the point is not to be afraid at all». Enough of the noumenous – *don't* be afraid! His words have become a *niggun*, a Hasidic song, that is popular in Israel and the diaspora. This injunction not to fear really is the main point. The Jew is to venture boldly where angels fear to tread, but it makes of him not a fool, but a saint.

A little over century later, in 1927, the *Friediker Rebbe* of Chabad Lubavitch, R. Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn of blessed memory, emerged from his exile by the Soviet regime in Kostroma, and composed a Russian mantra: «*He боюсь я никого, и не верю никому, только Богу одному. Нет, нет никого кроме Него одного!*», «I do not fear anyone, and I do not believe anyone, only God alone. No! No! There is no one at all but Him!». And these verses of defiant rejection of fear, but of love and praise, too, and the profession of the absolute oneness of God that harks back to the *Shema* as well (it also encodes Kabbalistic ontology), became a *niggun*, set to a vigorous old Russian tune. Thousands sing it now, and one hopes all the good souls of Creation will join in its happy chorus someday, here on earth in the kingdom of Moshiach, and before the Master of the Universe, in the luminous chambers of song.

Bibliography

- J. R. Davila, *Descenders to the Chariot: The People behind the Hekhalot Literature*, Brill, Leiden 2001.
- A. F. J. Klijn, *Jewish-Christian Gospel Tradition*, Brill, Leiden 1992.
- A. L. Juliano and J. A. Lerner, *Monks and Merchants: Silk Road Treasures from Northwest China, Gansu, and Ningxia, 4th-7th Century*, Abrams, New York 2001.
- J. Kellens, *Les Noms-Racines de l'Avesta*, Reichert, Wiesbaden 1974.
- C. R. A. Morray-Jones, *A Transparent Illusion: The Dangerous Vision of Water in Hekhalot Mysticism, A Source-Critical and Tradition-Historical Inquiry*, Brill, Leiden 2002.
- A. Orlov, *Celestial Choirmaster: The Liturgical Role of Enoch-Metatron in Enoch and the Merkabah Tradition*, "Journal for the Study of the Pseudepigrapha", 14.1, 2004, pp. 3-29.
- J. R. Russell, *The word k'ustik in Armenian*, in Aa. Vv. (a cura di J. A. C. Greppin, Delmar), *Proceedings of the First International Conference on Armenian Linguistics*, Caravan Books, New York, 1981, pp. 107-114.
- The Platonic Myth of Er, Ara, and Arda Viraz*, "Revue des Etudes Arméniennes", 18, 1984, pp. 477-485.
- The Dream Vision of Anania Shirakats'i*, "Revue des Etudes Arméniennes", 21, 1988-1989, pp. 159-170.
- Kartir and Mani: A Shamanistic Model of Their Conflict*, in *Festschrift Ehsan Yarshater*, "Acta Iranica", 30, 1991, pp. 180-193.
- Sleep and Dreaming in Armenian*, in Aa. Vv. (a cura di J. A. C. Greppin, Delmar), *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Armenian Linguistics*, Caravan Books, New York 1992, pp. 147-169.
- On Armeno-Iranian Interaction in the Medieval Period*, in Aa. Vv. (a cura di R. Gysselen), *Au carrefour des religions. Mélanges offerts à Philippe Gignoux. Res Orientales*, VII, 1994, pp. 235-238.
- A Parthian Bhagavad Gita and its Echoes*, in Aa. Vv. (a cura di J. P. Mahé, R. W. Thomson), *From Byzantium to Iran: In Honour of Prof. Nina Garsoïan*, GA: Scholars Press, Atlanta 1996, pp. 17-35.
- Liturgical Mysticism and the Narek*, "Revue des Etudes Arméniennes", 26, 1996-

1997, pp. 427-439.

The Four Elements and the Cross in Armenian Spirituality, with an Excursus on the Descent in Merkavah Mysticism, "Jewish Studies Quarterly", 4.4, 1997, pp. 357-79.

God is Good: Tobit and Iran, Iran and the Caucasus v, Tehran 2001, pp. 1-6.

Armenian and Iranian Studies, Armenian Heritage Press and Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9, Cambridge (MA) 2004 (=AIS).

An Armenological Note on Kartir's Vision, in *Dasturji Dr. Hormazdyar Dastur Kayoji Mirza Birth Centenary Memorial Volume*, Dastur Kayoji Mirza Institute, Udvada (Gujarat, India) 201, pp. 253-258.

An Armenian Spirit of Time and Place: the Švot, "Revue des Etudes Arméniennes", 36, 2014-2015, pp. 13-59.

On the image of Zarathustra, in Aa. Vv. (a cura di A. Williams, S. Stewart, A. Hintze), *The Zoroastrian Flame: Exploring Religion, History, and Tradition*, I. B. Tauris, London 2016, pp. 147-178.

P. Schäfer, *Synopse zur Hekhalot-Literatur*, Mohr, Tübingen 1981.

M. Shenkar, *Intangible Spirits and Graven Images: The Iconography of Deities in the Pre-Islamic Iranian World*, Brill, Leiden 2014.

M. D. Swartz, *Mystical Prayer in Ancient Judaism: An Analysis of Ma'aseh Merkavah*, Mohr, Tübingen 1992.

D. Winston, *The Iranian Component in the Bible, Apocrypha, and Qumran: A Review of the Evidence*, *History of Religions* 5.2 (Winter 1966), pp. 183-216.

R. C. Zaehner, *The Dawn and Twilight of Zoroastrianism*, Putnam, New York 1961.

FROM PARTHIA TO ROBIN HOOD:
THE EPIC OF THE BLIND MAN'S SON.

James R. Russell
Harvard University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem

לכבוד הרב מיכאל סטון מורי וידיד נפשי

Nearly a quarter century ago, as we sat by his stove on a cold Jerusalem winter night sipping arak and nibbling sunflower seeds, Prof. Michael Stone declared that it was time I began a new large project, on epic. Since then one has researched Armenian epic literature, from the fragments of the great cycles of the pre-Christian Artaxiads and early Christian Arsacids to the mediaeval and modern folk epics of Sasun and Kašt. Most of these researches have been published and reprinted (*An Armenian Epic: The Heroes of Kasht*, Ann Arbor: Caravan, 2000; and *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies, 2004). This essay considers the ramifications (that pun will become apparent presently) of another; and it is a pleasure and honor to dedicate it to a great scholar and lifelong friend.

The epic of the Blind Man's Son (*Köroğlu*) has long been popular among Armenians, and several versions in Armenian are known— both transcriptions from oral recitations in dialect and renderings into the standard modern literary language. But all the characters are Muslims and by far the greatest number of versions of the epic are in Turkic languages, from Central Asia through Iran into Azerbaijan and Turkey. However one must agree with some other scholars that the early form of the epic probably took shape in Arsacid Armenia, with its roots in Iranian types that are older still. The dossier of Armenian epic is thus incomplete without consideration of it; and it is of additional interest in that, unlike the dynastic cycles, it deals with bandits and men of the lower and oppressed classes, rather like

other narratives elsewhere of the Robin Hood type. Its study calls for different methods and other paradigms than those used to interpret the standard epic hero and his martial deeds. The latter's tragic flaw is often his overweening pride, Greek *hubris*; whilst in the bandit epic the Greek derivative verb in its passive voice, *hubrizomai*, to be the humiliated victim of another's pride and violence, supplies the key motif and structural turning point of the plot.

There is a fairly concise but very interesting version of the epic of Kōroğlu in eastern Armenian here that was produced at the turn of the 20th century by an *ashugh* ("minstrel") who worked from both printed Turkish editions and familiar oral recitations by fellow masters of his craft.¹ He intended it for the edification of a community midway between rural mediaeval tradition and urban modernity, between the cultures of orality and print. Though his text was composed in a newly standardized literary language and was set in type at a modern press, it was intended to be enjoyed by an audience used to hearing it spoken and chanted aloud. Such a nexus of cultures, of technologies, is not unique for a people whose history stretches unbroken across cataclysms and ruptures that have brought an end to the career of some nations and thrown up others. Another example of a story with venerable pedigree in Armenian and roots to the east that began its career orally and then found its way into written and then printed literature is the "Tale of the City of Brass (or Bronze)" (Arm. *Patmut'iw n pñjē k'alak'i*) from the collection *Thousand Nights and a Night*, the story most likely going back itself still farther, in my view, to the tale of the Phantom City in the *Saddharmapundarikasutra* ("Lotus Sutra of the Good Law"), a monument of Mahayana Buddhism crafted most likely among speakers of Eastern Iranian languages along the trading roads of Central Asia.²

¹ Mkrtič' Taleanc' (Ashəg [Ashugh] Jamali), tr. from Tk. to Arm., *K'ōrōllu hek'iat'ə Gzir ōllui ew Pōli bēki het patahac anc'k'erə*, Part I, Tiflis: Tparan Movsēs Vardaneanc'i, 1897, repr. in Rāzmik Sołomonyan, ed., *Aṣuṭ Łarib, K'yor-Ōlli, Amrah ev Salvi, Alvan ev Ōsan*, Erevan: Zart'onk'-90, 1992.

² "The Cross and the Lotus: The Armenian Mediaeval Miscellany *The City of Bronze*," in Vesta Curtis and Sarah Stewart, eds., *The Rise of Islam (The Idea of Iran, Vol. 4)*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2009, pp. 71-81.

When one speaks in Armenia today of heroic epic, it is the great saga in four branches (*čiwł*) of *Sasna crer*, “The Wild Men of Sasun”, also known by the name of its most prominent character as “David of Sasun” (*Sasunc’i Dawit’*). That epic, first set down in writing by Garegin Sruanjteanc’ from an oral reciter and published in 1874— and since then transcribed in scores of variants— has taken pride of place as the “national” epic of Armenia.³ But long before the epic of Sasun became widely known to the reading public, there was another that already enjoyed great popularity and wide diffusion among Armenians from Constantinople to Astrakhan, and from the 17th century well into the 20th. Soviet Armenians were to renew their acquaintance with it *via* a famous opera and from Russian translations; and Armenians in Turkey and Azerbaijan were familiar with it because of its great popularity and “national” status in those countries. But few surmised that its roots are in part in the culture of ancient Armenia itself. That is understandable, since its main characters are all Muslims, mainly Shi’i, with Persian and Turkic names; and most of the variants are in Turkic languages, principally Azeri and Turkmen, and as far east as Kirghiz, though there are Kurmanci Kurdish, Persian, Georgian, and Armenian variants, with recitations also in Modern Greek. The roots of the epic are in eastern Anatolia, but its diffusion is so general that it was for some centuries a *Gemeinsage* of common folk of the Near East and Central Asia. The political divides in recent times between the various peoples inhabiting the region have become so

³ I will attempt to demonstrate that the epic of Köroğlu has its roots in the pre-Christian culture of what might be called “Greater Iran”: Arsacid Northern Mesopotamia, Armenia, and Parthia, and Scythia beyond. In a series of studies I have explored aspects of the antiquity of the epic of Sasun: “On the Armeno-Iranian Roots of Mithraism”, “Revelations of Darkness: Medieval Armenian Apocalyptic in the Epic of Sasun and the Visions of Yovhannēs Kozern,” “Iran and Israel in the Epic of Sasun”, “The *Šāh-nāme* in Armenian Oral Epic”, “The *Šaraf-nāme* and Armenia: Some Mythological Themes”, “Epic in the Irano-Armenian Marchlands”, and several other articles, reprinted in J.R. Russell, *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9, Cambridge, MA, 2004. See also “Argawan: The Indo-European Memory of the Caucasus,” *JArmenSt* VIII.2, Fall 2006 [2007], pp. 110-147; “The Shrine Beneath the Waves,” *RES* 51, Cambridge, MA, Spring 2007, pp. 136-156 (Russian tr. in *Rossiia XXI*, Moscow, 2007, pp. 10-43); “The Epic of Sasun: Armenian Apocalypse,” in press in the *Proceedings*, ed. by S. La Porta, of “After the Apocalypse: The *Nachleben* of Apocalyptic Literature in the Armenian Tradition,” The Center for Literary Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Israel, 4 June 2007.

acute that the idea of such a widely shared literary work, expressive of shared cultural values and themes, is no longer intuitive.

Despite its strong association with Turkic cultures one proposes that the epic of Köroğlu (or, in Azeri, Koroğly, henceforth K), “The Blind Man’s Son”, has its origins in the world of pre-Islamic Iran and of the Parthian Arsacids in particular, its themes and symbols informing a tale of Mesopotamian Jewry in the *Jewish Antiquities* of Josephus, first century CE, in the *Iranica* of the Babylonian Talmud some two to three centuries later, and in the epic of the Arsacid king Aršak II in the fifth-century *Buzandaran* of P’awstos. The subject matter of these early testimonies was and remained popular because it endowed with heroic characteristics and dimensions a particular kind of hero appreciably different from the regal Agamemnon or Arthur. Ours is not a haughty nobleman but the brave and cheerful bandit who rebels against unjust authority, robs the rich, and gives to the poor. A versatile fellow, he knows how to get by as an itinerant bard, a glib trickster. He doesn’t brood like Achilles. Like so many of us in the real world, he has to hustle. In the West the English Robin Hood with his band of merry men in Sherwood Forest is so much an exemplar of the type that his name is often used simply to define it. But these epics are rolling stones that as they tumble through history gather moss. As will be seen to have been the case with K, the historical Robin Hood of the 14th century seems to have inherited in the legends that crystallized around him the ready-made heroic exploits and characteristics of the hero of a folk epic tradition perhaps five centuries older.

K is not just an interesting Oriental text, an *oikotype* of the Robin Hood theme. It is a classic of its genre, fit to be studied and enjoyed as literature for its own sake; and once a work is thus defined it is licit to study it in translation, since its value is no longer simply philological. A student asked to read a book without immediate utility, if it does not belong to a branch of specialized scholarship in which he is acquiring mastery, is justly entitled to require an answer to the question “So what?” about it. So one will also discuss why this epic and other ballads and

sagas about robbers and bandits are important to the world's spiritual culture, to our understanding of how men through the ages have sought answers to the seemingly permanent problem of human inequality and injustice, much as they have invented sacred scriptures to grapple with the perennial conundrum of theodicy. One will also endeavor to propose how the method of the study of this type of epic can help one to understand some other signal events in remote and recent history that have crystallized into legend.

K can be divided variously; but it is common to break it up into more or less thirty episodes, sometimes called "branches" (Turkmen *şaxá*, from Pers. *šāx*; compare the Arm. *čiwł* "branch", used of the four parts of the Sasun epic) as though the different episodes stemmed from one great and hoary tree trunk, a sort of *Ur*-epic. In this way its reciters, called in Pers. *Kūroylū-xwān* ("K-reader/chanter") analogously to the recounters of Ferdousi's *Book of Kings*, who are dignified by the appellation *Šāh-nāme-xwān*, can work through the whole Muslim month of fasting, Ramadan, reciting each evening for an hour or so the prose sections called in Ar. *qişsa* interspersed with poems sung to the accompaniment of the *saz*, a stringed instrument like a lute. Iranian reciters of the *Book of Kings* often work in coffee houses whose walls are adorned with frescoes of different episodes and characters that they gesture to during their performances, which often include improvisatory passages mentioning and praising the evening's company. Most of the rural reciters of the K epic are poor and perform in barns or other impromptu places: some in modern southeastern Turkey are sharecroppers who augment their meager income by their art. Such was the case with the Armenian reciters of the Epic of Sasun. In the years before the Turks destroyed in the 1915 Genocide the millennial civilization of the Armenians in most of their land, reciters of the Sasun epic would perform for some thirty listeners gathered for warmth on winter nights in the barns where animals sheltered. They, too, both spoke and chanted, and played the same stringed instrument. The reciters of K, like those of the Sasun cycle, tend to have mastered a varied repertory of epics, romances, and ballads; and, like the Armenians again, some but not all know K by heart in its entirety.

First, then, the bare bones of the story: there is a man, the royal stable master. He has various names in the versions of the epic, but 'Alī, the name that marks eastern, Iranian Islam, is common. A magic stallion, the famous *asp-e bahrī* "horse of the sea" of Iranian folklore, comes out of the waves and impregnates one of the royal mares. Ali duly informs the king— usually this is the great late 16th-early 17th century Safavid Šāh 'Abbās, though again there are others in variants of the epic— that the colt to be born of this union will be the greatest horse in the world, and the king enthusiastically awaits it. The foal Ali presents to his liege lord is ugly, though; so the monarch orders it destroyed; and, enraged at having been embarrassed by the lowest servant of the royal entourage, blinds the stable master. Ali, his sight darkened, still saves and hides the horse, instructing his only son, Rōšan, whose Persian name means rather ironically in the context of his father's sudden darkness "bright, shining, clear", to keep the colt in a lightless stable for a specified time, such as forty days. The boy either inadvertently or through impatience lets a glimmer of light in. The horse will still be strong; but, had he obeyed his father to the letter, it would also have sprouted wings. This interruption of a magical process that would have brought perfection will be recognized as an old folklore type. Some versions add that Ali instructs Rushan to bring him a special milky foam from a spring: again, the boy brings the liquid but cannot resist eating all the tasty foam on the way. Ali says sadly that the foam would have restored his sight; but at least it will make Rushan an invincible warrior. In yet another version, Rushan is instructed in a dream to taste foam of three colors on the river, which will endow him with three skills.

The horse, meanwhile, has grown big and strong; and is named *Kīr-at* (Arm. *Ł(ə)rat'*, pron. /Gherát/), lit. "dappled gray horse" (tr. thus in Arm. as *Pisak*, also) after its color. It is an unremarkable name; but then the name of the steed of Rustam, the great hero of the *Book of Kings*, Raxš, just means "reddish brown"; and Alexander's Bucephalus was, well, blunt-nosed like an ox. Rushan takes Kirat out to ride. The youth is instructed by his father to fill a furrow with water over and over

for three days and then ride Kirat there till his hooves get through the mud and kick up the dry earth below. As we have it, this is a strength exercise; but I think it is a late rationalization of an earlier motif whose supernatural symbolism had been forgotten. In the fourth and final branch of the epic of Sasun, the last of the heroes, *P'ok'r Mher*, i.e., Mithra the Younger, finds that the earth has become too soft to support the hooves of the magic steed of his line, *K'urkik Jalali*, "Mighty Little Colt" (the diminutive suffix *-ik* in Arm. usage can be used of respectful affection; the horse is a giant). This is a sign that the world is too evil for the heroes to inhabit any longer; and Mher is to go with the horse into Ravens' Rock at Van— a blind portal inscribed with invocations to the Urartean gods— to wait for the end of days, when a grain of wheat will be the size of a hop and the ground will be hard. As it is, the king sees the splendid Kirat and demands him for the royal stable. Rushan, staring down proudly from the saddle, insultingly refuses, declaring himself for the first time Son of the Blind Man. K and his father escape from Iran into Turkey; and thereafter Ali leaves the story.

K founds a fortress at a place called *Çamlıbel*, "Misty Mountain" (but Tolkien probably did not hear of it: the geographical sources of Middle Earth are northern European), at a spot where the caravans traveling to and from Baghdad, Constantinople, Tabriz, and Isfahan must pass. This crossroads of the Ottoman and Safavid empires is in Armenia; and tradition generally locates it at Sivas (Arm. Sebastia): most of the action of the non-Central Asian versions epic takes place in Western and Persian Armenia, the vicinity of Kars, Erzurum (Arm. Karin), and Salmast. K assembles about him a colorful cast of brigands and outlaws, some of whom bear the epithet *dali*, "crazy" (Tk. *delli*, cf. Arm. *cuṛ*).⁴ Some are as strong and brave as he, and join him after a contest or confrontation: though he is leader, the sense is not of yet another feudal order but of a band of free men who follow their

⁴ In the Oğuz epic *Dede Korkut*, which incorporated numerous Armenian and ancient Anatolian themes the Turkic invaders of Anatolia encountered, there is a character called *Delli Dumrul* who seems to be based upon the same Polyphemus-like ogre as the Armenian Tork' Angel: see J.R. Russell, "Polyphemus Armenios," *REArm* 26, 1996-1997, pp. 25-38.

leader out of respect. Though K's men abduct for him the lovely princess Nigâr *xānom* (Pers., "Picture", cf. Arm. l-w *nkar*, as in "pretty as a..."— and the old *topos* of falling in love because of a picture one has seen figures in some versions) and he bears a son, there is no foundation of a dynasty to rival those of the Persians and Turks. The person closest to K seems to be the kidnapped, beautiful youth Ayyvaz, who fights alongside him and waits upon him, whom he dotes on and grooms as his heir. It is not clear what else the hero does with this Ganymede; but in any case K's only true mate is neither fellow robber nor noble princess nor even handsome boy. It is his horse, Kirat— just as with Rostam and Rakhsh.

The bulk of the tales are self-contained narratives of adventures, mostly raids, in which K robs the rich and gives to the poor. He is an *aşık*, a minstrel (cf. Arm. l-w *aşut*; the word is Ar. '*aşūq*, "lover", the minstrels of pre-Islamic times having been called Mlr. *gōsān*, Arm. l-w *gusan*, "singer"): often he sings to his friends and foes rather than speaking to them, but sometimes— as when he is captured— he sings of the exploits of K while pretending to be somebody else. K is thus a witty trickster and romantic lover, very different indeed from, for instance, pious Aeneas with his Dido-denying *gravitas*. The manner of K's end differs from one version to another of the epic: he is killed, or Kirat is killed. Or he dies peacefully, making Ayyvaz his heir, and puts down his sword. Another ending is supernatural, and recalls the apocalyptic ending of the epic of Sasun, in which the last of the heroes, *P'ok'r* Mher, Mithra the Younger, is occulted into a cave till the end of days: K simply vanishes, or else goes to join the forty immortal saints of the mythology of the mystical Shi'a Bektashi sect. An apocalyptic dénouement is interesting: as we shall see, bandit rebellions frequently compensate for their lack of a coherent social program or ideology with inchoate visions of a violent end to this unjust world, believing also that their leaders can die only by treachery, if at all.

The earliest dated recorded version of K is the *Kūrōyli-nāma*, written in Pers. in the Tabriz area in the 1840's at the request of the Orientalist Alexander Chodzko, who soon afterwards published a much embellished and somewhat bowdlerized

English translation.⁵ As already noted, there are versions from as far west as Greece and as far east as Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, and Kirghizia: in general, the farther east one goes, the more K is cast as a ruler rather than a robber.⁶ There are at least two published Arm. versions of the K epic. One, printed at Tiflis in 1897, is a rendering into a fairly standard Eastern Armenian from Tatar (as Azeri Turkish was then called) prose and verse by Mkrtič' Taleanc', whose name as a minstrel, was Ashugh Jamali. G. T'arverdyan in 1941 published a long versified text transcribed in dialect from recitations by *ashughs* repatriated to Russian Armenia from Persarmenia (Khoy and Salmast) and the Vaspurakan region of Western Armenia (Van, Başkale, Moks). The latter area was a center also of recitation of the Sasun epic, much of whose action takes place in the vicinity; and Moks (Clas. Arm. Mokk') was the home of the famous heroic ballad Mokac' Mirza (i.e., Mirza of Moks) and of the epic *Kašti k'aĵer*, "The heroes of [the village of] Kasht".⁷ So the epic of K would have been part of a rich oral culture and an extensive repertory: the traces of one tale in another bear witness to a natural reciprocity— an inter-textuality of the spoken word— in the learning, transmission, and reception of these works.

And there is ample evidence that the epic was known and popular long before the modern period. Late in the 17th century the historian Arak'el of Tabrīz (Arm. Dawrižec'i), in his account of the reign of Shah Abbas, lists the names of the bandit-leaders of the Jelali uprising, about which we will have more to say presently. One of these is K: *Ays ayn K'ōrōġlin ē, or bazum xaġ ē asac'eal: zor ayžm ašāġnern eġanaken* "This is that Kōroġli [thus, with the Azeri ending -i instead of -u] who recited many songs that *ashughs* perform now." Not long after, in 1721, Elías Astuacatur Mušeġeanc', a rather colorful individual from Erzurum who made his

⁵ The book is extremely useful and its annotations are enlightening and informed by direct experience. It has become common for students of the East to deride the work of the Victorians. That is unfortunate; but intelligent readers of Russian literature are beginning to turn from inferior recent translations back to another Eminent Victorian, Constance Garnett.

⁶ See Judith M. Wilk, "The Persianization of Koroġlu: Banditry and Royalty in Three Versions of the Koroġlu 'Destan'," *Asian Folklore Studies*, Nanzan University, Vol. 60, No. 2, 2001, pp. 305-318.

⁷ See J.R. Russell, *The Heroes of Kasht: An Armenian Epic*, Ann Arbor, MI: Caravan Books Armenian and Caucasian Series, 2000.

living as a merchant and was arrested at Astrakhan' by the Russians as a Persian spy, compiled, and I quote, "A book of songs of music, composed by diverse men and having relation to obscure matters, that is, conceived by poetic men. For that reason, here, I wanted to inscribe something of the sayings those men fashioned, which is pleasure of the body for our brethren. I consider it better thus to bring enjoyment, than to engage in slanderous speech about other people... The sayings concerning K. This K was an Ottoman Turk by race: they say he was from the land of Bayazet. He dwelt in the mountains and forests of the land of the Ottomans, and with many horsemen guarded the passes and the roads. Sometimes he robbed merchants, and sometimes he accepted donations that were freely offered. His actual dwelling was between the cities of Kars and Karin. There is a great wood now named Soğanlı [i.e., "Onionful"]. There he erected a fortress that is called Kôr Oğlı *kalesi* ["fortress"]; and he has fortresses in other places. This was in the time of the king of the Persians Shah Abbas and during the reign of Sultan Murat of the Turks. It was his custom to make merry and to savor the pleasures of the mountains and the forests. Because of his merrymaking his voice resounded through the mountains and the flowering plains of the region. He rebelled against the king. His history is lengthy; but this is not the place to write it. He also captured every beautiful boy and absconded from the city, on account of which many praises are sung. We will write down here, to the best of our ability, what we have heard."⁸

The stories of K remained popular in the early 19th century. Xač'atur Abovean, whose *Vērēk' Hayastani* ("The Wounds of Armenia") is considered the first modern Armenian novel, thought the bandit-minstrel a member of his own nation. He wrote: "So what, at last, was one to do, that both our own hearts and other nations might understand, even praise us, and love our tongue? I remained mired in doubt. I knew how many notable, wise, talented men there had been in the lands of the Ottomans and the *Kızılbaş* [Tk. "Red Hats", i.e., Shi'a Iran], minstrels loved at the court of Khan, Shah, and Sultan, fine singers of lays and shapers of verses— and

⁸ See X. Samvelyan, intro. to G. T'arverdyan, ed., *K'yoř-ōhli žołovrdakan vipasanut'yun*, Erevan: Armfan, 1941.

many were Armenians. Keşiş oğlu and Kör oğlu are sufficient for my words not to ring false.” And a century before, Joseph Emin had rendered into Armenian a quatrain by K recited to him by Muḥammad Ḥasan Xān of Ganja: *Barik’i dēm, barik’/ Amēn mardu gorc ē;/ Č’arik’i dēm, č’arik’—/ Ktrič mardu gorc ē* “Rendering good for good/ Is the work of every man;/ But repaying evil with evil/ Is the business of the brave.” The late 18th-century Armenian bard of Tiflis, Sayat’ Nova, composed his lyrics in several languages; but the primary tongue of the *ashugh*— understood, therefore, by most listeners of any nationality or confession in the Transcaucasus— was “Tatar”, the regional Azeri Turkish. So it may be supposed that Armenians knew the K epic in that language. Still, Emin’s citation shows that rendering it into Armenian was an option, with a precedent. Later in the 19th century the writer, poet, and revolutionary Ėrap’ayēl Patkanean began an Armenian version of his own of K that was to remain unfinished. He wrote of it, “My K is an Armenian, but for a reason understandable to me he rejects the Armenian faith. I intend to quicken in him, in my own fashion, the last embers of Armenian independence... My hero, for the sake of the idea to which he has dedicated himself, sacrifices the most precious and sacred treasure a man has— his religion. I want to unite in him two elements: his God-given talent and lofty soul, and his subtle patriotism...” In this case, the hero’s Islamic faith is an intentional and painful rejection of Armenian Christianity: many reformists believed that the subjugated condition of the Armenians was to be blamed on the emasculating injunction of Christian morality to turn the other cheek. So some sought a revival of an imagined paganism; others maintained that the militant ethos of Islam had encouraged and preserved the virility of the Turks and Kurds.

After Patkanean another Eastern Armenian writer, Łazaros Ałayeanç’, rendered into Armenian a quatrain recited by the hero during one of his exploits incognito as a minstrel this way: *Es mi Jalali em, anuns Ėrušan,/ Hōrs anunn ē Xor; mōrs, Xorišan./ Arhestov ašut em, inč’pēs tesnum ēk’:/ Or es K’yor’ ōllin č’em, aha jez nšan* “I am a Jelali; my name, Rushan./ May father’s name is Xor; my mother’s, Xorišan./ By trade I am an *ashugh*, just as you see,/ And here’s a sure sign that K

ain't me." What is interesting here is the mention of an apparent variant of the hero's name, *Xor oğlu*. In Turkmen, with the pronunciation of K as *Gör-oghli*, tradition explains that Rushan was born miraculously of a dead mother, in the dark of the grave (from the Pers. l-w *gūr*). In the Sasun epic, both the young David and his horse are immured in lightless chambers. David's relatives do this, not as a kind of incubation to nurture their strength, as in the case of Kirat above, but to prevent hero and steed from emerging and raising a rebellion against the Arab tyrant Msramelik'. The Arm. for "deep" is *xor*, a loan from Mlr. and a good paronomastic stand-in for *gur*. In some versions of the Sasun epic there is even a peripheral figure, somewhat supernatural, who makes brief appearances as *Xor manuk*, "Deep child", *manuk* being the Arm. equivalent of *oğul*, "boy, child".⁹ So it is possible that a type of the figure of K has made its shadowy way into the epic that was itself to overshadow K's story in Armenian literature.

The epic of Sasun in its essence is of very great antiquity: the magic, foaming milk of which the heroes are engendered, the unequal founding twins Sanasar and Bałdasar, the magic horse from the sea, battles with dragons, the two heroes who bear the name of the Zoroastrian divinity Mithra, as Mher— are all pre-Christian mythological *topoi* in a cycle of narratives that crystallized in its present form around the events of the ninth-century freedom struggle of the Armenians, begun in Sasun, against the oppression of the Caliphate. That uprising was a signal event in the formation of the Armenian Arcruni and Bagratuni kingdoms.¹⁰ An analogous process may have led to the shaping of the K epic: that is to say, much older epic motifs and themes, including the name and childhood history of the principal character, K himself, crystallized around the epochal events of the Jalali rebellions.

⁹ This character may be related to the *T'ux Manuk* "Black Child" of Armenian mythology. See J.R. Russell, "The Armenian Shrines of the Black Youth (*t'ux manuk*)," *Le Muséon* 111, fasc. 3-4, 1998, pp. 319-343.

¹⁰ It is not coincidental that two of the five principal heroes of the Sasun cycle bear the name Mher (i.e., Mihr, Mithra— the Zoroastrian divinity associated among other things with the Apocalypse). The Armenian revolts were the westernmost of a chain of contemporary uprisings across the Iranian north against Arab rule: in some eastern regions the image and inspiration of the rebellion was the Buddha of the future, Maitreya, whose popularity among Iranian adherents of the Mahayana school may have to do with his linguistic and typology relationship to Mithra.

The famous Russian scholar of Islam, I.P. Petrushevsky, writes, “Most likely one of the leaders of the Jalali movement adopted the name K, which had become popular thanks to a legend that had taken shape in earlier centuries.” So the historical bandit might have taken his name from a legendary predecessor; and his deeds were then recast in archaic legend as the epic grew around him, rather as with the Sasun epic in the same region, or with another bandit epic, Robin Hood, in faraway Britain.

Let us consider briefly, then, the Jalali movement— the great upheaval in which the historical K of the epic took part. With the rise to power of the Shi’i dynasty of the Safavids around 1590 and the consolidation of the Iranian state as a major Near Eastern imperial power after a hiatus of centuries, hostilities began with the rival neighboring power, the Sunni Ottoman Empire of the Turks. The two Muslim states collided on the Armenian plateau, the devastation lasting over a century. In the lawless conditions of a power vacuum the Shi’i armed bandits called Jalali after one of their leaders ravaged the Armenian communities, and scribes writing in the colophons of their manuscripts in the period speak with one voice, decrying them as “the bloodthirsty beast” (*ariwnarbu gazan*) and “the evil dragon” (*č’arn višap*, a designation of the Antichrist). Employing an ancient genre to bewail an all-too-familiar kind of disaster, Azaria of Sasun wrote a “Lament on the blows delivered to the eastern provinces and the realm of Armenia by the Jalalis” (*Ołb i veray haruacoc’ arewelean gawařac’ ew ašxarhin Hayoc’ i jeřac’ Jalaleanc’*). An important source already mentioned is the *History* of Arakel of Tabriz, who studied and worked at Echmiadzin in the mid-17th century and compiled his chronicle at the suggestion of Catholicos P’ilipos, on the basis of both colophons and eyewitness accounts of events. He completed his book in 1662 and died eight years later. As we have seen, Arakel observes that K’s songs, composed during the reign of Shah Abbas, that is, *ca.* 1600, were popular with the minstrels of his day. K’s is one of a number of names in a list, of whom Arakel writes, “All of these are Jalalis, who refused to submit to the king. They did not dwell in any one place, but were destroyers and despoilers of the earth; and wherever they heard word of prosperity, thither did they hasten, pillaging, robbing, setting fire to buildings and burning them to the

ground.” He adds that they attracted followers from among the Armenian community: “But from amongst the Christian folk some men who had no fear of God in them, when they saw what the Muslims [*aylazgik*’, lit. “those of another nation, gentiles”, the disparaging designation frequently employed for Muslims] were doing, began to do likewise. For their hands were eager to do what their eyes beheld (*vasn zi ač’ōk’ tesin ew srtiw yōžarec’an*)— whether it was rape in plain sight or theft in secret, that is what they did. For the land was without a ruler (*antēr*) and barren of strong masters to control the realm; so every man satisfied the inclinations of his desire.”¹¹ The traveler Eremia Çelebi Kōmürçiyān calls the Jalalis “a motley crew of barbarians (*xaṛničatanč gundk’ xuzadužk*)” who terrified those who saw them. They dragged off women with their children into captivity and surrounded themselves with them.” Nigar and Ayvaz in the epic of K would have been among these unfortunates.

So it would seem that some Jalalis were Armenians, possibly apostates from Christianity like the legendary Fr. (*Tēr*) Simon who became an Alevi Shi’a to save his flock from massacre, after whom the region of Dersim (Tk. “Tunceli”) supposedly got its name. Doubtless even more of the hapless victims of Jalali kidnappings were Armenians as well. The names of Jalali bandits (*awazakk*’) provided by Eremia and Arakel give one a colorful picture of their piratical character: *Küçük Ahmet* (“Little Ahmed”), *T’awil pičn erkaraygi* (“Dirty Long Tail”), *K’esek’es* (“Cut and Cut Again!”), *Kör kaya* (“Blind as a Rock”), *Qalenter oğli* (“Son of the Mad Dervish”), *Abu Hancar* (“Father of Dagger”), *Kara sâ’at* (“Black Hour”, meaning the time that has tolled for you if you meet him), *Tengri tanımaz* (“He recognizes **no** God”), and *Siki büyük anpatkar* (“Shameless Big Dick”).¹² The chaos in which these bands arose, and to which they contributed, lasted nearly a century and a half, affecting every ancient center of Armenian life from the outskirts of Constantinople in the west to Tabriz in the east. Conditions were so desperate that many were driven to cannibalism, and

¹¹ See Aṛak’el Dawrižec’i, *Girk’ patmut’eanc’*, tr. L.A. Khanlaryan, Arakel Davrizhetsi, *Kniga istorii*, Moscow: Nauka, 1973, ch. 7 (p. 89 f.).

¹² See M.K. Zulalyan, *Jalalineri šaržum ev hay žolovrdi vičakā ōsmanyān kaysrut’yan meġ*, Erevan: Arm. Acad. Sci., 1966, p. 165.

spurred an exodus that may be seen as the first wave of the modern Armenian diaspora. So the period is certainly significant enough for an ancient epic to have assumed a contemporary shape around it.

The motivations of the bandits were varied: political and economic chaos allowed charismatic leaders to come to the fore. Shi'a religious faith, with its strong millenarian aspect, inspired many who felt the end of days was imminent. Though the Jalalis acted with barbarity and excess, many felt also that they were fighting for freedom and justice. In an Arm. version of the K epic, the hero *Zalāmin kačartēr, axktin kāsirēr, / Zankinic' kaṛnēr, fukarin katar* "Slew the oppressor and loved the destitute, / Took from the rich and gave to the poor;" and his men boast, *Menk' ašxarhi ēn t'ayfan enk', or lci tak č'enk' māneli* "We are that race of the world that will not remain under the yoke." Since this Robin Hood-like legacy has persisted, let us look at the bandits then, not from the standpoint of outraged scribes, but from the perspective of social history.

The leftist British historian Eric Hobsbawm, in his landmark study *Bandits*,¹³ drawing mainly from examples in Europe and South America of the past two centuries, finds that the ones around whom legends typically grow begin their careers, not as criminals, but as avenging victims of an outrageous, humiliating act of injustice or aggrieved status of subservience. They flourish in regions without the strong control of a central government, but tend to fight local oppressors, for the most part, rather than opposing a distant reigning monarch. Almost invulnerable, the noble bandit can be killed only by an act of betrayal. The average bandit band operates for two to three years and has about twenty members. (In the epic, with its typical hyperbole, K enjoys from 365 to 777 confederates, and his exploits last a lifetime.) The members of Hobsbawm's model gang are called "bent" or "crooked"—as in the K and Sasun epics—because of their apartness from law-abiding "straight" society. On bandit violence, Hobsbawm remarks, "A wild and indiscriminate

¹³ Eric Hobsbawm, *Bandits*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2000.

retaliation: yes, but perhaps also, and especially among the weak, the permanent victims who have no hope of real victory even in their dreams, a more general 'revolution of destruction' which tumbles the whole world in ruins, since no 'good' world seems possible."¹⁴ Thus the apocalyptic violence of our Shi'a revolutionaries in eastern Anatolia.

Bandits often rise up against foreign oppression, and oppose to tyranny, even in rigidly class-bound societies, a remarkably egalitarian system of self-regulation. The bandit ethos thus combines a kind of chivalry with religious conviction: "We were... knightly, though also spiritual" (*caballeresco pero espiritual*), recalled a Spanish Anarchist; and Anatoly Lunacharsky, the first minister of culture of the Soviet Union, called Communism "the last religion". The Communist League founded by Karl Marx himself was at first named the League of the Outlaws; so the relationship of bandits to revolutionary movements has a semantic and ideological reciprocity. Each inspires the other. One of the archetypal bandit-revolutionary heroes of the Communist movement in the Russian Empire was Semyon Arshakovich Ter-Petrosyan (1882-1922), the legendary Kamo, an Armenian who robbed banks to finance the revolution. Though the Tiflis heist he pulled off in 1907 netted 200,000 rubles, Kamo lived like an ascetic devotee of the cause, never spending more than fifty kopeks a day for his own needs. Kamo's patronymic, "son of Arshak", introduces a pleasing symmetry: as we shall see presently, the epic legend of a fourth-century Armenian king, Aršak II, is cast in the same mold that centuries later was to give shape to the K epic in its present, recognizable form, in the same lands where Kamo and his comrades were later still to fight to bring down the old world and make a new one. (In the words of the hymn of the world Communist movement, The Internationale, *Весь мир насилия мы разрушим до основания и затем/ Мы наш, мы новый мир построим: кто был ничем, тот*

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

станет всем. "We will destroy to its foundations the whole world of violence and then/ We will build our own new world, and who was nought, he shall be all.")¹⁵

We have seen that K was a minstrel. This too, is typical of some famed bandits, rebels, and outcasts. In 14th-century France, the greatest of the balladeers was the vagabond criminal François Villon. And bandits have often been the heroes of folk ballads, from Jesse James in 19th-century America to the Anarchist bandits of Benamerj in Andalusia celebrated in the *Gypsy Romances* of the early-20th-century poet Federico García Lorca.¹⁶ Russians still sing songs like *Ой да не вечер* and *Из за острова на стрежень* that honor and mourn the bandit rebel Sten'ka Razin: this writer grew up in red diapers, listening to and singing Shostakovich's cantata based on Yevtushenko's poem about him. The genre endures: William S. Burroughs' *Western Lands* trilogy, an apocalyptic celebration of revolutionary banditry, interweaves pirate utopias (an entire separate topic but along much the same lines: bandit society at sea) with Western tales of the fellowship of honest thieves of the American hinterland, the so-called "Johnson family". In his monograph *Der Räuber Nikola Schuhaj*, 1953, the East German scholar Ivan Olbracht sums up the essence of the strivings of these rebels: "Man has an insatiable longing for justice. In his soul he rebels against a social order which denies it to him, and whatever the world he lives in, he accuses either that social order or the entire material universe of injustice. Man is filled with a strange, stubborn urge to remember, to think things out and to change things; and in addition he carries within himself the wish to have what he cannot have— if only in the form of a fairy tale. That is perhaps the basis for the heroic sagas of all ages, all religions, all peoples, and all classes."

Thus the popularity of the archetype of K. But where does the archetype come from, in the region of eastern Anatolia and the Transcaucasus— the Armenian

¹⁵ The romantic aura of revolutionary movements is especially seductive to intellectuals with the good fortune to live far away from the sanguinary horrors they bring in reality to the unfortunates under their sway. See Jamie Glazov, *United In Hate: The Left's Romance With Tyranny and Terror*, Los Angeles, CA: WND Books, 2009.

¹⁶ See Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movements in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, New York: Norton, 1965, p. 78.

highland? Georges Dumézil traced it to a legend about the Scythians in the *Histories* of Herodotus (5th cent. BC), IV.1-4:¹⁷ the Scythians, he writes, *blind* all their slaves (*tous de doulous... tuphlousi*) by reason of the milk they drink (*tou galaktos heineken tou pinousi*). Some of these slaves married Scythian women; and their children rose in rebellion but were put down in a curiously humiliating way— the Scythians advanced on them with horsewhips instead of swords or arrows, reminding them thereby that they were slaves. This psychological tactic broke their morale, and they capitulated. An aspect of the episode has mystified scholars: it is easy to understand the sons of blind men rising up against those who had blinded their fathers, and Dumézil may be right in seeing the kernel of the K epic here. But what of the milk— mares' milk, actually? In the K epic Rushan is instructed by Ali, as we have seen, to bring his father foam from a spring, and he drinks it off instead. It would have cured Ali's blindness, but at least it makes K strong. This magical milk seems to be the same kind of potation as the seminal fluid of the *kat'nalbiwr*, the "milky spring" of Armenian epic. Covinar, whose name probably means something like "Lady of the Sea", drinks one-and-a-half handfuls from a rock phallus spurting the stuff that stiffens out of the waters of lake Van, and in nine months' time bears the unequal twins Sanasar and Baḏasar, the first generation of heroes of the Sasun epic. In the analogous episode of the Ossetic *Nartæ*, it is a shepherd's semen rocketing across the river Terek and impregnating the rock behind which the lady Satana hides, that does the job. In the epic of the heroes of Kasht, the village men drink from a *kat'nalbiwr* that makes them both "bent" and strong. So perhaps in an earlier variant of the Scythian tale, the son of a blinded servant drank magic milk, acquired valor and strength, and rebelled against those who humiliated and flogged him.

The Armenologist Haïg Berberian, in a book-length review of Dumézil's study, finds elements that were later to appear in the K epic, in the legends that accumulated around the Armenian Arsacid kings of the fourth century AD. According to both the *Buzandaran* of P'awstos and the *History* of Movsēs Xorenac'i,

¹⁷ Georges Dumézil, "Le legends de 'Fils d'aveuglés' au Caucase et autour du Caucase," *Revue de l'histoire des religions* 117, 1938, pp. 50-74.

the violent and impious king Tiran is captured and blinded by the Persian Shah; Tiran's successor, Arshak II, receives from Tiran's chamberlain, P'isak ("Dappled"), a request from the Sasanian governor of Atrpatakan, i.e., Azarbaijan, for the splendid roan and dappled (*čarpuk čančkēn*) mount of the Armenian king. The latter sends one that is alike but not as good, and the treacherous courtier not only points out the deception, but lets the Persian know that his own masters plan to revolt and restore their deposed Arsacid kin to the Iranian throne. Blindness, horse, deception, rebellion: the elements, only slightly differently distributed, are wholly familiar. And to this dossier one might add two additional testimonies from other sources in the Parthian world.

The historian Josephus, writing shortly after the disastrous revolt of the Jews of Israel in the first century AD against Roman dominion, recounts in his *Jewish Antiquities* XVIII.314 in terms steeped in Iranian epic imagery and theme the tale of two unequal brothers with twin-like, rhyming names, Anilaeus and Asinaeus, sons of a widow in Nehardea, a Jewish town of Parthian Mesopotamia. Apprenticed to a weaver and flogged with stripes (*plēgais*) for some infraction, they react to the indignity (*hubris*) by revolting. Styling themselves generals, they gather around them other young men of the lowest social orders (*tōn neōn hoi aporōtatoi*), build a citadel (*akropolin*), and live by robbery. They defeat the army of a satrap sent to deal with them; and Asinaeus is invited by the admiring Arsacid king Ardavān III to attend at the royal court. When the courtiers mock the Jewish hero-bandit for his diminutive stature, the king retorts that Asinaeus has a soul greater in stature than his small body (*hōs meizona en tēi parathesei parekhoito tēn psukhēn tou sōmatos*). Geoffrey Herman, in a brilliant study of this episode,¹⁸ notes that it has a parallel in the epic cycle of Arshak in the *Buzandaran*, where the defeated Armenian commander Vasak Mamikonean is derided by the Sasanian king Šābuhr (Shapur) II as a crafty little fox. Vasak retorts, employing an intricate hypogrammatic strategy,

¹⁸ Geoffrey Herman, "The Story of Rav Kahana (BT Baba Qamma 117a-b) in Light of Armeno-Persian Sources," in Shaul Shaked and Amnon Netzer, eds., *Irano-Judaica VI*, Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2008, pp. 53-86.

that Shapur has seen only half of him— half his name. Now he is a fox, *aluēs*, but when he was a full Vasak, he was also a *skay*, a giant.¹⁹ The brave Asinaeus is killed by treachery— poisoned by the Parthian wife of his weak-willed brother, Anilaeus. Only thus, by treason, can a true bandit hero die. In Josephus' narrative, chronologically midway between Herodotus' Scythians and the Armenian Arsacid court of the *Buzandaran* of P'awstos, we encounter a true bandit epic, just south of the Armenian mountains.

The tale of Anilaeus and Asinaeus makes no mention of a wonderful horse; but another Jewish source from Parthian and Sasanian Mesopotamia, also mined by Prof. Herman for its Iranian content, supplies interesting additional equine material. This is the Talmud. We have seen that K's father Ali was the royal stable master. This office is convenient thematically: Ali is best placed to recognize the worth of Kirat. But it is also symbolic, or was so, in ancient Iran, where the *āxwarrbed*, "stable master", was part of the court hierarchy but also the lowliest courtier. Of Rabbi Yehuda I the *Bavli* says, *Ahōrērē dā-Rabbī 'atīr mi-Šābūr mālākā*, "The Rabbi's stable-master [using a Pers. l-w] was richer than king Shapur."²⁰ Ali's office is thus a marked term whose meaning is best understood in its Parthian and early Sasanian context.

... impiis inuidebam, prosperitatem peccatorum observans,... in aerumnis mortalium non versantur, et cum hominibus non flagellantur. Ideo cingit eos, ut torques, superbia, et violentia, ut vestis, operit eos. Psalm 72.

Certain of the themes and images reviewed above merit an excursus. The horsewhip figures prominently in the narrative of Herodotus on the servile

¹⁹ For a discussion of the word game in this passage with relation to Armenian oral poetics and ancient mythological themes, see J.R. Russell, "Magic Mountains, Milky Seas, Dragon Slayers, and Other Zoroastrian Archetypes," Ratanbai Katrak Lecture, University of Oxford, 3 November 2009 (in publication in the *Proceedings*, ed. Elizabeth Tucker).

²⁰ See Geoffrey Herman, "Ahasuerus, the Former Stable-Master of Belshazzar, and the Wicked Alexander of Macedon: the Parallels between the Babylonian Talmud and Persian Sources," *AJS Review* 29.2 (2005), pp. 283-297.

rebellion: the mere sight of the instrument is sufficient to quell the uprising. In the *Anabasis* of Alexander of Arrian, Hermolaus, one of the noble Macedonian youths serving as a page in the entourage of the Macedonian king, insults the latter on the royal hunt by riding in and spearing a boar before Alexander can. For this act of *lèse majesté* he is whipped in front of the other boys and his horse is taken away from him. Enraged by this insult— the Greek word *hubris* is used— he and his lover vow to murder Alexander. In the *Kārnāmag* (“*Res Gestae*”) of Ardešīr, son of Pāpak, the young Persian, this time in the service of the last Parthian king rather than the last Mede, likewise forestalls him at the hunt and is punished by being sent to work *in the royal stables* and having his horse taken away from him. In the *Histories* of Herodotus, the young Cyrus plays king in a game and has one of the other children, the son of a Median noble, flogged. The father of the boy is so outraged by his son’s humiliation— the passive denominative verb *hubrizomai* is used!— that he complains to king Astyages himself. In the *Frogs* of Aristophanes, Dionysus and his servant go down to Hades to select the best poet to save Athens, and in the course of their adventures undergo a sort of flogging competition on their bare bottoms. The comedian here is patently disarming a potent and keen taboo: the free man, much less the god, is immune from the humiliation against the most private parts of the person exemplified by the application of the whip applied in punishment to the naked body of a slave, particularly his nether parts. Greek *eis to sōma hubrithai* “to be ‘hubrised’ on the body” signifies a physical outrage against the body such as mutilation. Additionally the long, springy, punishing horsewhip is *pars pro toto* of the horse, a symbol not only of noble privilege— cf. the Roman *eques*— but of genital prowess and penetration, and, because of the way one rides, of the anal parts as well. It combines aspects of both social and sexual potency, the reversal of which, by the use of a horsewhip on a noble youth’s backside, seems to me a switching point in the narrative where the potential epic hero is so radically dehumanized and degraded that he must become an outlaw, a bandit. Note that the narratives concerning the future kings Cyrus and Ardeshir utilize the *topos* only in part: the actual persons of the two are not violated, but the *hubris* of their Median and Parthian overlords is sufficient to doom the latter. In the case of K, the physical

violence of blinding is visited upon the stablemaster Ali; so K's revenge is to take the very best horse—the one Shah Abbas rejected—and begin a life of brigandage against Sultan and Shah alike.

These ancient sources provide a host of both large themes and plots and small but intensely significant symbols and details that are to be encountered in the K epic of later ages. The roots of the epic are in the legends of the Iranian peoples and those culturally and politically kindred to them; and the epic grew on their lands. It is thus the monument of a developing regional culture founded in antiquity, shaped by a turbulent history, and perennially animated by hopes, sufferings, and strivings that engender balladry and epic wherever there is destitution and oppression and the stubborn resilience, the will to resist, of the human spirit. The study of the bandit epic type provides a way to understand in a new light other important historical narratives that memory has retained as legend. There are three examples to be adduced: the first, the Sasun epic itself. We have seen how its heroes are called “bent”, how the first generation of them is a pair of unequal twins born to a princess about to be sent away as a hostage to a foreign tyrant. She drinks of a magical, milky spring and her strong, brave sons are born. The heroes acquire a magic horse and found a fortress, Sasun, from which they, in the company of vividly-named fellow braves like *Dzenov Hovan*, “John of the Booming Voice”, sally forth to fight against oppression. The greatest of them, David, is immured by cowards, as is his steed, the second part of whose very name, Kurkik Jelali, has a special resonance to the student of K and his times. David dies by treachery, the only way a hero can, and his son Little Mher provides the apocalyptic dénouement, entering a cave at Van to remain till the end of days. Then he will come forth to save or destroy the world: the ambivalence of this point may have to do with the Christian faith of the reciters or the inchoate violence of bandit eschatology, or maybe a bit of both. Even the way Kurkik Jelali will tread solid ground then has an echo, as we have seen, in the epic of K and its description of the training of Kîrat in a water-filled furrow of the field. The heroes of Sasun became in legend a titan race, different from smaller, weaker from “straight” folk, called in the epic “Armenians”; but the latter-day *jan-fedayis*, the

guerrillas of Sasun, Zeitun, and elsewhere in Armenia had the appearance, and enjoyed the popular repute, of the bandits of legend.

The second case comes from the Parthian era and the homeland of Josephus and involves a young man whose mother, according to tradition, was supernaturally inseminated. Though of the royal Davidic line, he grew up in obscurity as a carpenter, then collected a ragged crew of fishermen and other lower-class types, with whom he traveled around preaching against the tyranny of the rich and the oppression of the poor, and asserting that his kingdom— of justice and kindness— is not this one. He was arrested as a rebel against the alien Roman occupier and was forced to endure the humiliation of being stripped naked and flogged. The four standard accounts of His life all record that He was crucified between two other men, one to His right and one to His left. Both were bandits, one of whom who mocked him, apparently for His belief that some good might come of this tortuous, humiliating execution. In the early narrative of one of His followers, Mark, He died with a despairing complaint from the Psalms on His lips: “My God, why did you abandon me?” According to other Gospel accounts, though, Jesus Christ, the Jewish rebel hero, gave up the ghost with a calmer affirmation culled from the Jewish evening prayer, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” This version, Luke’s, which is most likely closer than others to a Hebrew Gospel (often attributed by the Church Fathers to Matthew), makes the bandit on the right a righteous man; the one on the left, a blasphemer. By the 5th century AD these two have names, Dysmas and Gestas; and an apocryphal text, *The Story of Joseph of Arimathea*, embroiders the legend this way: “The first, Gestas, used to strip and murder wayfarers, hang up women by the feet and cut off their breasts, drink the blood of babes; he knew not nor obeyed any law, but was violent from the beginning.” But “the other, Demas [i.e., Dysmas], was a Galilean who kept an inn; he despoiled the rich but did good to the poor, even burying them, like Tobit. He had committed robberies on the Jews, for he stole the Law itself at Jerusalem, and stripped the daughter of Caiaphas, who was a priestess [!] of the sanctuary, and he took away even the mystic deposit of Solomon

which had been deposited in the place." That is, Gestas is a reprobate murderer; Dysmas, a Robin Hood-like bandit hero, and an anti-Semite besides.

For Gestas goes on to declare that had he only know Jesus was king, he would have killed Him, too; while Dysmas asks Jesus to protect him from the devil and looks forward to the punishment of all twelve tribes of Israel. Christ grants him a place in Paradise and assures him that "the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and Moses shall be cast out into the outer darkness." When Joseph of Arimathea arrives later on to recover the bodies for burial, those of Jesus and Dysmas are gone; but the corpse of Gestas lies there, monstrous, "like that of a dragon". He has been dehumanized to a reptile, to the snake that deceived the father and mother of mankind. In subsequent depictions of the Crucifixion, the two thieves are shown contorted with their arms and legs gashed and broken, while Christ is whole. This detail of the thieves refers to the medieval practice of breaking criminals on the wheel and then exposing them to a slow and hideous death. Gestas is shown, as one would expect, writhing in agony and deformed and hideous to behold, while Dysmas receives Christ's benevolent gaze and sometimes has his mouth open to receive a spray of the salvific blood of the Savior.²¹

The message of this developed narrative is plain: Christ is not to be confused with rebels or bandits, even though he shares their company and their punishment. Moreover, the idealized thief receives Christ as king, and not as king of the Jews but as their enemy. Christ has been transmuted into Caesar as surely as the poor thief Gestas is metamorphosed into a reptile. Such malign inversion is not unusual in the process whereby nascent Gentile Christianity sought to distance itself from its origins, gradually demonizing the latter. If one looks beyond this perverse corruption, with its malign, degenerate, anti-Semitic intent, one may attempt to reclaim and restore a semblance of the original. A poor man raised without a father gathers a band of young men like himself and travels around his home territory,

²¹ See Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross, and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999.

never traveling far in his mission, and offends the rich and powerful while feeding and healing the poor. He can be captured and killed only by treachery and betrayal. He dies at the hands of a foreign tyrant in the company of a pair of bandits, one perhaps braver and more likeable than the other. His is an otherworldly kingdom; their manner of rebellion is more earthly and violent.

Two millennia pass. David of Sasun fights the Arabs, Robin Hood fights the Sheriff of Nottingham, the heroes of Kasht fight Tamerlane, K fights Shah and Sultan, the revolutionaries of 1789 rise up, then the Communards of 1871, the Armenian *fedayin* resist the Ottomans, in 1917 the Winter Palace falls, the workers of Vienna, then the Spanish Anarchists and Communists fight fascism, armed with a newer, wider, more articulate plan for the liberation of the world. But the plan itself drowns in the blood of the Cheka's camps and torture chambers. A deeper darkness falls: it is 1941, and we are in Belorussia. The Nazis begin their planned extermination of the Jews: nobody, says Hitler, remembers the genocide of the Armenians a generation ago. Who will stop him now?²² (The Germans and their many enthusiastic Ukrainian, Latvian, and Lithuanian henchmen killed about a million Soviet Jews with ordinary bullets, a year before the first gas chambers went into operation.) In the village of Stankiewiczze there is a farming family. One of their twelve children, Tuvia, b. 1906, is a rebellious tough, a good rider, a trained soldier. He has a brother who is a little less heroic and charismatic. But the two Bielskis—the Sanasar and Baghdasar!—establish a stronghold in Nalibocka forest, robbing the Germans and their collaborators. Subservient to none, they rescue every Jew, young or old, who will join them, and run their partisan unit on the basis of labor democracy. The people who see Tuvia on his white horse, in his leather jacket, with his tommy gun in hand, acclaim him as a latter-day Judas Maccabeus. At the end of the war, the Bielskis have saved some 1500 people. Tuvia moves to New York, gets

²² I propose in my recent study "From Musa Dagh to the Warsaw Ghetto: Armenian and Jewish Armed Resistance to Genocide" (in publication, *Judaica Petropolitana*, St. Petersburg) that Hitler's remark was intended ironically. In fact everybody remembered the Armenians, and Franz Werfel's book about the Genocide was an international bestseller. The point was, rather, that nobody *cared*.

married, lives a simple life, and passes away in his old age.²³ The Nazis called the partisans bandits; the French collaborationist authorities, too, derided the Manouchian group— Jews and Republican Spaniards, led by an Armenian— of the Maquis as “L’Armée du Crime”.

Bandit epics matter because imagination empowers reality and the theme of these epics is, however ancient in its literary and mythological roots, also current events. Fighting for authentic freedom is possible, it is right, and it is necessary in most every generation. It has happened before, and, human affairs being what they are, it will happen again. We might as well be ready and retell the story, and enjoy it in the retelling.

²³ Nechama Tec, *Defiance: The Bielski Partisans*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1993.

The Armenian Magical Scroll and Outsider Art

James R. Russell

Harvard University

Abstract

Unordained clergy make Armenian prayer scrolls, which go back to the amulets against the Child-stealing Witch. They are analogous to the MSS of Ethiopian Christians, made often by charismatic and socially marginal figures. This art found a niche in East Christian society; but none was provided for the appropriately named “outsider” art and the art of the insane in the West, which often expresses religious visions and sentiments that the artistic and mental health establishments—rather than an ecclesiastical order this time!—have forced to the margin of society or beyond it.

Despite the early efforts of Frederic Macler, though Armenian magical and talismanic texts have been edited and published there has been little study of the art as such of the manuscripts that contain them. Perhaps because of their greater flamboyance and their situation partially in an African context, it is the analogous material of the Ethiopian Christian tradition that has received art historical attention. And modern avowedly religious art of almost any kind in the West became so generally marginalised in criticism that much of it, including the art of people labelled insane, has come to be studied, if at all, under the rubric of *art brut* or outsider art. Since the makers of folk-religious-magical art in Armenia (the *tirac’u*) and in Ethiopia (the *debtera*) are sometimes marginal figures like outsider artists, I have attempted in this essay to initiate an approach to Armenian magical and talismanic art that employs the comparative method and takes advantage of the insights of studies of outsider art, the art of the psychologically abnormal, and the art of self-taught religious visionaries.

Keywords

Hmayil, *Debtera*, Magical Scrolls, Magic, *Tirac’u*, Al, Lilith, Child-stealing Witch, Demons, Outsider Artist

In May of 1949 a 16-year-old freshman at the University of California, Berkeley, went to hear a lecture by George Boas, a visiting professor, on “Meaning in the Arts”. Though she found the presentation “entertain-

ingly glib” overall, the speaker’s discussion “of the evolution of art in terms of a fluctuation between *ritual* and *improvisation*” interested her, though she dismissed it, too, as “a nice-sounding restatement of the overworked Classic vs. Romantic antithesis” (Rieff 2008: 21). The insight is testimony, not only to the frightening precocity of the future critic Susan Sontag, but to a dichotomy that cuts through the perception and reception of our modes of thinking about the unseen and phenomenal worlds through religion and philosophy, and our representation of them in the visual arts and music—a dichotomy, the conscious appreciation of which in recent times goes back to its re-formulation by Nietzsche. On one side is the Apollonian stability and harmony of form; on the other, the Dionysian spontaneity and creative chaos of force. The first upholds the dogmas and ethics of society rooted in tradition; the second champions individual vision, freedom, and spontaneity: Qumran vs. Temple, lawgivers and priests vs. shamans and prophets, Sir Joshua Reynolds vs. William Blake, Mozart vs. jazz. Like most neat dualities, this one is useful, more for the opposing tensions within a single art or belief or person that it suggests, than as a description of actually antithetical things. For those are probably few.

So it is with a sense of ritual and improvisation conjoined while in potential conflict, rather than suggesting that either exists independently of the other, that we may approach a phenomenon in art, and specifically, in the art of Armenian magical manuscripts, particularly the scrolls called *hmayil* that are employed for defense against demons, particularly the ancient Child-stealing Witch, called in Armenian *Al* or *T’pl-ha* (= *thagha*) (Plates 1 and 2) These scrolls contain a number of prayers culled from Scripture, Christian hagiography, and the writings of Armenian theologians and mystic, as well as incantations that are fairly standard from one scroll to another; and these texts generally follow a prescribed order. They are divided by pictures of Christ, of saints, and of demons, again in the same order. All this is ritualistic: though the content and iconography of the scrolls are freer than the programme of a Gospel manuscript, and the performance of magic does not have the same sanction as the liturgy—indeed more often than not the Church condemns all forms of it—still the artist-scribe worked in compliance with a fixed tradition. Indeed, the texts and traditions having to do with the Child-stealing Witch in their origins antedate by many centuries the canonical text of the Bible. However, the maker of a magical scroll most often lacked training as an artist; and though his work reflects the themes and styles of the iconography of the Church, it almost always looks primitive, even childlike, in its lack of technical sophistication;

and beside the gold leaf, lapis lazuli, and embossed silver of fine manuscripts, the *hmayils* seem an art of poverty. The art of the scrolls can also be bold and uncanny in a way Gospel book illumination is not, including fanciful symbols and strange patterns; and when these depart widely from recognised, canonical forms, one can discern the mark of individuality, of improvisation.

The principal aim of these scrolls always was to protect women in childbirth. To a reader in the early years of the 21st century that may seem an obscure or esoteric purpose; but in Armenia marriage and childbirth were issues of tremendous social tension. On the eve of the feast of Ascension (Arm. *Hambarjum*) girls performed an elaborate ritual and told fortunes about marriage; and on the feast of St. Sergius (Arm. *Sargis*) in January a girl would eat a salty cake baked by an old woman and then dream of her future husband. Her whole sense of identity and her metaphysical world were fixed on the single issue of her future marriage. Once wed, a young bride was kept mute (Arm. *munč pahel*) and was allowed to talk back to the household in which she lived—her husband's and mother-in-law's—only after she had given birth to a son. If she bore a daughter, she might be kept bound to silence several years longer. And a childless woman was an object of pity and derision. Given the high rate of infant mortality, the fear of losing a newborn, particularly a boy, was terribly keen. So even if the longed-for marriage was consummated and the desired male child was born, the anxieties of the mother did not end. One might then dedicate a son to the Virgin Mary for further protection: a silver ring was hung on his left ear, a *hmayil* was left under his pillow, and his hair was not cut till age seven (see Lind-Sinianian 2003: 34, 54).¹ As for barren women, they might visit a spring called a *kat'nalbiur*, "milky source",² or rub against or crawl beneath a phallic *portak'ar* "omphalos-stone", in the hope of magically becoming fertile.

The Armenian texts have their closest analogues in the Christian magical manuscripts of other contiguous or Orthodox Christian cultures: Byzantium, Christian Syria, and, most interestingly, Ethiopia. But the Jewish childbed talismanic texts against Lilith, and the ancient Mesopotamian ones against Lamashtum, prove that the Armenian and

¹ This useful manual also situates the *hmayils* within the larger context of Armenian magical texts and practices, such as talismans against the evil eye, books on astrological magic (the Arm. *Alawit*, Arabic *Ghayat al-Hakim*, Latin *Picatrix*), etc.

² The white or milky spring represents seminal fluid and figures in both Armenian epic and Yezidi cosmological hymnology; farther afield, in Syriac spiritual poetry and Indian mythology, it is also the milk of God (see Russell 2000: 43–48).

other Christian works belong to a wider and older tradition. In Armenian Christian literature, from its beginnings down to recent times without interruption, theologians and clerics have devoted detailed, impassioned sermons to the condemnation of the kind of magic the scrolls represent: testimony to their early presence and long continuity in the culture. Thus however far removed a maker of scrolls was from a monastic scriptorium, and however idiosyncratic his gift might be, he inherited a settled tradition of great antiquity in which he was expected to operate, both by his instructors in the magical art, and by the clients for whom he produced his talismans. Unfortunately we know very little about the Armenian artists who made these scrolls: what inspired them to take up such work, how they were trained, how they were regarded by others in the community, what their working days and inner lives were like. It would seem, though, that most of them had the title *tirac'u* (= *tiratsu*), that is, a man not ordained as a priest but permitted to perform some sacerdotal functions.

Among the Syrian Christians, or "Assyrians" (Arm. *Asori*), who employ the Syriac dialect of Aramaic in their literature and everyday speech, the makers of scrolls were (and are) likewise associated with the church but not fully ordained clergymen. They evidently are believed to possess magical powers; and they are trained to make talismanic texts and to place themselves in special psychological and physical states when producing them. There is something of the outsider to them, too. Nicholas Al-Jeloo, a young scholar of Assyrian ethnicity from Sydney, Australia, relates: "Growing up in Australia I knew of Rabi Yosip of Tkhuma (a reader in the church), Shamasha Warda Adam of Tiyyari (a deacon in the church), and maybe one or two others in Sydney, and another in Melbourne who were involved in the church somehow and had this as sort of a business on the side. They jealously guard their base texts, which have been handed down to them from their fathers, etc. and I guess are training their children in the art. As a child my mother gave me one, which I was to sew into my clothes, keep in my pocket, put in my wallet, or keep under my pillow. It was a little 'prayer bundle' which had been folded multiple times and sewn into a piece of cloth over and over again so that it could not be opened and read. I lost it unfortunately and never had another one written. Rabi Yosip died a few years ago but Shamasha Warda is still alive... and he also is said to have a room in his house where he writes these things that his wife wouldn't dare to enter even to clean. He asked my father once, years ago to get him a crow—he obviously wanted to use it for some sort of ritual. When they write these talismans they are supposed to fast for a certain period

and observe certain practices, use certain types of ink, paper, etc. They did these for protection from the evil eye, demons or evil spirits, and especially to unbind men from their wives (if they have been magically bound by jealous people who oppose the marriage, and thus prevented from its consummation). There is black magic in Syriac, but the texts are hard to find or have never been studied. My father remembered, when growing up in Habbaniya on the Middle Euphrates, an Assyrian man with a magic book who could make sandals dance and grain 'walk' up a wall. A friend from Mosul now in Australia told me her father, a priest called Zaya Bobo (born in the Hakkari region of Tiari and died in a village near Urmia), had such a magic book and could practice magic with repetition of certain psalms. She also told me of a magical manuscript that exists in Syriac called *Semon Kharrasha* (Simon Magus)".³

The position of the Armenian *tirac'u* is analogous to that of the present-day Ethiopian *debtera*, as well; and the detailed, recent studies of the latter by ethnographers and philologists may help one to construct a hypothetical picture of the *tirac'u*-magician. The *debtera* in turn has attracted the attention of art historians interested in the genre defined in English as Outsider Art, in French as *Art brut*. Though such art has existed as long as other kinds of art have, the definition of the genre, and the methods of its study, are relatively new and mark a break with conventional and canon-oriented approaches both to artists themselves in society and to their work. Though the genre covers a wide range of kinds and media of artistic production, one may attempt a general definition, or, better, a characterisation of Outsider Art. The outsider artist, man or woman, typically has not received formal training in painting or sculpture; and even if he or she has studied formal techniques, they have made a decision to break with them in some radical manner. So, the first thing the outsider artist is outside of, is the scriptorium, or, in modern times, the salon, academy, and gallery. Sometimes that is as far as it goes; and we have the innocuous Folk Art of Grandma Moses and hundreds of others. But the genre was not defined simply to encompass *naïveté*; it addresses far more troubling subjects and deeper kinds of alienation. An outsider artist can also be a person who as the result of a powerful dream, or waking hallucination (as the psychologised society now calls prophetic vision), or trauma (as it calls the experience of the tragic aspect of existence), is impelled to paint or sculpt, and to do so prodigiously, with extreme effort. Such art, given its inspiration, is of-

³ E-mail letter of 16 December 2008. I am most grateful to my friend and colleague for his extremely interesting and detailed reminiscence.

ten of religio-magical content; and although it partakes of the imagery, subjects, and nomenclature of one or more known religions, it also expresses an urgent, idiosyncratic, private cosmology. Many outsider artists, then, produced their work in mental asylums—institutions in which many prophets and most shamans would have found themselves imprisoned, too, had they the misfortune to live in modern Europe and America. Until the 1920's the drawings and paintings of the insane were not recognised as art and were at best tolerated as a kind of therapy and sometimes preserved in medical records. But even as the definition of art has widened, so has the social field in which one situates the artist. And we shall see that Armenian magical art and Outsider Art have very strong affinities.

Let us look first at the sources of the Armenian *hmayil* and its typical content. Its main feature is an invocation against the Al, or Child-stealing Witch. Belief in this demonic being is ancient and widespread in the Near and Middle East. Lamashtu, the Child-stealing Witch of ancient Mesopotamia, rides an ass. She is a fearsome lion-headed monster, with a woman's body and a bird's claw-like feet, grasping a serpent in each hand; at her breasts, she suckles a black dog and a pig. This demoness hates mortal women, and it is her particular function to kill their babies. On a talismanic tablet she appears with the demon of an evil wind, Pazuzu. The tablet depicts also a patient attended by doctors. The latter wear robes designed to resemble fish—the perennial symbol of immortality (Plate 3). There are three more relevant Mesopotamian demons—all of storm winds: *lilu*, *lilitu*, and (*w*)*ardat lili*—the last two being female. The latter fly through the air and find men whom they seduce. But their relations with a man are not of the kind he has with his wife, for they have no babies, and give no milk. They are unfulfilled, and bitter, and, taking on the role of the first demon mentioned, Lamashtu, they attack women in childbirth. So, this is the origin of the famous demoness of later Jewish and Christian lore, Lilith (Hutter 1995: 974-975; Eilers 1979). From Mesopotamia, she makes her way to the culture of the Phoenicians and Canaanites. An incantation in Aramaic script from Arslan Tash against the “Flyers” and “Stranglers” is given as belonging to *ssm bn pdr*, “Sasom son of Pidar” (Sperling 1982). This enemy of the Child-stealing Witch will hound her across countries and ages and down to our time. In the magical texts of Hellenistic Egypt, as Prof. Martin Schwartz of the University of California at Berkeley has now elucidated in a series of articles, Sasom's name becomes the Perso-Aramaic-sounding Sesengen bar Pharanges, and, later on, our “Open Sesame!” This fusion with things Persian is not at all unusual, particularly when

one considers that Persia was not only a great power, but the home of the Zoroastrian priesthood, the Magi, after whom magic got its name. The Talmudic tractate *Baba Bathra* 73a, blending Jewish and Persian themes, thus makes Lilith herself the mother of the archfiend of Zoroastrianism, Ahreman; and the demon of Wrath of the Zoroastrian Avesta, Aeshma, appears in the Biblical book of Tobit as Ashmedai, English Asmodeus.⁴ Later still, Sasom is reincarnated as a Manichaeon, then Byzantine Christian saint, Sisinnios. From there, he enters Jewish magical lore as Sasanoy. Lilith appears in a number of Aramaic incantation texts; and in the Biblical book of Isaiah, 34.14, it is prophesied that various demons and inauspicious creatures, including hyenas, tawny owls, vultures, and Lilith, will dwell in the ruins of the enemy-land of Edom. The Septuagint translates Lilith as *onokentauros*, literally, “ass-centaur”, perhaps partly in reference to the donkey Lamashtu rode. But the word can also have the connotation of a Siren,⁵ so the nuance of Lilith as a temptress of men may be there in the Greek, too. Amongst the texts found at Qumran, on the Dead Sea, from around the time of Christ, there is a scroll with an incantation against “the punishment of child-bearers, an evil visitant, a de[mon]” (Penney/Wise 1994). The peoples of the Near East lived in a magical universe fraught with demonic perils against which magical practices, it was believed, were of effect; and there is a vast literature of spells and incantations in which the gods and demons of many nations rub shoulders.⁶ Only theologians—and not

⁴ “I saw Ahriman the son of Lilith”, says Rabba, “jumping so swiftly from battlement to battlement on the walls of the town Mafoze that a man riding on horseback could not keep pace with him” (see Rappoport 1937: 49). The evil of the 11th-century Crusaders seems to have been too great even for the demon Ashmedai: when they massacred the Jews of Mainz, he intervened and fought them, dying with the holy people of Israel; and his green blood mingled with their red blood in the streets (see Scholem 1977: 161) (I thank Prof. Joseph Dan of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for this reference). But since Ashmedai was, according to the Apocrypha of the Bible, an avid student of Torah, attending daily the Academies on high and below, this Jewish incarnation of the Avestan archdemon of Wrath, *Aēšma daēva*, was a strange and ambiguous person whose character merits closer investigation.

⁵ The enchanting singer, not the car alarm. Since it is her songs—something verbal—that men hear, after which they err; and because of the onocentaur’s asinine quality, the Siren becomes the demoness of false and stupid belief, i.e., heresy (see Russell 1993).

⁶ The field of magic in the Hellenistic period and Late Antiquity is enormous, and with the encouragement of modern interest in transgressive religion, very many studies and collections of texts have appeared in recent years. A very few of these may be listed here: Faraone/Obbink 1991; Luck 1985; Betz 1986; Naveh/Shaked 1985/1993; Gager 1992; Meyer/Smith 1994.

all of them—saw any contradiction in simultaneous belief in an omnipotent, omniscient, wholly good God and in a plethora of evil spirits acting with virtual independence. And the believer pleaded for aid against them to ancient gods or, indeed, other demons, and to the saints and angels of Judaism and Christianity familiar to us even now. He did not see in this any compromise of God's power: for the Jew or Christian, a prophet or warrior-saint might be understood to represent the Divine host.

In Jewish folklore, Lilith is believed to have been not a supernatural being at first, but the first wife of Adam, made from earth as he was, and not from his rib, either—more an equal than a helpmate. Once, the first human couple quarreled: Lilith pronounced the ineffable Name of God, the Tetragrammaton, and was instantly spirited into the air. She flew away. Adam complained of his loneliness to God, who dispatched three angels to find Lilith. These become the triumvirate of saints commonly encountered in Christian spells. They caught up with her at the Red Sea, where she declared she was determined to kill any children Adam might father on a second wife. They wanted to drown her then, but Lilith begged mercy, and they struck a deal: they would protect from her any child born in a home where their names were invoked. The three are named Sinoi, Sasanoy, and Samangluf (Plate 4), and are invoked in various texts, including the magical “Book of the Angel of Secrets”, the *Sefer Raziel*. Why *three* rhyming angels? Perhaps because originally Lilith had had the two companions whose names rhyme with her own; and the invocation of a trinity is potent by itself. In Jewish homes it became commonplace to put such a talisman near a woman abed with child. In Yiddish, this was called a *Kimpetsettl*, from German *Kindbettzettel*, “Childbed Label”, or, in Ashkenazic Hebrew, a *Shir ha-Ma'alos*, “Song of Degrees”—after Psalm 121, which is often recited as a defense against evil influences. One of these bears the title *Shemira la-bayit ve-la-yoledet*, “Protection for the house and the woman in childbirth”, with the Psalm at the centre. At the bottom is the Western Wall, with the Dome of the Rock, cypresses, and Al Aqsa mosque rising gracefully above. Another *Kindbettzettel* against Liliths and other evil spirits depicts a many-armed magical bird with the old Hellenistic magical name AGLA, the Tetragrammaton in plain and “angelic” Hebrew script (with astral circles linked by straight lines—a variant of the magical scripts called in German *Brillenbuchstaben*, literally “eyeglass-letters”), the Hand of God, instructions at the bottom on where in the house to hang it, and the Imprimatur of the Imperial Russian censor at Warsaw, 1867 (Plates 5 and 6). Lilith herself appears in a Jewish talisman reproduced in Fred Get-

tings' useful *Dictionary of Demons*; and there is a prayer for pregnant women, largely of canonical character but containing one esoteric, angelic name, to be recited by a husband: there is a place for insertion of his wife's name, and the page seems to have been used as a *Kindbettzettl*, even though it belonged apparently to a bound book. So Lilith appears as the succubus who flies to sleeping men for spectral and barren intercourse, and, in her boundless bitterness against the fertile daughters of Eve, acts as the murderous Child-stealing Witch.⁷ The talismanic texts of the Syrian Christians, in Syriac, are strikingly similar to the ones found in Armenia, except that the name Lilith is prominent, as in a magical book written by one Daniel, son of the priest (*qashisha*) Kushaba of Alqush: *wd'rb' qryn llyt' wmlwy't w'm' hnwt' dtly'* "the fourth they call Lilita and Malwita and the mother strangler of children" (Gollancz 1912).⁸

Although the Lilith comes from the Semitic world, these talismans made a detour through Byzantium before arriving from the Near East in the mediaeval Jewish community of Europe: Jewish talismans against her thus contain the Greek names of the child-stealing Harpies *Okypode* and *Aello*, from the *Theogony* of Hesiod, 267; and the magical name *Strina*, which is a distortion, by reason of the similar appearance of the letters *nun* and *gimel*, of the accusative *striga* of the Greek word *strix*, the demonic screech owl (from which we get modern Italian *strega*, "witch"). The charm against the Child-stealing Witch even finds its way into Shakespeare's *King Lear*, act 3, scene iv: "St. Withold footed thrice the (w)old;/ He met the night-mare and her nine-fold;/ Bid her alight/ And her troth plight;/ And aroint thee, witch, aroint thee!"⁹ Here, the Lilith, or night-mare succubus, has children; and her murderous forays seem to be as much for the purpose of feeding them, as for vengeance against mortal, child-bearing women. We can infer this from an Armenian tale,

⁷ This text and the other Hebrew *Kindbettzettln* here illustrated come from the collection of Dr. Marcus Moseley, Professor of Hebrew and Yiddish at Northwestern University, who was given it by his father-in-law, a noted Yiddishist who acquired it in Vilna, Lithuania, before the Nazi Holocaust. I am most grateful to my colleague and friend for lending me this and several other treasures and permitting their reproduction.

⁸ The illustrations in the book depict a saint on horseback confronting a blotchy, primitive-looking black demon with disshevelled hair who is perched in a tree—substantially like the Armenian portrayals of the scene.

⁹ See Gaster 1980: 18 ff.; and a letter to the author of the late Prof. Gaster of 30 March 1982.

in which the Child-stealing Witch is called Al, from Iranian *āl*, “scarlet”, referring to the puerperal fever with which she strikes women.¹⁰

Armenian tradition calls a fiery being named Al the first wife of Adam, too; so there is no doubt she is the same being called Lilith, or Night-mare, elsewhere. In the Armenian tale, the Al, called in the dialect of Kharberd, Turkish Harput, Elk’ (with the Classical plural, *k’*, as *pluralis tantum*), takes a young mother’s liver, but cannot eat it unless she dips it first in water—perhaps a recollection of Lilith’s flight to the Red Sea. She is caught with a metal pin stuck into her clothes, for iron pins or scissors are a common charm against these monsters; and, once she is captured, we learn she has many children herself, and has stolen the liver in order to feed them. She returns the human mother’s liver to her, and becomes her servant. Eventually the Elk’ is freed, after promising not to harm seven generations of the family, only making their wooden spoons break easily. Maybe this proviso has to do with the relative potency of iron.¹¹ The Al is shown in Armenian talismanic scrolls as a long-clawed, horned, bearded, tailed, club-footed monster, pitch-black, holding the innards of some victim, as in the folk tale from Kharberd (Ališan 1910: 239). It resembles typical depictions of the demons that we find in the margins of mediaeval Armenian manuscripts, one of which depicts Jesus healing a man stricken blind and dumb by demonic possession, in Matthew 12.22.¹² In another illustration, where Sts. Sisianos and Peter are shown confronting Als, the demon facing the viewer looks rather owlish—perhaps it is a *Strega!* (Wingate 1930). The Armenian talismans against the Al invoke three saints, Siovn (i.e., Zion), Sisi (perhaps from Sis, the capital of Cilician Armenia), and Sisiane (i.e., the Greek vocative of Sisianos): the same triad, and same story, as in the Jewish magical texts—and both in their present form derive from a Byzantine Greek prototype, as Gaster pointed out long ago.¹³

In Armenian folk belief, metal objects—scissors, spades, swords, pins, even guns—are considered to possess power against the Al; and in Akn on Good Friday, the time of the darkening (Arm. *xawarum*) of the

¹⁰ On the Al and other demonic beings in Armenian pre-Christian religion and later folk belief, see Ch. 15 of Russell 1987; Macler 1929; Macler 1928; and Feydit 1986. The Persians call their demon also *mādar-e āl*, “mother of the Āl”, and the Armenian demones feeding blood to her children explains why.

¹¹ This tale was told by Marian Serabian, a native of Xarberd (Harput), Western Armenia, to Hoogasian Villa (1966: 352–354).

¹² British Museum MS Or. 14161, fol. 56a, A.D. 1695, in Nersessian 1987: fig. 25.

¹³ *Vasn t’playi ew Ali*, in *Eminskij étnografičeskij sbornik*, I, Moskva-Alexandropol, 1901: 224–229.

church in mourning for the crucified Lord, blacksmiths hammered out steel crosses for the protection of women in childbirth. In the same town a member of the K'eč'ian clan was believed to have encountered and fought an Al on a mountain once: thereafter members of the family were believed to be able to defeat the demoness even as the saints of the talismans do. It was also thought that planting a metal object like a spade in the earth when an Al was passing would make the being visible—at which point it was subject to human control and could even be helpful around the house.¹⁴ The *hmayil* itself, like a rare *Narek* or Gospel book, was carefully preserved in the family shrine, wrapped in a cloth. It was considered a *tan surb*, “saint of the house”: in the 19th century, a priest would perform a ritual of healing by standing on a carpet—a delineated sacred space—with the patient at home. The priest held the sacred book, the *tan surb*, in one hand; a cross, in the other—and would recite a text containing the names of demons, urging the afflicted person to name the demon responsible for his ailment and thereby be cured. The priest-healer then put the cross to his patient's mouth and read from the book a curse against the demon named. As we shall see presently, Ethiopian healers perform analogous rituals; and they attribute to Solomon a catalogue of demons that exists in Armenian MSS also. As for the household MSS, emissaries of the Matenadaran in Yerevan tried to collect *tan srber* in the 1960's but quickly discovered that Arme-

¹⁴ See Harut'yunyan 2006: 302 ff. This massive collection of spells and folk prayers, many from hitherto unpublished records in the ethnographic archive of the Myasnikyan library, is an indispensable source for future study in the subject: the texts under No. 1(159) deal with the Al and T'p'a. There is an excellent glossary; and the explanatory notes, based largely on the earlier studies by Lalayan, Abeghyan, Achar'yan, and others in *Azgagrakan Handēs*, *Biurakn*, and the other journals of a century ago are also superb. The work suffers from the author's probably deliberate failure to consult good Western scholarship on Armenian magic and folklore, with the result that the material is presented as virtually *sui generis* and without a comparative Byzantine, Antique, or Near Eastern context. Just as Soviet Armenian scholarship in the field was extremely useful for the edition and systematic presentation of folk texts, but occasionally suffered from the weakness of an ideologically driven analysis, so a kind of new xenophobia bedevils some scholarly work of the post-Soviet era. The excellent MA thesis submitted by Yoav E. Loeff to the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, 2002, “Four Texts from the Oldest Known Armenian Amulet Scroll: Matenadaran 116(1428)”, should be consulted in any future study of this genre of Armenian magical texts. In 2002 the Matenadaran at Erevan printed a facsimile scroll of a *hmayil*, MS 312, 15th century: the accompanying booklet contains a fine introductory scholarly essay by Lilith Zakaryan, entitled *Armenian Talisman*. I am most grateful to my colleague Dr. Khachik Gevorgyan for procuring for me a copy.

nian families generally refused to surrender them. Their wishes were respected; but some scrolls did find their way to the library and thereafter people paid reverential pilgrimages to them (Abrahamian/Sweezy 2001: 58-59). In the unsettled conditions of the early 1990's, Georgian bandits stole *hmayils* from Armenians; two of these criminals tried to sell me one in Jerusalem in the autumn of 1992.

A printed scroll in the collection of the Armenian Library and Museum of America (95-77), based upon a MS dated 1 November 1717 is typical of the Armenian *hmayil* and contains the following texts: 1. Scenes of Christ's life; 2. The credal poem *Hawatov khostovanim* ("I confess in faith") of the 11th-century Catholicos St. Nerses Shnorhali; 3. Prayer for intercession for the owner of the scroll by Mary, God, the twelve Apostles, the Lamb of God, and the Offering of Christ; 4. Prayer to the Holy Sepulchre; 5. The Paternoster; 6. The Trisagion; 7. The Transfiguration; 8. Prayer to the Crucifixion; 9. Prayer for the binding of witches and heretics; for the success of a judgment at law, and for the sweetness of good fortune (*T'agawor yzor apawēn...*) ("King, mighty refuge..."); 10. Prayer to Mary (*Astuacacin amen orhneal...*) ("All Blessed Mother of God..."); 11. Prayer to St. John the Baptist, lit. Forerunner (i.e., Arm. *Surb Karapet*); 12. Prayer to St. Stephen the Protomartyr; 13. Prayer to the patron saint who converted the Armenians, St. Gregory the Illuminator; 14. Prayer of protection (*Hayr surb srbea zis...*) ("Holy Father, purify me..."); 15. Prayer of protection (*Tēr Yisus ognakan im...*) ("Lord Jesus, my helper..."); 16. Prayer for Angelic protection; 17. Names of Angels; 18. Prayer for headaches and eye-aches (*Gayr getn i Yordanan...*) ("He came to the river Jordan..."); 19. Prayer against the evil eye and evil tongue (*Hraniwt' Hrap'ael...*) ("Raphael, of fiery element..."); 20. Prayer for travellers (*Kenamanuel...*) ("*I abide/Emmanuel?..."); 21. Cruciform texts of the binding of Isaac and invocation of the Cross and Crosses; 22. Prayer of the 10th-century mystical theologian St. Gregory of Narek (*Ordi Astucoy kendarwoy orhneal yamenayni...*) ("Son of the living God, blessed in everything...", Ch. 41 of the *Matean olbergut'ean*, the *Book of Lamentation*); 23. Prayer of St. Gregory of Narek (*Enkal k'alc'rut'eamb...*) ("Receive in sweetness...", Ch. 12.3 of the *Book of Lamentation*, used as a talismanic prayer against nocturnal terrors; 24. Prayer to St. George; 25. Prayer to St. Sergius; 26. Prayer for intercession by the holy kings; 27. Selections from the Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John; 28. Prayer to bear a child; 29. Prayer for the binding of demons and *Als* (*Solomon imastunn etes zišxann diwac'...*) ("Solomon the Wise beheld the prince of the demons..."); 30. Prayer against the *T'pla* and *Al* (*Surb Siovn surb Sisi ew surbn Sisiane...*) ("St. Zion, St. Sis, and St. Sisiane...").

nos..."); 31. Prayer for business (*vačari*) and the star of good fortune (*t'aleh*, *st'aray*); 32. Colophon (rhymed). The 21st item, a list of holy Crosses and other sacred shrines of Armenia, such as the *T'ukh Manuk*, or "Black Youth" of folklore (Russell 1998: 319-343), is vividly produced in scrolls as a text itself cross-hatched to produce innumerable crosses, in the manner also of the magic squares filled with numbers and symbols that also abound in Armenian and other magical books; and we shall presently observe analogues in Outsider Art. Some examples may be adduced from a *hmayil* at the Zohrab Center of the Armenian Diocese, New York: the *Al* (Plate 7); Christ and the Cross with astrological and other symbols (Plate 8); Adam and Eve (Plate 9); a saint vanquishing a dragon (Plate 10); a magic square with mystical, asemic symbols (Plate 11); and multiple cross-hatched crosses (Plate 12). In the 19th century, scrolls were printed, too, with more conventionally Mephistophelian demons (Plate 13). It would seem, indeed, that in the modern period any ecclesiastical opposition there might once have been to prayer scrolls against the *Al* simply evaporated. For instance, one illustrated *Girk' alot'ic'*, "Book of Prayers", ca. 1800, which contains prayer-spells against the evil eye, the evil tongue, the *Al*, and the *T'pła*, as well as *Anuank' s[ur]b nšanac'n ork'en barexos vasn mer* "Names of holy signs [i.e., crosses] that are intercessors on our behalf"—everything a typical *hmayil* has—boasts on its title page that it was printed *Hramanaw Teārn Danieli čšmartaser Patriargi [sic!] Kostandnupolsoy* "By the command of Lord Daniel the truth-loving Patriarch of Constantinople" (Oskanyan/Korkotyan/Savalyan 1988: 747, no. 975.). However, Gary Lind-Sinanian of ALMA reports that the recent souvenir publication of a *hmayil* by the Matenadaran in Erevan aroused condemnation by the church hierarchy in Echmiadzin, perhaps because the mode of its presentation made light of its subject.

But before discussing the genre of Outsider Art in relation to the Armenian material, let us look at two of the more important elements of Armenian magic: the spells against the *Al*, which are the main purpose of the magician's work; and a text that is often used in magical prayers and sometimes found in scrolls, the Conversion of Cyprian of Antioch. A typical invocation against the *Al* from an Armenian scroll reads as follows:

Prayer for the binding of demons and als.

Solomon the Wise saw the prince of the demons of darkness, who roared like a cloud and screeched like a dragon. Solomon says: O foul and accursed one, what are you? The demon says: I am the prince of the demons and mother of all evils and sins. I am the one who kindles enmity between brothers, contention and quarrel and disturbance and fornication. I enter into the hearts of men, bringing and sowing the seed of wicked desire. Solomon says: Arise,

that I may see you. And he arose, greater than a mountain, and wished to fall upon him. Solomon says: Become small! And he became smaller than a mustard seed. And Solomon trapped him, and put him in a ring on his right hand, and put a piece of the tablets of Sinai on top, with a piece also of Noah's Ark, and of Jacob's Ladder, and of Aaron's staff: and by the prayers of Kononos may all evil demons and wicked satanic contrivances be banished and frustrated, may they be released and cast out afar for this servant of God (N. N.)

Lord, show me your ways, and teach me your paths.

Prayer of the t'pla and al.

Holy Siovn holy Sisi and holy Sisiane and holy Noviel and holy Taghiel, angels are they, by Christ's command. They went out hunting and heard a child's cry. They went and saw the Al in her wickedness, and seized and held fast and bound the Al on the rock of Al. The mother of the Al came, and says: What might this be? They say: What is this, that you go in, to a mother's womb, and eat her child's flesh, drink the blood, and darken the light of its eyes? The mother of the Al says: spare my son, and we will not go near to that house where they recall your names, to the servant of God (N. N.): in the name of the Father and Son and Holy Spirit, now and forever, and unto ages of ages, Amen".¹⁵

Armenian protective charms are sometimes leaves of sacred texts folded into triangles or diamonds and kept on one's person. For example, the passage beginning *Pahapan amenayni K'ristos*, "Christ, protector of all", from the long credal prayer *Hawatov xostovanim*, "I confess in faith", by St. Nerses Shnorhali ("the Graceful", d. 1173), which is recited at the end of the Divine Liturgy of the Armenian Church during Lent, is folded into a triangle, with the recipient's name written on the outside,

¹⁵ Printed scroll, from a (MS?) version dated 1 November 1717: cat. no. 95-77, collection of the Armenian Library and Museum of America, Watertown, Massachusetts: I thank Gary Lind-Sinanian of the Museum for very generously providing photocopies of their collection of Armenian talismanic scrolls. On Solomon's seal and ring, see Perdrizet 1903. The legend that Solomon had imprisoned the demons gave rise to an interesting, complex story in the *Thousand and One Nights*, in which the Caliph orders his men to go find them, and they visit the fabled City of Brass at the ends of earth (see Russell 1984). Some versions of the text describe (and, in MSS, portray) the Al as a wingless bird perched in the middle of the universe on a leafless tree. I have proposed a source for this in the Indian Garuda, with a separate development from the same source resulting in the Russian ballad (*bylina*) about the conquest by the epic hero Il'ya Muromets of the Nightingale-Robber (Rus. *solovei razboinik*) (see Russell 2005).

and carried as a talisman.¹⁶ The word *pahapan* is critical: it is roughly equivalent to Greek *phylakterion*, the word the Byzantines used for an amulet; another Armenian term for an amulet, *gir*, “writing”, would correspond to Byzantine Greek *kharti(on)*.¹⁷ Pages from the prayer book *Matean olbergut‘ean*, “Book of Lamentation”, of St. Gregory of Narek, serve the same purpose as the leaves of Shnorhali. But scrolls are the most common shape a protective text generally takes, in Armenia. There are a number of possible reasons for this, each sufficient in itself, but none fully provable.

First, the scroll has the prestige of antiquity. It predates the sewn quires of the codex by millennia. Greek *biblion* means a roll of papyrus; and *ta biblia*, “the scrolls” *par excellence*, are the Bible. We still use the word volume, from Latin *volumen*, which means “a thing rolled up”; and the standard formula at the end of a *volumen*, *explicitus est liber*, “the book is unrolled”, gives us our word “explicit”. In Armenian, the word *magalat‘*, “parchment”, actually comes from the Syriac for a scroll, the idea of parchment for Armenians having evidently been linked originally to an inscribed scroll; cf. Hebrew *megillah*, “scroll”. (The latter word as a loan in American English has come to mean “a long, drawn-out story”, from the Yiddish expression *a gantse megillah*, “a whole scroll”).¹⁸ The Torah is still used by Jews for liturgical purposes only in scroll form; and the Byzantines made both Biblical and liturgical rolls. These scrolls are very long and large: the average papyrus roll in Roman times was sold as a unit on average 15 feet long; but these were glued together very often to make a longer book, and there is an ancient Egyptian papyrus text a full 133 feet in length. A very big scroll is more public, it has been suggested, than a codex, simply because it requires several people to unroll and read it; so it has about it the power of social ceremony, of ritual (Kazhdan/Epstein 1985: 5). A scroll of very small size is as private as a large one is public, and it is easy to carry on one’s person: the Byzantine phylactery was typically a thin sheet or lamella of silver or gold, inscribed with a magical text and cryptic symbols, rolled

¹⁶ At Cambridge on 18 March 1997 Mrs. Shushan Teager of Belmont, MA, born in Beirut, showed me one that had belonged to her grandmother, Mrs. Zarman Nazaret‘ian, born in Aintab (modern Gaziantep), Turkey.

¹⁷ On the Byzantine terms, see Greenfield 1995: 120.

¹⁸ See Philologos [H. Halkin], “White House Megillah”, in the *Forward* English-language weekly, New York, 21 March 1997: 10. Prof. Martin Schwartz of Berkeley objects that I must transliterate the Yiddish for the Hebrew word for a scroll with a short -e-, as *megilleh*. But in Americanised Yiddish, where we encounter, long before Sesame Street flickered onto the screen with its (now very multicultural) Cookie Monsters and friends, one Megilla Gorilla, fixing the -a- in pronunciation.

up and sealed in a tube with two pierced lugs for a chain.¹⁹ One model for this may well have been the Jewish *mezuzah*, a little scroll put in a case and affixed to the door-frame, to protect the home against, amongst other things, the Angel of Death; and Jews also wear during prayer boxes containing tiny scrolls inscribed with sacred texts, called *tefillin*.

Though the earliest datable Armenian magical scrolls preserved come from the 15th century, it is likely that protective texts began to be translated from Greek and Syriac, with native compositions added thereto, fairly soon after St. Mesrop Mashtots' invented the Armenian alphabet, early in the 5th century. The Armenians live, after all, in a part of the world where amulets against the Child-stealing Witch had been common for millennia, as we have seen, in the languages of Syria and Mesopotamia from Akkadian down to Christian Syriac, in Aramaic, in Pahlavi, in Hebrew, and in Greek.²⁰ The Armenian cleric Yovhan Mayravanec'i/Mayragomec'i (fl. ca. 575-640), who wrote numerous sermons excoriating his flock for their drinking, theater-going, and other lapses, has an oration *Vasn č'ar sovorut'ean erdman*, "On the evil custom of oath-taking", in which he alludes specifically to swearing by saints and the Cross—commonplace in talismanic scrolls—and a *T'ult' vasn hmayic' diwt'akanac' ew anawrēn yur't'olac'*, "Epistle concerning bewitching spells and impious makers of charms".²¹ The phenomenon must be present for one to sermonise against it. But the same motives that impelled Yovhan to publish his denunciations would have led the keepers of monastic libraries to destroy such texts, or at least not to collect them until recent centuries; so talismanic scrolls made of perishable parchment stood little chance of survival over the ages.

Most *hmayils* contain an Armenian translation from Greek of the shorter version of the legend of the Repentance (or Conversion) of Cyprian of Antioch; the Armenian version of a longer recension may date from as early as the 5th century. The short form of the narrative is the one used for magic, though. It is found in the first Armenian printed book, *Urbat'agirk'* ("Friday Book", so called because of the potency of magic on that day), which Yakob *melapart* ("the sinner") produced at

¹⁹ See James Russell (not this writer), "The Archaeology of Magic in the Byzantine Period", H. Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Magic*, Washington, DC, 1995: 42.

²⁰ For the early Syriac phylacteries, made by Christians for clients with Sasanian Middle Iranian names, see Gignoux 1987; for more recent examples, see Gollancz 1912.

²¹ The texts are published in *Tea'n Yovhannu Mandakunwoy Hayoc' hayrapeti č'ark'*, 2nd ed., Venice, 1860; see also Hac'uni 1932.

Venice, A.D. 1512. The *Kiprianos* has gone through innumerable printings since then, down to the present day: most of the recent editions, from Jerusalem, Beirut, and now, also, post-Soviet Erevan, are tiny prayer books in 16-*mo*, to fit any pocket with ease, and containing various protective texts, such as the credo *Hawatov xostovanim* mentioned above.²² Cyprian was a sorcerer who could bind heaven and earth by his magical powers, but was unable to work a love charm on behalf of a young client upon a young woman, Justina, because of her strong Christian faith. A demon then told Cyprian of the mysteries of the Bible and Christ. The sorcerer, realising the greater power of the Cross, a picture of which is boldly printed at this point in the text (Plate 14), was promptly baptised. Thereafter he employed his prayers to release men from the bonds of black magic, employing, among other things, the ring of Solomon and the “bonds of bronze” with which the ancient king of Israel confined the demons. He remained, that is, a magician. The tale of Cyprian thus ties into the magical texts against the AI; and the early-20th-century American Armenologist Jane Wingate was undoubtedly right in relating this text to the scrolls, as part of a single strand of Armenian magical literature.²³ The legend of Cyprian of Antioch is more than a curiosity of magical literature; for it is generally recognised as a forerunner of the legend of Dr. Faustus in the West. In Armenia it remains much as it was originally intended to be: a text of admonition, though one in which Cyprian does not give up magic, he just becomes a Christian magician, more powerful than he had been as a pagan. In the West, though, the story develops into Goethe’s poignant drama of the aging, lonely scholar, jealous of young love and disillusioned with alchemical retorts and tomes, whose creative encounter with Mephistopheles enables him to renew his powers.

But Goethe’s insights do exist in embryo, still, one thinks, in the theme of the myth of the AI, too. It is barrenness, the anguish of imprisonment in the pride of self and the agony of Adam’s love denied, that drives the primordial Lilith, the Child-stealing Witch. There is in her, surely, a passionate emotion that makes her closer to our human state, our own perennial predicament, than God’s triumvirate of angelic hit men. And as we have seen, tradition could not always maintain the myth of Lilith in this starkly tragic and isolated form: Lilith, or AI, be-

²² On this prayer, see Russell 2005.

²³ Wingate, *art. cit.*, with translation; see discussion by Russell 1994. For an edition of the long recension of the life of Cyprian in Armenian, see Akinean 1961. Akinean believes the Armenian text to be a 5th-century translation from the Greek of Eusebius of Emesa.

comes the *mother* of Als, with little children of her own: her depredations, originally driven by a Medea-like jealousy, are now also the expression of maternal instinct. Even the demons must nurture someone, must love. This change in the tale seems to me to be of some importance, for true magic must be manipulative, a strict imposition of one's will upon the universe and other people, irrespective of their own needs and strivings, their own happiness—it can only operate, thus, by the deliberate suppression of compassion. It is materialist, and cruel. Religion, by contrast, must involve the deliberate submission of one's own will to that of a higher power; and this creates a relationship, requires the acknowledgement of the real existence of another, with another's sphere of being. It cannot but introduce, in whatever measure, both humility and compassion. The Christianity of Armenian magical scrolls perhaps mitigates somewhat their magical essence: the poignancy of the tragedy of Lilith forces the hand of folk religion. She must have children, too; and the magic worked against her, therefore, acquires a good reason to remain provisional, to work only unto the seventh generation, or only in a house where the requisite talismanic scroll is hung up high, to trail down to the floor of the pregnant woman's bedroom.

The legend of Cyprian is interesting in another way, too: as a magical text about a magician, it is as close as we come in the primary magical literature itself to authorial autobiography. Its salient feature is a career cut in half by failure and then galvanised by a vision and subsequent conversion; and in its barest essentials this describes the trajectory of many outsider artists. Let us consider first the evidence of the Ethiopian *debtera*, as closest in religion and culture to Armenia.²⁴ The *debtera*—the word comes from a Greek term for “parchment”—is, like the Armenian *tirac'u*, an unordained Christian religious practitioner; and it is *debteras* who make magical scrolls (Plate 15). He is considered a holy man in his community, but he can also inspire fear as someone abnormal. One *debtera*, a man named Asres, had an initiatory dream in which a luminous being commanded him to eat the thigh of an impure animal, the hyena: he did this with pleasure, understanding thereby that God purifies the impure. There are several features of interest here: the 18th-century Armenian minstrel (*ašut*) of Tiflis, Sayat' Nova, had an initiatory dream in which St. John the Baptist, the equivalent of the Muslim Khidr, taught him how to play musical instruments; and in the mediaeval period the poet Kostandin Erznkac'i had a vision of a luminous being that

²⁴ The Ethiopian evidence in the discussion comes principally from Mercier 1997.

initiated him into poetic vision and composition.²⁵ Thus there is ample precedent in Armenia for initiatory dreaming, though I know of no case for the *tirac'u* who made scrolls. However, there may be an overlap in the case of the modern Armenian *nayol*, or “seer” of the Otherworld. He is usually chosen by a traumatic illness or other experience and is subsequently guided by dreams and other visions: he practices divination (by pouring melted wax into water, or throwing beans, etc.) and healing. He develops his own prayers and rituals, without undergoing apprenticeship; but resistance to the calling can cause blindness, for his primary sight is now of the next world (Lind-Sinianian 2003: 57). As for the Ethiopian initiatory dream, the command to Asres to eat something long, thick, and impure is obviously sexual and represents a traumatic experience transformed into a positive one; and one is reminded forcefully of the precedents of the Hebrew prophets forced by God in a vision to eat a scroll. Asres’ communication with the Otherworld seems to have continued over time: he made a point of celebrating the feast of the angel Gabriel, who, he believed, had once intervened to rescue him from misfortune. Tradition attributes to *debteras* other supernatural experiences in connection with their acquisition of magical knowledge: Tewany, a 17th-century liturgical poet and master of the occult, used to feast with invisible demons, and was lifted up in the air by unseen women and carried to lake Tana, where he learnt folk remedies. He made a talisman that kept the Angel of Death away from his house for a full seven years. In Armenia, Gabriel is the *groł*, the “writer” of destinies who comes as the Angel of Death to take the soul; and there is a ballad, kindred to the Greek myth of Alcestis, in which a princely hero named Aslan (“Lion”) fights Gabriel. But it is his wife’s devotion, not his physical or magical prowess, that persuades God to lengthen Aslan’s and her own life (Russell 1998a). As for flight through the air, this is the signature experience of the witch or the shaman the world over. Ethiopian Christian holy men can also be possessed, as are shamans elsewhere, by spirits who “ride” them like horses: such a belief in possession is general in the Muslim and Jewish communities of the country as well.

In Ethiopia a master of talisman making trains acolytes for seven years before they get a notebook of their own. It can be a demanding job to be a *debtera* and teacher: Asres always wanted to study liturgical poetry, for example, but never had time. The scrolls themselves are strikingly similar to the Armenian *hmayils*, down to the cross-hatched pat-

²⁵ See J. R. Russell, tr., intro., and comm., Derenik Demirjian, *The Book of Flowers* (*Girk' calkanc'*), Belmont, MA, 2003, esp.: 11-19.

tern in invocations of the Holy Cross and other crosses (Plate 16). The scroll's length conforms to the height of the client's body (Plate 17), all of which it is intended to protect and heal; but a scroll that had belonged to a deceased relative can be re-used with the old name scratched out and that of the new owner inserted. Scrolls are rolled up and kept in a case under one's pillow or near an afflicted limb of the body; or they can be hung vertically over one's sickbed. A priest visiting an ailing parishioner might read such a scroll hanging over the person's bed: a jug of water is placed nearby, and the priest will dip the Cross in it while reading out a prayer, then blow on the water (perhaps in imitation of the spirit of God hovering over the face of the waters in Genesis!) and sprinkle it over the patient. These fascinating practices might have had parallels in Armenia, though testimony is lacking. With the modernisation of Ethiopian society, the traditional role of the *debtera* has begun to disintegrate; but one traditional maker of talismans, Gedewon (1939-2000), befriended by the scholar Jacques Mercier, began to work more freely as a creative artist, utilising the themes and skills of his sacred craft and exhibiting his work in Paris. His paintings, removed from their traditional context, are now studied under the rubric of Outsider Art, where they find affinities with the canvases of other visionaries practicing outside the formal art world (Mercier 2003).

What is certain is the similarity of subject matter. Like Armenians, Ethiopian Christians consider Friday a day of special danger: the "Outsider Artist"/*debtera* Gedewon painted a special talisman for the day (Plate 18). Like Armenians they regard the Cross as a sign of victory, not a reminder of Christ's suffering; and tend not to portray His crucified body thereon. They call it typically "the Cross, conqueror of enemies", and use it abundantly in talismanic scrolls. This view of the Cross recalls the *xač' patrazin* ("Cross of war/victory", the second word probably from Arm. *paterazmin*, "of war", but maybe also Middle Iranian *pērōzēn*, "victorious") the heroes of the Sasun epic wear on their arms as part of their battle equipment. And the talisman with which Cyprian releases the virgin Justina is a great cruciform figure in Ethiopian MSS, just like the Cross shown in Armenian texts of the *Kiprianos* (Plate 19): the story of the reformed magician is equally prominent in both cultures. Like the Armenians, Ethiopians cultivated legends about the two kings of old who possessed magical powers: Solomon and Alexander. Ethiopian magical texts include talismans against Gog and Magog (Plate 20), whom Alexander is said to have confined behind bronze walls at the ends of the earth. The gates are guarded by automatons that play music since the ophidian peoples fear it: one is reminded of the Story of the City of

Bronze (*Patmut'iwn phnje k'alak'i*), a tale translated into Armenian from Arabic that features similar automata. The prayer of "Solomon's Net" (Plate 21) describes how the ancient monarch was trapped by blacksmiths but vanquished them by invoking God's name. Solomon also drew portraits of demons in a book: demons are curious to see themselves, but when they view Solomon's pictures they vanish in a puff of smoke! The book—a pseudepigraphon, of course—exists in Armenian, and the MS was published by the French Armenologist Frédéric Macler²⁶ (Plate 22). As for the blacksmiths, one recalls that in Armenia they used to strike their anvils thrice at the beginning of the working week to strengthen the chains of Artawazd, the demonic king imprisoned in Mt. Ararat (Azat Masik') by the giants called *k'ajk'*. There are spells of protection against the latter in Armenian magical MSS; and scissors or other iron objects are believed to be powerful against the Child-stealing Witch and other evil powers. So perhaps the blacksmiths originally figured in the prototype of the Ethiopian tale as positive figures, and the confusion of roles arose because of Solomon's converse with evil demons.

The magical scrolls and other texts and paintings of Christian Ethiopia are so very close in subject and style to those of Armenia that they may fairly be said to belong to a single, common East Christian tradition of folk religion. So, although the social and historical context of the East African *debtera* is in many respects radically different from that of the *tirac'u* in the Ottoman Empire and the Transcaucasus, it would not be unreasonable to infer at least some similarities between the two classes of magician-artists. These might include a powerful, even traumatic, initiatory dream or other vision followed by apprenticeship and the production at graduation of one's own magical notebook; the experience of possession by a spirit or saint; ancillary mastery of healing arts, particularly herbal ones; making scrolls and other talismans to order for afflicted clients; an uneasy symbiosis with the established Church; and a position in the community of mixed reverence and fear. In both nations, a sanctioned niche is thus found for individuals who might be stigmatised as marginal or abnormal elsewhere: a feature of traditional societies innocent of the blessings or curses of psychiatry and its attendant world view. Let us now consider the outsider artist in Western society and his affinity to these Eastern Orthodox magicians.

The definition of the outsider artist has to be fairly broad, and to involve social polarities. At one extreme are people who are criminals by

²⁶ Venice, Marciana MS 210, published by Macler 1928.

any definition, such as murderers or child-molesters, or who are unable to function in everyday life, such as schizophrenics, other delusional types: these create art in mental asylums. One famous example is Adolf Wölfli (d. 1930), a Swiss mental patient whose intricate paintings teem with winged beings both angelic and demonic, crosses, multiple eyes, geometric patterns, and dense streams of text. (Plate 23) Wölfli's paintings, which are strikingly similar to Ethiopian religious ones in their hieratic and diagrammatic character, reflect a complex private cosmology peopled by saints with invented names, in which the artist himself figures as a heroic and persecuted figure.²⁷ The eerie avian trinities of another outsider artist, Johann Knüpfer, remind one of the three saints who pursue Lilith—but in his work they are themselves pursued by an evil hunter armed with a gun. (Plates 24 and 25) In the opinion of Greg Bottoms, outsider art is fuelled “by passion, troubled psychology, extreme ideology, faith, despair, and the desperate need to be heard and seen that comes with cultural marginalisation and mental unease”. Outsider artists need not be inmates of asylums, and at the other end of the continuum they can be moderately well-adjusted housewives, businessmen, and the like; but just as often they are disenfranchised people who wake up one day to find all hope finally lost, and in an act of heroic resistance to their social dysfunctionality throw themselves into the great task of creating a body of artistic work (Bottoms 2007: 9, 53). They are, it would seem, creating a cosmology that provides a context in which they can invest their fragmented lives with meaning and achieve a feeling of wholeness, of integrity. Such an artistic release, one notes, most often has a magico-religious aspect, the expression of a vision. The vision can be highly structured and its artistic and verbal expression extremely sophisticated while remaining idiosyncratic: the English poet and artist William Blake might be adduced as an example. Or it can be at the fringe of mainstream religion or beyond; and part of the reason for this, one suggests, is that just as Western society tends to marginalise the religious visionary, the mainstream Western art world correspondingly marginalises the expression of sincere religious experience unmediated by irony. So, an artist who is not yet an outsider runs the risk of finding himself isolated and marginalised if his art is unabashedly religious in content and sentiment.²⁸ It was an innovative artist impatient

²⁷ The principal study of this extreme of outsider art is the study by MacGregor (1989); the monograph by Walter Morgenthaler, *Ein Geisteskranker als Künstler: Adolf Wölfli*, 1921, was translated into English by Aaron H. Esman as *Madness and Art*, Lincoln, 1992; and, most recently, see Spoerri/Baumann 2003.

²⁸ On this predicament see Elkins 2004.

with the establishment, Jean Dubuffet (1901-1985), who coined the term *Art Brut*, collecting outsider art and eventually establishing a museum for it in Lausanne and making it a subject for study by art historians, as well as psychiatrists and criminologists (Rhodes 2000: 7-8).

Here are the experiences of some other outsider artists. August Neter, born in 1868, beheld a vision in the sky of a screen across which a torrent of images passed: God, then the witch who created the world, wars, monuments, castles— some ten thousand objects in the course of a hallucination that lasted only half an hour, which he took over the rest of his life to set down in drawings (Cardinal 1972: 94). In Neter's vision, the world is the creation of an evil being, rather than of the good God, who seems to hover somewhere outside the universe. Thus his cosmology is substantially the same as that of the cosmogonic vision described at the beginning of the Hermetic text *Poimandres*; and it is even closer to the ideas propounded by the prophet Mani in third century Sasanian Iran after a series of visions and visitations by his spirit-twin. These became the basis not only of a world religion of Late Antiquity, Manichaeism, but also of a vast painting, the *Ardahang*, that Mani executed himself and that is remembered as the *Aržang* in classical Persian poetry. Mani was also a calligrapher; and fashioned out of Aramaic a new phonetic alphabet in which to transmit his teachings.²⁹ This combination of talents recalls the skills of the maker of magical scrolls, joined perhaps to the visionary powers of the similarly antinomian William Blake. But in the context of his age Mani was a prophet, not a madman or social outcast.

Another modern outsider artist, Madge Gill, discovered her gift through the intervention of her spirit guide, whom she named Myrminerest and associated with the planet Mars. In a painting of Mars (Plate 26), she produces a pattern of squares filled with mystical, asemic letters or symbols very like the magic diagrams of Armenian and Ethiopian manuscripts, and her written invocations include both *voces mysticae*, or potent, glossolalic nonsense words (again typical of magical texts) and references to new technologies: "Myrminerest Mars/ Mars canals/ Vedi/ dai/ My all/ Jupiter luminary planet/ Through wireless master mind/ Saturn... communication" (Cardinal 1972: 30, 141). Laura Pigeon, d. 1965, after the trauma of divorcing her husband took up spiritualism, astrology, and drawing; and produced some five hundred mediumistic texts and pictures under the guidance of a spirit guide (Cardinal 1972: 91-93).

²⁹ On the cultural and psychological role of invented scripts, see James R. Russell, "The Script of the Dove: An Armenian Hetaerogram", forthcoming in *JArmenSt*.

These two women outsider artists display a significant feature in common that relates to the craft of the artist-magician of the Christian East: they both undergo a kind of spirit possession, but instead of being prophets or shamans they conform to a type of the experience validated by the society in which they live, for their gender—they become mediums, spiritualists. But although the experience is spiritual, it has a planetary, astrological aspect. And this deserves closer examination.

In the late 19th century, the astronomer Schiaparelli professed to have seen what looked like canals on the surface of Mars, and Camille Flammarion wrote a novel about extra terrestrials. European writers and thinkers seem to have displaced onto the red planet, at once so alien and so close, the kind of hopes and fears that had once been expressed in the terms of a more abstract heaven or otherworld peopled by angels or devils.³⁰ Thus, H. G. Wells' novel *War of the Worlds* imagines an apocalyptic invasion by terrifying Martians—octopi the size of grizzly bears encased in invincible death-ray machines that punish human hubris and restore to our race a numinous awe. Nathaniel Hawthorne's son-in-law, George Lathrop, published a similar tale on this side of the Atlantic in 1895. By contrast, the interplanetary being in George du Maurier's novel, *The Martian* (1896), is a gentle, protective creature, an innocent vegetarian endowed with synaesthetic imaginative and extra-sensory powers bringing love and companionship to lonely earthlings. Madge Gill mentions the wireless radio in her poem or prayer to her Martian spirit-guide: the inventor of alternating current, Nikola Tesla, who firmly believed he could invent a death ray as well, believed there were intelligent beings on Mars and thought he had communicated with them by wireless (see Seifer 1996: 220ff.). The most interesting example of this cultural fixation, perhaps, is the case of Hélène Smith, a working medium who not only communicated astrally with a Martian named As-tané, but did so in the Martian language—which syntactically and morphologically very closely resembles her native French. It is a euphonic language; and the characters of the Martian alphabet that she wrote in trance, which sometimes obtruded into her waking writing, resemble somewhat the shapes of Sanskrit characters (Plate 27). This is reasonable, since the deliberate exoticism of her inventions seems to be based upon what she had read of India. Her paintings of Mars resemble in

³⁰ It is the near alien that inspires the greatest fear; thus, Armenians were to the Greeks of Byzantium both Christians and foreigners. So, a woman possessed by a demon babbled in Armenian; and Armenian magical texts have their demons speak a pseudo-Arabic (See J. R. Russell, "A Scholium on Coleridge and an Armenian Demon", *JSAS* 10 (1998, 1999 [2000]): 63-71).

their dense detail and syncretism (Plate 28) of styles the sculptural and architectural inventions of outsider artists such as Ferdinand Cheval (d. 1924) (Cardinal 1972: 146)³¹ (Plate 29). And the strange language and its arcane alphabet seem to be an attempt to ennoble oneself, to endow oneself with a special glamour lacking in mundane life.³² The psychologist who studied her Martian “romance” writes of Hélène’s “homesickness for an unknown country” and her instinctive inner revolt against the limitations of her station in society and her sex: in this case, the possessed visionary and outsider artist has a respectable job but is also the subject of a psychological case study of 1899 that is still both interesting and poignant. *Ané éni ké éréduť cé ilassuné té imâ nibétiné chée du-rée*, “C’est ici que, solitaire, je m’approche du ciel et regards la terre”, explains her Martian friend and spirit-guide Astané, expressing both the alienation and the romantic dignity of this outsider artist, visionary, magician, who, in a world without a sacred language to elevate her imaginative power to the level of magic or sacredness, must invent one for herself.³³

In this survey one has sought first to describe the contents and styles of the Armenian magical scrolls and their sources; then to construct a hypothetical schema of the personality, experience, and training of the artist on the basis of what is known of the makers of the very similar magical scrolls of Ethiopia; and finally, combining salient features of magical art and the particulars of the people who make it, to relate the East Christian genre to that of Outsider Art and outsider artists in the West, with particular attention to the contrasting evaluations of religious experience and practice in the two kinds of society. In traditional Ethiopia and Armenia, the visionary who dreams, keeps company with angels, and speaks in tongues, is afforded a social purpose. In the West, where heaven and hell are displaced by an unhappy and anxious materialism onto Mars and cosmological visions, euphonious invented languages, and the like are the object of studies of neurosis, the only place for the kinsman or kinswoman of the *tirac’u* and *debtera* is the

³¹ Numerous outsider artists have created complexes of buildings or sculpture parks to express a religious message or personal imaginative vision and to surround themselves with a preferable sphere of entity (see Umberger 2007).

³² Societies such as professional guilds within linguistic and ethnic groups often create sub-languages and ciphers, not just to conceal their knowledge from the uninitiated and unprepared, but also to ennoble themselves with a sense of separateness, of being special (see Russell 2011).

³³ See Théodore Flournoy, *From India to the Planet Mars: A Case of Multiple Personality with Imaginary Languages*, 1899, English tr. reprinted Princeton, 1994.

hospital, the prison, or the art market, in which a special niche—more an annex or garage, actually—has been built.

Both kinds of society: the traditional and the industrial—seem to feel the same need, however, for transcendence and imagination, for a spontaneity that paradoxically has its roots in the deepest archetypes of our cultural forms. Yet both treat the individuals who because of crisis or compulsion pursue magical creation as transgressors against reality, as marginal and dangerous. Even when given a place, they stand a little bit outside and at an angle to conventional sanity; even when seen, they are canonically apart. One wonders what it is that frightens us so about them. It seems to me it is a protest that, were one not to isolate or sublimate it, would force us to transform the world, to make life the home of insider artists. One concludes with the words of the greatest visionary of all: “Religious distress is at the same time the expression of real distress and the protest against real distress. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of a heartless world, just as it is the spirit of a spiritless situation. It is the opium of the people. The abolition of religion as the illusory happiness of the people is required for their real happiness. The demand to give up the illusion about its condition is the demand to give up a condition, which needs illusions” (Karl Marx, *Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right*).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrahamian, Levon; Sweezy, Nancy (eds.) (2001), *Armenian Folk Arts, Culture, and Identity*, Bloomington.
- Akinean, Fr. N. (1961), “Apašxarut‘iwn Kiprianosi”, *Handes Amsoreay*, 75.1-4, Vienna: 4-38.
- Alishan, Ghevont (1910), *Hin hawatk‘ kam het‘anosakan kronk‘ Hayoc‘*, Venice.
- Betz, H. D. (ed.) (1986), *The Greek Magical Papyri in Translation, Vol. I: Texts*, Chicago.
- Bottoms, Greg (2007), *The Colorful Apocalypse: Journeys in Outsider Art*, Chicago.
- Cardinal, Roger (1972), *Outsider Art*, New York.
- Eilers, W. (1979), *Die Al, ein persisches Kindbettgespenst*, München.
- Elkins, James (2004), *On the Strange Place of Religion in Contemporary Art*, New York.

- Faraone C. A.; Obbink, D. (eds.) (1991), *Magika Hiera: Ancient Greek Magic and Religion*, Oxford.
- Feydit, Frédéric (1986), *Amulettes de l'Arménie Chrétienne*, Venice.
- Flournoy, Théodore (1899), *From India to the Planet Mars: A Case of Multiple Personality with Imaginary Languages*. (English tr. reprinted: Princeton University Press, 1994).
- Gager, J. G. (1992), *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World*, Oxford.
- Gaster, Theodor H. (1980), *The Holy and the Profane: Evolution of Jewish Folkways*, 2nd ed., New York.
- Gignoux, Philippe (1987), *Incantations magiques syriaques*, Louvain/Paris.
- Gollancz, Hermann (1912), *The Book of Protection*, Oxford.
- Greenfield, Richard P. H. (1995), "A Contribution to the Study of Palaeologan Magic", Henry Maguire (ed.), *Byzantine Magic*, Washington, DC.
- Hac'uni, Vardan V. (1932), *Erdmunk' hin hayoc' mej*, Venice.
- Harut'yunyan, Sargis (2006), *Hay hmayakan ev žolovrdakan alot'k'ner*, Erevan.
- Hoogasian Villa, Susie (1966), *100 Armenian Tales*, Detroit.
- Hutter, M. (1995), "Lilith", Karel van der Toorn et al. (eds.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Leiden: 974-975.
- Kazhdan, A. P.; Epstein, A. W. (1985), *Change in Byzantine Culture in the Eleventh and Twelfth Centuries*, Berkeley.
- Lind-Sinanian, Gary (2003), *Armenian Magical Practices: Faith, Folk, and Fate. An Exhibition Catalog*, Watertown, MA.
- Luck, Georg (1985), *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds*, Baltimore.
- Macler, Frédéric (1928), *L'Enluminure arménienne profane*, Paris.
- (1929), *Les dew arméniens*, Paris.
- MacGregor, John M. (1989), *The Discovery of the Art of the Insane*, Princeton.
- Mercier, Jacques (1997), *Art That Heals: The Image as Medicine in Ethiopia*, New York.
- (2003), "Gedewon: A Talismanic Art", Annie Carlano (ed.), *Vernacular Visionaries: International Outsider Art*, New Haven: 18-31.
- Meyer, M.; Smith, R. (1994), *Ancient Christian Magic: Coptic Texts of Ritual Power*, San Francisco.

- Naveh, J.; Shaked, S. (1985/1993), *Amulets and Magic Bowls, and Magic Spells and Formulae* (two vols. on Late Antique Aramaic incantations), Jerusalem/Leiden.
- Nersessian, V. (1987), *Armenian Illuminated Gospel Books*, London.
- Oskanyan, N. A.; Korkotyan, K'. A., Savalyan, A. M. (1988), *Hay girk'ə 1512-1800 t'vakannerin*, Erevan.
- Penney D. L.; Wise, M. O. (1994), "By the power of Beelzebub: An Aramaic Incantation Formula from Qumran", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 113/4, 1994: 627-650.
- Perdrizet, Paul (1903), "Sphragis Solomonos", *Révue des Études Grecques*, Paris, tome XVI, nos. 68-69, Jan.-Apr.: 42-61.
- Rappoport, Angelo S. (1937), *The Folklore of the Jews*, London.
- Rhodes, Colin (2000), *Outsider Art: Spontaneous Alternatives*, London.
- Rieff, David (2008), *Reborn: Journals and Notebooks, 1947-1963*, Susan Sontag (ed.), New York.
- Russell, James R. (1984), "The Tale of the Bronze City in Armenian", Thomas J. Samuelian, Michael E. Stone (eds.), *Medieval Armenian Culture*, Univ. of Pennsylvania Armenian Texts and Studies, Chico, CA: 250-261.
- (1987), *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, Harvard Iranian Series 5, Cambridge, MA.
- (1993), "The Mother of All Heresies: A Late Mediaeval Armenian Text on the Yushkaparik", *Revue des Etudes Arméniennes* 24: 273-93.
- (1994), "Grace from Van: A Micro-Historiola", *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, Vol. 7: 35-45.
- (1998), "The Armenian Shrines of the Dark Youth (T'ux manuk), *Le Muséon* 111, fasc. 3-4: 319-343.
- (1998a), "An Epic for the Borderlands: Zariadris of Sophene, Aslan the Rebel, Digenes Akrites, and the Mythologem of Alcestis in Armenia", R. Hovannisian (ed.), *Armenian Tsopk/Kharpert*, Costa Mesa, CA: 147-183.
- (2000), tr., intro., and comm., Karapet Sital, *An Armenian Epic: The Heroes of Kasht (Kashti k'ajer)*, Ann Arbor, MI.
- (2005), "Solov'i, solov'i", *St. Nersess Theological Review* 10: 77-139 (published in Russian in *Rossiia XXI*, 2006.4, Moskva: 156-197).
- (2005a), "The Credal Poem Hawatov xostovanim ("I confess in faith") of St. Nerses the Graceful", J. J. van Ginkel et al. (eds.), *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since*

- the Rise of Islam*, Orientalia Lovanensia Analecta 134, Leuven: 185-236
- (2011), “The Script of the Dove: An Armenian Hetaerogram”, *Journal of Armenian Studies*, Belmont, MA, 2011.
- Scholem, Gershom (1947), “Peraqim hadashim be-inyane Ashmedai ve-Lilit”, *Tarbiz* 19: 160-175.
- Seifer, Marc J. (1996), *Wizard: The Life and Times of Nikola Tesla, Biography of a Genius*, Secaucus, NJ.
- Sperling, David (1982), “An Arslan Tash Inscription: Interpretation and Implications”, *Hebrew Union College Annual* 53: 1-10.
- Spoerri, E.; Baumann, D. (2003), *The Art of Adolf Wölfli: St. Adolf-Giant-Creation*, New York.
- Umberger, Leslie (2007), *Sublime Spaces and Visionary Worlds: Built Environments of Vernacular Artists*, New York.
- Wingate, J. S. (1930), “The Scroll of Cyprian: an Armenian Family Amulet”, *Folk-Lore*, London, Vol. XLI, No. 2: 169-187.



Plate 1



Plate 2

Plate 3

Plate 4



Plate 5



Plate 6



Plate 7



Plate 8



Plate 9



Plate 10



Plate 11



Plate 12



Plate 13

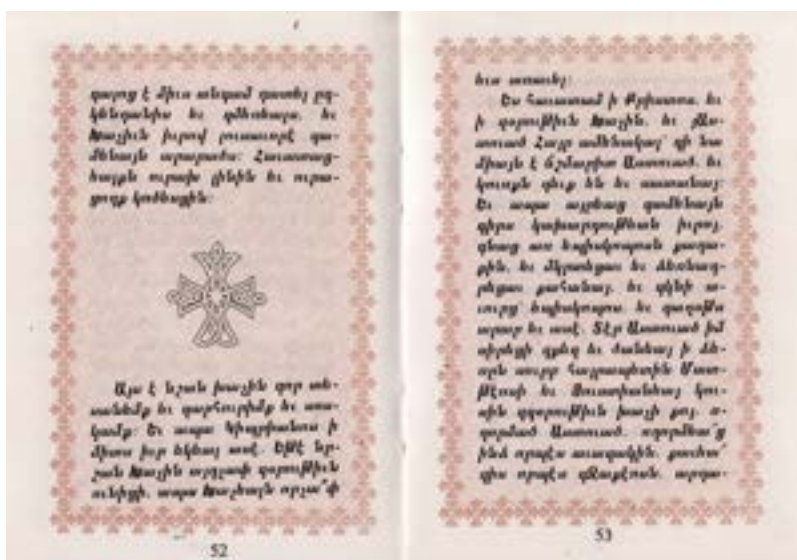


Plate 14



Plate 15



Plate 16



Plate 17



Plate 18



Plate 19



Plate 20



Plate 21



Fig. 365. - Le serpent de mer.
(Vernon, *Manuscrits* 201, fol. 99r et 99v)

Plate 22



Plate 23



Plate 24

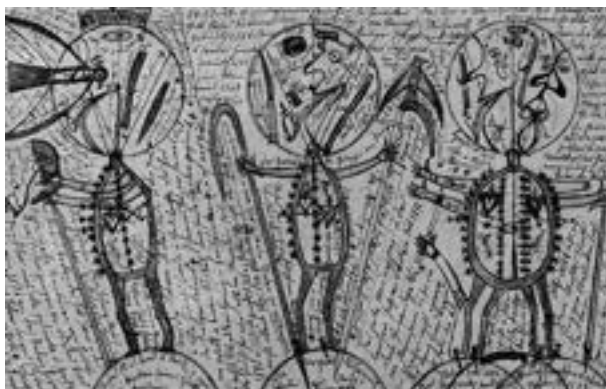


Plate 25



Plate 26

[illegible]

Fig. 23. Martian text No. 27, source of September 12, 1907. Written by Siffo. Smith incriminating Actand (then Latapold for the French words at the end). See the translation, p. 143. Too many 'x' at the end of the first line immediately produced the scratch intended to strike them out. (Disproportion one-half natural size.)

1. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10.
 2. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10.
 3. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10.
 4. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10.
 5. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10.
 6. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10.
 7. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10.
 8. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10.
 9. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10.
 10. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10. 2017 10 10.

Fig. 25. Test No. 18 (October 18, 1867), written in pencil by Mlle. Smith concerning *Yersinia*. Reproduction is autotype two-thirds of the natural size.

6 5 1 4 2 3 8 0 7 9 2
a b c d e f g h i j k l m n
L T 1 V 4 6 5 d n 0
p q r s t u v w x y z . ' -
P. Initials V. - sibilant 3 signs & plural

Fig. 34. Martian alphabet; summary of the signs obtained (Naves has been given as such by Niles, Smith.)

Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely from a manuscript.

Fig. 26. Test No. 26 (August 21, 1956), which appeared in visual hallucination, and was copied by Nille Smith. Reproductions in autotype.

Plate 27

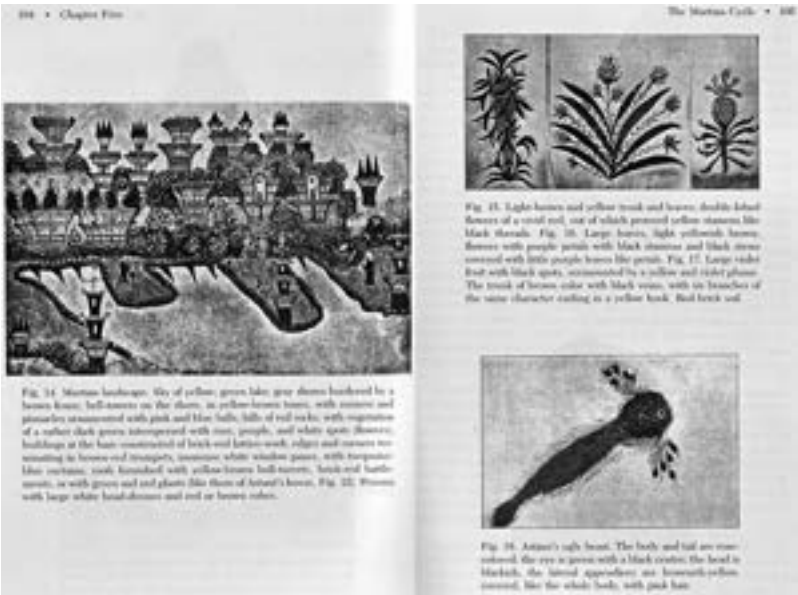


Plate 28



Plate 29

Argawan: The Indo-European Memory of the Caucasus

James R. Russell

Preface

This essay examines an episode in the fragments of the oral epic cycle of King Artasēs I (Gk. Artaxias; from an Old Persian form *Artaxšassa, Old Iranian *Arta-xšathra-, “Whose rule is through right/order [Aša]”) and his Alan bride Sat’enik. Artasēs was the eponymous founder of the Armenian Artaxiad dynasty, which came into being in the early second century B.C. as Seleucid rule receded from Anatolia; it endured down to the dawn of the Christian era, when a branch of the Parthian Arsacid dynasty established itself in the country. A major figure in the Artaxiad cycle is the crown-prince, Artawazd: his character has been telescoped, however, into that of a much later monarch, Artawazd II (r. 55-34 B.C.), who came to the throne after the death of the only Armenian ruler who ever played a significant role in Roman and Near Eastern history, Tigran II (“the Great,” r. 95-56 B.C.). Of particular interest to this study is a Median nobleman living in Armenia, Argawan.

The primary source for all this material is the *History of the Armenians* (Arm. *Patmut’iwn Hayoc’*) of Movsēs Xorenac’i. The work is rich in genealogical, mythological, and epic lore; so in Armenian tradition Xorenac’i has acquired the status of a Herodotus, as the *Patmahayr*, “Father of History,” of the nation. His dates are accordingly assigned to the so-called *oskedar*, “golden age” of Armenian literature—the period in the fifth century immediately following the invention by St. Mesrop Maštoc’ of the Armenian alphabet. Much in the *History* is demonstrably derived or patterned upon earlier or non-Armenian works (Lazar P’arpec’i, Josephus, the *Alexander Romance*), or is anachronistic; and it is likely therefore that Xorenac’i lived later, perhaps as late as the eighth century. However there is no reason to doubt his assertion that he heard with his own ears the

minstrels (Arm. *gusan* < Pth. *gōsān*)¹ recite the epic songs to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument: Xorenac'i's renderings are in all respects careful transcriptions of a primary, oral source.

The Armenians lived for centuries in close proximity to the Alans—speakers of a North Iranian language, a branch of the Scythians. The modern Ossetes are direct descendants of the ancient Alans, with the same language and culture; and in the republic of Georgia Ossetic- and Armenian-speaking communities are still contiguous. The Armenian oral epic *Sasna c'ier*, "The Wild Men of Sasun," first transcribed in 1874 in the region around Lake Van, has very ancient Anatolian and Iranian strata: a lady of the lake, a sword cast in water; and rock-births, and other evidence of proto-Mithraism. This combination of Old Anatolian and Iranian themes can be observed farther to the north in the Ossetic oral epic, the sagas of the *Nartae* (pl. of *nart*, "hero, manly man"); so it is probable that the Armenian epic tradition served as a conduit for such material, perhaps as long as two millennia ago, if one gives credence to the hypothesis that Alan lore was the source of these themes in Arthurian legend. There are thematic parallels in Armenian and Alan epic; so in addition to borrowing from Armenia it would seem there was much cross-fertilization as well. This is what one might expect: cultural influences between close neighbors over a long period are generally not a one-way affair.

The Ossetic Nart sagas are recited, in various versions, by other peoples of the Northwest Caucasus such as the Abkhaz and Adygei (Cherkess, Circassians). A narrative of the Narts in Adygei contains a version of the story of the marriage of Artašēs to Sat'enik and the intervention of Artawazd. These three characters have different, Ossetic, names; but a fourth player, Argwana, is plainly the Median Argawan of Movsēs Xorenac'i. This character is not mentioned in the Ossetic versions themselves; so it is probable that the Adygei story reflects an older Alan narrative that is now lost in its original—Argwana is a *Nebenüberlieferung* then—testimony for a name that undoubtedly existed once in the Ossetic *Nartae* proper. By any historical and textual standard of priority this name and character came from the Armenian epic transcribed by Movsēs Xorenac'i at least a millennium before any Nart saga was transcribed. The Adygei Nart tale provides proof of a borrowing from ancient Armenian oral literature; it is also the first independent attestation of the material in the epic cycle of Artašēs quoted in Movsēs Xorenac'i's narrative outside Armenian—nay, outside his own book.² It provides a

¹ In later times, the term *gōsān* was replaced, for reciters of lyric and romantic verses and cycles, by *ašut* / *ashugh* /, a loan from Arabic 'ašiq, "lover;" those who recited and chanted the heroic epic of Sasun were called *asac'oł*, "sayer, reciter" (cf. the mediaeval usage *asotik*).

² There is an elegy of the dying Artašēs, probably from the same cycle, in the *Letters* of Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni: see J.R. Russell, "Some Iranian Images of Kingship in the Armenian Artaxiad Epic," *REArm* 20, 1986-

strong argument, if any still be needed, for the antiquity and authenticity of his narrative concerning Artašēs.

The Kartvelologist Georges Charachidze published in 1987 a short, elegant book, *La mémoire indo-européenne du Caucase* (Paris: Hachette) in which he suggests that the oral Nart sagas, originating in Ossetic and widely diffused amongst non-Indo-European speakers in the Western and Northwestern Caucasus, enshrine Indo-European institutions, beliefs, and values that had become essential to social and personal life but were not—or could not be—overtly expressed in the canonical religions of the Ossetes and their neighbors. The title of this essay is offered in homage to his insight. That Indo-European memory is not only Ossetic, but Armenian, since Armenia is a major source for the Narts; and partly because oral epic in Armenian society in Anatolia and the Transcaucasus occupied a niche analogous to that of the Narts farther north, as a kind of Indo-European secular scripture.

The relevant Armenian passages are cited in the original, with my translation; and the other texts considered, systematically summarized—in the final section of the essay, with important terms explicated in the footnotes thereto.

Actualité

When one studies an epic there is a tacit sense one deals with archaic culture (Homer), with alien or primitive ways of life, or with a highly self-conscious re-employment within the West of a form that is acknowledged to be obsolete in any living context of serious literature since the Romantic period. Indeed, several of the epics of that latest age in which the genre seems to have thrived as a serious high literary form, are inauthentic: they are not just the products of self-conscious, individual artifice (no one would condemn Milton's *Paradise Lost* on these grounds), but forgery. Macpherson's *Ossian*, though it inspired or interested a number of creative artists, from Felix Mendelssohn to Vladimir Nabokov and Osip Mandelstam, is, strictly speaking, a fake; and a heated argument rages around the theory that the great epic of the East Slavs, *The Lay of Igor's Campaign*, with all its poetic brilliance and haunting imagery, was not composed soon after a war that took place in A.D. 1185, but is in fact the work of the late-eighteenth-century Slavist Josef Dombrovsky.³ The passion that

1987, esp. p. 259, reprinted in J. R. Russell, *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, Harvard Armenian Texts and Studies 9, Cambridge, MA, 2004 (=AIS). But the Circassian version of the Narts *repeats* a detail from Xorenac'i.

³ On the reception of Ossian in Russia, see Yu.D. Levin, ed., James Macpherson, *Poemy Ossiana*, Series Akademiya Nauk SSSR: Literaturnye Pamyatniki, Leningrad: Nauka, 1983, esp. pp. 277-458, with texts of over thirty writers, from Pushkin to Mandelstam, that deal with Ossian. On Igor see, most recently, Edward L. Keenan, *Josef Dobrovsky and the Origins of the Igor Tale* (Harvard Series in Ukrainian Studies,

informed both forgers and debaters was often nationalistic: the neo-paganism of the Renaissance and the secular philosophy of the Enlightenment, supporting the methods and findings of the new discipline of comparative philology, rejected the universal authority of the Bible and cast into doubt its authenticity as a genealogical document. It was left to individual peoples to discover the texts that cast light on their own antiquity. Many of these texts were epics; and those like the *Nibelungenlied* were believed to express the mores and spirituality of an ethnic group—often heroic values at variance with the teachings of the Christian Church. In Germany, epic has been a tool used to extol chauvinism and cruelty.⁴ In the Soviet Union, as will be seen presently, epic was to become a weapon in the class struggle.

The first recitations of the Armenian epic of Sasun were discovered and recorded in 1874, though oblique references to the epic in Armenian tradition and the testimony of visitors to the country go back to at least half a millennium earlier; and it was only in the 1780s that Movsēs Xorenac'i's text began to be studied as a source of national and epic tradition. The Armenians thus caught the wave of nationalism in their treatment of their epic. Study of the Nart sagas is much more recent; but both the *Nartae* and the Sasun epic were manipulated by the Stalinist regime in the Soviet Union in the cultural campaign to exalt what was supposed the unmediated genius of the Folk over the art-for-art's sake work of "Formalists." As writers, poets, and theatrical directors were being shot *en masse*, bewildered *ashugh*s were hauled before applauding audiences to demonstrate the "people's art." Thus, 1939 was chosen, rather artificially, as the one thousandth anniversary of the Sasun epic, and sumptuous editions the size and shape of Bibles were printed. Fortunately for scholarship, the

Cambridge, MA, 2003).

Vladimir Nabokov, who translated the Igor Tale, was cryptically inconclusive as to its authenticity in his commentary on the text. He enjoyed the intricate aesthetic possibilities of this very ambiguity, as can be seen from his own novel of epic poem and commentary, *Pale Fire*, where names appear as their own mirror-images, and, sure enough, one Con-mal, the inverted Malcolm of *Ossian*, appears as the translator of Shakespeare into Nabokov's invented Zemblan language. (But there is a real Novaya "Zembla" with a Nabokov river!) The pure intellectual playfulness of Nabokov's literary art, a kind of verbal equivalent of his fellow émigré Pavel Tchelitchew's (Chelishchev) famous painting "Hide and Seek," raises the entire issue above the vulgarity of falsification and nationalism.

⁴ There is nothing of Russian playfulness and dreamlike invention in the history of the Germans and their epic. Wagner's self-important operas, his own racial anti-Semitism, the proto-fascist pageantry of the Wagner-fests at Bayreuth, and Hitler's espousal of the "Nordic" ideology of the Ring cycle, form a straight line to the crematorium.

Soviet state also supported the serious ethnographic study of epic, in the Caucasus and elsewhere; so the picture is not entirely depressing. Given the use and misuse of epic by nationalist, fascist, and totalitarian ideologists, though, it is not surprising that the genre has now gone underground, as it were. It is not favored in sophisticated literature; but in shadowy, powerful ways, epic is present still in the cultural products of the present age. I wish to argue and emphasize this, in order to impress upon the reader that the cultural and spiritual role of the *Nartae* and the Armenian epics in the Caucasus of the present day is neither a quaint archaism to be examined by Orientalists at a fastidious distance, nor is it the artificial outcome of cultural policies imposed from above. Once one accepts that these epic songs are intellectually and aesthetically intricate and actual in themselves, it becomes possible fruitfully to explore their depths of meaning, as living literature. The reader is invited to a brief digression into the actuality of epic in present-day Anglo-American culture—to see, as it were, the workings of epic within his own cultural consciousness.

Iranists deal familiarly with the enduring presence of the *Šāh-nāme* in the context of a living and extremely sophisticated poetic tradition subordinate to none; so there is perhaps less cultural prejudice in this branch of Oriental studies than elsewhere. However I should like to argue briefly that the epic genre exists and thrives in contemporary Western culture, even when driven underground, as it were, since it addresses actual and relevant issues in the most effective way. The epic form is often excluded from contemporary literature, so it re-emerges in the lower realms of popular culture. One finds it in Westerns and in fantasy novels; and where it does appear in good literature, it is barely noticed. Here are some examples of epic low and high. When I first presented my findings on the sources of the Armenian epic of Sasun to an interested audience in a lecture at the Armenian Library and Museum of America, almost a decade ago, I had just watched the movie *Legends of the Fall*, which is all about the concept of the hero and his place in an unrecoverable past. Shortly before beginning this essay, I joined the crowds at the Boston Common cinema and watched part three of the epic *Lord of the Rings* on a big screen: the hero Frodo made it to Mt. Doom and threw the malign Ring of Power into the fire, accomplishing his great task. It is all gray and downhill for the enervated hero thereafter, which is as it should be, despite the requirement of happy endings in the movie business. Tolkien's invented epic has been around for half a century;⁵ and the dénouement recalled the structure of a recent novel, Jonathan Lethem's *The Fortress of Solitude*. The reviewers

⁵ See my discussion of it, and of the uses of epic in religious proselytization in ancient Armenia, in the art. "The Epic of the Pearl," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 28, 2002, reprinted in AIS.

have failed to notice that the book is an epic, half-Biblical, half-Tolkienish. The hero is a Jewish boy named Dylan Ebdus who grows up in a bad neighborhood of Brooklyn where he is mistreated and robbed by some Gentile Blacks but also initiated by others—a homeless man, a close friend and his father—into a realm of wonderful language and music. He is given a magic ring that enables him to fly, and, later, to become invisible (the latter power is the same as Frodo's, in Tolkien). His name is typical of that of *digenes*, “twy-born,” heroes (cf. the Greek Akritic cycle) and reflects both halves of his epic childhood: his first name is mantic/artistic, and conjures up Dylan Thomas (poetry) and Bob Dylan (music), in that order. Lethem's hero in an earlier novel, *Motherless Brooklyn*, is a boy whose family name is Essrog, the Ashkenazic (i.e., Eastern European Jewish, but on the Armenian reflex of Askenaz, “Scythian,” see below!) pronunciation of the Hebrew word *ethrog*, “citron.” So Ebdus just might be Lethem's idea of the Ashkenazic /*avdus*/ for ‘*avdūth*, “slavery”: God took the Israelites out of Egypt, *mē-’avdūt b-hērūt*, “from slavery to freedom”—and Dylan does cross the East River/Red Sea to Manhattan's Stuyvesant High School and beyond.

The issue of a dual identity is significant in the Armenian epic episode we are shortly to consider: Artawazd is the son of an Alan mother, but it is unclear whether his father is an Armenian (Artasēs, the king), a Mede (Argawan), or a demon (Arm. *dew*—when he is accused of being a changeling). The situation expresses the ambiguous position of a dramatic character: Telemachus tells Athena he is assured he is the son of Odysseus, but then he adds, ruefully, that he doesn't know, for “No man knows his own father.” The extreme treatment of this epic—and very human—situation is the murder by Oedipus of his father, Laius, and his marriage to his mother, Iocasta. The Armenian epic treats this paradigm of the family triangle with only slightly less violence. First, the character's origins are established, with programmatic treatment of their inherent problems. But then the epic character must grow into manhood; so we return to the novel and its middle passage.

After high school, Lethem's Dylan makes a mess of the middle period of his story, at a New England college for which his previous life has not prepared him. For this hard middle passage of the epic hero, in which he is an alien and a wanderer, compare the ambiguous, hard time of Tolkien's middle book, *The Two Towers*; or the episode of Mec Mher in the second *čiwł* (“branch,” i.e., chapter/song) of the Armenian epic of Sasun, for that matter. It is *de rigueur*, the long journey. As an adult in Berkeley, California, he becomes a music critic obsessed with what he now correctly discerns as his epic childhood, in a future world that seems thin and without substance. The ring can do only evil now: though he uses it, and loses it, in destroying his archetypal enemy (not Sauron's great Eye, but a mean mugger who has

plagued him since the first pages of the novel), he is spent. A major epic hero often has one best friend, practically a lover, who is sacrificed for him: Achilles had and lost his *therapon* Patroclus; Frodo had his trusty Sam Gamgee;⁶ and Dylan has Mingus (named after the famous jazz musician), who ends up in prison. All that is left is to write down the story: one recalls the tablets mentioned at the end of the Epic of Gilgamesh. Exodus, loss, and enervation provide an epic patterning to Biblical narrative, too: after the crossing of the Red Sea and the encounter on Sinai, Moses is a different man, so shaken that his face remains veiled for the rest of his life after his encounter with God. Deuteronomy is one great dictation of what happened; and Moses makes one last, great, unheroic plea for life before God takes him into an obscure occultation not unlike the end of Little Mher in the epic of Sasun. Moses and Ebdus/ *'avdūth*, rings and Hobbits, all came together as one read Lethem's novel.

It is probable that the average reader entering the fortress of solitude of Lethem's tiny hero will not be aware that the strong aesthetic satisfaction and deep emotional truth of the book derives in large measure from the way it draws subtly upon epic themes and symmetries. The large armature of epic is often a tripartite structure, consisting of a problem, the struggle to solve it, and the resolution and after-effects. The structure can be developed in various ways, from strong and overt plots to more delicate, emotional, even introverted types. The strongest presentation of the problem is war; the mythological reflex of it, the *Drachenkampf*, or dragon-fight. The most delicate expression of the same tripartite problem-pursuit-resolution is a plot centered on love: here is the ambiguous nexus between the epic genre and that of romance. In the epic fragment on Artašēs, we are to observe the playing out of parallel themes of love and war, with all their subtleties, ambiguities, and problems. Such is the essential structure of many a folk-tale, too. The person who deals with the problem is a hero—larger than life, and therefore legendary—but still possible and therefore not mythological, even if he walks in a world of mythological phenomena and possibilities. Tolkien and Lethem both invented their epic worlds, though the sources are real and painful: England in the Great War, a Brooklyn ghetto boyhood. But most epics are not really the inventions of one man, even a genius like Homer. They are shaped out of the collective experience, tradition, feeling, values, and accumulated wisdom of a whole community; and to that extent an epic is organic rather than artificial. The idea that something is organic is dangerous if misused—to promote some

⁶ When Tolkien was recovering in an English hospital from a case of trench fever he caught during the frightful battle of the Somme, he was treated by a doctor named Gamgee who was related to the inventor of a kind of surgical bandage which bore his name. So the role of the side-kick who takes care of the hero could not be more literal.

intangible, archetypal national essence, as fascists did with Nordic epic; or to wage a campaign of folk culture against the practice of art for art's sake derided as "formalism," as Stalinists did with Armenian and other epics. In fact epics move freely from orality to writing and back (as is the case with the Kurdish *Mam u Zin*)⁷ and from one nation to another. For high culture is as "organic" as any other kind: all are human.

That does not mean, of course, that all manifestations of culture are of equal aesthetic or intellectual merit, or should be regarded as such for fear of causing offense; and still less should they be treated by scholars with uniform seriousness of method or on the same level. I have alluded above to *The Lord of the Rings*. Tolkien's epic is popular because it answers a need, and that is an interesting fact to observe. But Tolkien's characters are without subtlety and his writing is stilted. So a diet of Tolkien alone is junk food. But if reading Tolkien leads one then to read *Beowulf* and Homer, one will be intellectually nourished. Jonathan Lethem's novel is a good, ephemeral book; it will not enter the American literary canon. In citing Tolkien and Lethem I do not mean to imply that either of them is as good as a Classical epic poet, only to suggest that epic form is of relevance still to the everyday lives of Americans, and to affirm that it exists in the liveliest domains of Western culture.

The features of epic I have outlined above are deeply embedded in the Biblical (Moses), Greco-Roman (Homer), and Germanic (the *Nibelungenlied*, courtesy of J.R.R. Tolkien) literary cultures: these form, in various combinations and proportions, a large part of our spiritual and cultural inheritance in this country. They affect the way we organize the raw material of life into meaningful patterns. The *Epic of Sasun* in Armenia, the *Mahabharata* in India, the *Šāhnāme* in Iran, and the *Nartae* in the Caucasus perform analogous social, artistic, and spiritual functions and are often more consciously valued in those more traditional societies for the character of their role and message. As long as people speak and write artistically of their own high aspirations and tragic failures, of war and the enigma of life's transience, and of meaningful love, there will be epic.

Scythians, Sarmatians, Alans, and Ossetes.

The ancient North Iranian peoples of the Eurasian steppes—Scythians, Sarmatians, Alans—are vividly described for us by the "Father of History," Herodotus, and by subsequent Classical authors.⁸ The way of life best suited to the Scythians was not one of ar-

⁷ The oral and written versions of this Kurmanci epic romance reciprocally influenced each other over time. On this case, and on an analogous Armenian text, with some discussion of the politics of epic, see James R. Russell, intro. and tr., Karapet Sital, *An Armenian Epic: The Heroes of Kasht (Kašti k'qjer)*, Ann Arbor, MI: Caravan Books, 2000, p. 28 and n. 34.

⁸ The literature on the Scythians, especially in the area of art and archaeology, is vast. The best recent survey is Renate Rolle, *The World of the*

chitecture or road-building; but this does not mean they were technologically or ecologically primitive by comparison with their more sedentary neighbors along the Black Sea littoral and in warmer climes. They perfected the technology of horseback-riding and horse warfare, inventing such useful items as the stirrup and trousers; they were masters in the production of felt, which is warm and waterproof and relatively light. The artistic forms that adorned their everyday objects were pleasing and enduring: the designs on the felt saddle-cloths and horse-trappings preserved by permafrost for twenty-five centuries in the Scythian kurgan (burial mound) of Pazyryk, in the Altai mountains of Siberia, are similar to those on the felt equipment of Central Asian horsemen today. The famous “animal style” of visual art portrayed flying and running beasts and swirling water and clouds: perhaps it may be seen as a celebration of life as motion, vitality, and change.

The Scythian peoples did not embrace Zoroastrianism; and the fear and hatred peaceful Mazdaeans felt towards the marauding *mairyas* (the Avestan term carries with it the implication of violence; but cf. also Phl. *mērag*, just a young man) creates a mental dichotomy between these North Iranians and their Eastern and Southern Iranian cousins who chose another religion and way of life. But the division need not be seen as quite so stark. The view of the living world adumbrated in Scythian art may indeed exist as well in the usages of the Zoroastrian faith—which originated amongst nomadic pastoralists, in Central Asia—where the Avestan word *yaozđāthra*-, rendered imperfectly in English as “purification,” actually means “making lively, stirring up” (cf. the Arm. l-w *yoyž*, adv., “stirringly” > “very, powerfully”); and the epithets for “holy,” Av. *spənta*- and Phl. *abzōnīg*, mean, respectively, “bounteous” and “incremental,” i.e., productive of burgeoning life. Horses were central to Scythian culture; and Zarathustra also employed the terminology of the horse race in his vision of the progress and resolution of time. (The image of the Bridge of the Separator, elaborated in Zoroastrian eschatology, may have existed in Scythian shamanism, too, as I will suggest shortly in a discussion of the magic powers of the musical instrument of Alan epic bards.) Speakers of Avestan, like Scythian artists, envisaged peace and repose in terms of the image of a horse unharnessed and hitched after a long ride. The Scythian animal style lent inspiration to the art of the Celts, who inhabited Eastern and Central Europe in antiquity and were thus contiguous to the westernmost Scythians; and the fanciful, intricate menageries in the miniatures of the mediaeval manuscripts of Ireland and northern

Scythians, Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989. On art, see Esther Jacobson, *The Art of the Scythians: The Interpenetration of Cultures at the Edge of the Hellenistic World*, Handbuch der Orientalistik S.2, Leiden: Brill, 1995.

Britain—the best-known examples are the Book of Kells and the Lindisfarne Gospels—in many respects echo, and not very distantly at that, Scythian art. The Scythians drank fermented mare's milk, as Central Asian and Mongolian nomads still do; and they inhaled hemp-smoke in psychedelic steam-baths. Their religious institutions included shamanistic practices;⁹ and they believed in a pantheon of goddesses and gods.

On the territory of modern Ukraine, and especially on its Black Sea littoral, the Scythian peoples came into close contact with Greek settlers and interacted with them for well over half a millennium. Hellenic goldsmiths—or local artisans trained in Greek workshops—vividly portrayed Scythians and their style of life in magnificent sumptuary objects of gold and silver. These were found in Scythian burial-mounds, the *kurgans* that dot the Ukrainian and South Russian steppe; most of these luxury items, along with more perishable objects of wood and felt preserved by the permafrost of the Altai, have been excavated by Russians, from the time of Peter the Great onwards. Accordingly, they have found a new home in the collections of the Hermitage museum at St. Petersburg. The “Royal Scythians,” as we know from Greek texts, were called *Paralatai*—cf. Av. *paradhāta*, “made foremost,” which we find in the form *Pēšdād* in the Persian national epic, the “Book of Kings” of Ferdosi, as the name of Iran's first royal dynasty. The North Iranian peoples inhabited an area stretching from Eastern and Central Europe to the borders of China: around the jade-rich oasis of Khotan, in what is now the province of Xinjiang—Chinese Turkestan—the sophisticated Buddhist culture of the Sakas (their name is a form of the same word “Scythian”) flourished till around the year 1000. (Turkic and Islamic invasions gradually doomed the multicultural civilization of the Silk Road.)

Some of the heraldic symbols of the Sarmatians, an Iranian

⁹ The Scythian shamans were initiated by being tied down on horses and run bareback till their testicles were crushed and they were either killed or left alive but unmanned. These no longer natural men were thus called *enarees* or *anarieis*, in Greek transcription; and this is the same Iranian word as Armenian *anari*, meaning “monstrous,” and probably comes from “*a-narya-*,” “un-manly” or, literally, “unmanned.” Sexual reversal or ambiguity is a salient feature of the shaman's identity in a number of cultures, notably the case of the “berdaches” of Native American culture, who served as seers and sometimes had relationships with the super-masculine warriors (see Walter L. Williams, *The Spirit and the Flesh: Sexual Diversity in American Indian Culture*, Boston: Beacon, 1986). The Alan martial epic heroes are “*nar-thrya-*,” “manly,” men *par excellence*, the *Narts*. (Another praiseworthy quality was what is called in Pahlavi *ērīh*, “Iranian-ness,” a concept combining the virtues of moral and physical strength. It derives from the much-abused adjective *arya-*, “noble,” and is reflected in the character in the *Narts*, prince Aleg, whose name Colarusso derives from **arya-ka-*).

people related to the Scythians, were used by Polish noblemen, leading to the rather Romantic claim of Polish nationalists that their nobility were descendants of the Sarmatians.¹⁰ Russians and Ukrainians, likewise imbued with a nationalistic fervor impelling them to seek ancient and romantic forebears, have claimed Scythian origins at various times: a typical example is Alexander Blok's revolutionary poem *Skify*, "The Scythians," which exploits the image of the Scythian as Noble Savage.¹¹ It is true that the Eastern Slavs live on the same land that was Scythia once; and there are important Irano-Slavic linguistic and other connections. But the last descendants of the Scythian Alans are the Ossetes (properly, Os: the Georgian toponymical suffix *-eti*, cf., e.g., Geor. Javakheti, Arm. Javakhk', has been absorbed into their name, Rus. *osetin*, *Osetiya*) and they survive in the Caucasus to the present day.

These peoples—the Yas/Ass/Os/Ossetes in particular—were related to Armenians through intermittent invasion, dynastic intermarriage, and long cultural contact, from the eighth century B.C. down to the Middle Ages. Because of old invasion and more recent Biblical anthropology, Armenians have long called themselves Ask'anaz, the Biblical word for a Scythian. There is a district northeast of present-day Armenia called Šakašēn, i.e., "Scyth's Home," known in Strabo by the Greek form *Sakasēnē*. The ancient Iranian province of Drangiana, Avestan Zranka, was invaded by Sakas and acquired its present name, Sistan, from Middle Iranian Sagastān, "Scythian country." The epic hero Rostam, whose name means "he who possesses the strength of a river" (<OIr. **rautas-taxma-*), came from there: thanks to the testimony of Movsēs Xorenac'i, we know that tales about Rostam *sač'ik*, "the Saka," were popular in Armenia long before he became the principal hero of Ferdosi's great poem.¹² Subsidiary epic narratives,

¹⁰ In the summer of 2000 I visited the mausoleum of the Persian epic poet Ferdōsī at Tus near Mashhad. The short-lived, neo-Achaemenian Pah-lavi dynasty of the twentieth century built the wonderful edifice, decorating the interior with bas-reliefs reminiscent of the friezes of the Parthenon. There is also an ethnographic museum there, with the gifts of various visitors on display, notably a plaque dedicated by Polish airmen in World War II—who describe themselves as Sarmatians paying homage to their Iranian brethren!

¹¹ Russian and Ukrainian scholars have also been at the forefront of research: one might mention, amongst the earlier writers, such titans as Mikhail Rostovtzeff (*Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*, 1922, repr. New York: Russell & Russell, 1969) and Yulian Andreevich Kulakovskii (see most recently S.M. Perevalov, ed., Yu. A. Kulakovskii, *Izbrannye trudy po istorii Alanov i Sarmatii*, Series *Vizantiiskaya Biblioteka*, St. Petersburg: Aleteiya, 2000).

¹² See J.R. Russell, "The *Šāh-nāmē* in Armenian Oral Epic," reprinted in *AIS*, pp. 1063-1072.

Pers. *dāstāns*, about Rostam were still related orally in Armenia down to the early years of the twentieth century, in various local dialects.

As is well known, a large proportion of the vocabulary of Armenian derives from Northwestern Middle Iranian speech of the Parthian period. The Armenians lived under the rule of the successive dynasties of pre-Islamic Iran: Achaemenians, Parthians, and Sasanians. Even after the last Armenian Arsacids forsook Zoroastrianism and embraced Christianity, and the nation consciously chose a Western orientation, the relationship to Iran remained close. When we speak of Iranica with respect to Armenia, it is therefore the country corresponding more or less to the republic of Iran today that we have in mind. Since all that is left of the once-vast North Iranian domain is Ossetia, historical myopia tends to reduce the role of the Scythian peoples, of the “Other Iran,” to near insignificance. However when one considers that Perso-Scythian wars were important enough to the Achaemenids for a festival called Sakaia to be instituted;¹³ that Scythian masters taught the Achaemenian princes how to ride; that Rostam was a Saka, that Sakas ruled India and created a Buddhist civilization on the Silk Road; that the Alans play a role in the legend of the Apostolic foundations of the Armenian Church—the Other Iran is no small player, it is not even Other. There was a time when the Ossetes, now a small people, were very widespread indeed. One way of tracing them is to note the places where useful phrases of their language are recorded. The common Alan and modern Ossetic greeting is *Da bon xorz*, “Y’all have a nice day” (the word *xorz* is from the same Iranian root as Armenian *axoržak*, “appetite”):¹⁴ in the Middle Ages, a Byzantine scholar heard the greeting in the streets of Constantinople and recorded it in a list of phrases from

¹³ Two Achaemenian bullae of the 5th–4th cent. B.C. were excavated in 1979 at the site of the Armenian Artaxiad and early Arsacid capital, Artaxat (Gk. Artaxata), which depict six captives with their hands tied behind them, standing one behind the other and facing right (see Jacques Santrot et al., eds, *Arménie: Tresors de l’Arménie ancienne*, Paris: Somogy/ Editions de l’Art, 1996, pp. 222–223, pis. 210 a–b). The composition of the scene is that of the triumphal relief of Darius I at Behistun, except that in the latter only one captive is a Scythian (added on later, it seems, with tall, pointed *tigraxauda*-hat and all). On the bullae from Artaxat, though, all six captives are Scythians: perhaps this reflects the actual political concerns of the time, when that northern neighbor of the satrapy of Armenia loomed so large.

¹⁴ Upon entering a host’s premises, Ossetes politely wish *Farn atsy khadzary*, “Happiness upon this house!” The expression is common in various Caucasian cultures, notably Georgia. *Farn* is Old Iranian *farnah*-, Avestan *khwarenah*-, Sogdian *farn*, and Armenian loan *p’ark’* “glory.”

that polyglottic metropolis, and somebody else scribbled it on the back of a Latin deed in Hungary. And long before then, Marcus Aurelius—the same Roman emperor who penned the Stoic *Meditations*—who had defeated the Alans in Germany, drafted some into his cavalry and sent them to Roman garrisons in Western Europe—from France all the way to north Wales.¹⁵

Rostam is not the only—not even the most important—Scythian in ancient Armenian literary tradition. The epic fragments about king Artaxias I (Arm. Artasēs) and his Alan bride Sat'enik (her native Alan name would be Satana, unrelated to the Hebrew term for the Adversary at the Divine court from which we get Satan, despite Nicholas Marr's unfounded hypothesis) and her descendants appear in the *History* of Movsēs Xorenac'i, and in the complex Apostolic legends of the Oskean and Suk'iasean martyrs.¹⁶ The modern Ossetes are the descendants of the ancient Alans (whose name in turn is perhaps a form of the same word as Iran), and now live mainly in the central region of the north Caucasus, divided between the post-Soviet Russian Federation (North Ossetia, capital Ordzhonikidze) and the republic of Georgia (South Ossetia, capital Tskhinvali). But these political boundaries are somewhat deceptive, as Armenian- and Ossetic-speaking populations are still just barely contiguous, meeting at a midpoint in the republic of Georgia; and in ancient times, too, they were neighbors: Artasēs met them on the banks of the Kura.

Georgian literature might be considered as one vector whereby Armenian traditions spread to the north, since St. Mesrop Maštoc' invented the Georgian alphabet and Georgian Christian architecture derives its basic forms from Armenian models. There are numerous Armenian loan-words in Georgian, as well. The Georgian chronicle *K'art'lis c'xovreba*¹⁷ mentions Artasēs, corrupting his name to Artasān, in the presentation of a version of the narrative known in Movsēs Xorenac'i, and knows also of his tutor Smbat. The text mentions numerous Alan-Georgian alliances against the Armenians;

¹⁵ A Latin inscription found at Artasat—where also the bullae with Scythian captives come from!—was dedicated to Marcus Aurelius by the Legion XV Apollinaris.

¹⁶ See J.R. Russell, "Scythians and Avesta in a Mediaeval Armenian Vernacular Paternoster, and a Zok Paternoster," *Le Museon* 110.1-2, 1997, pp. 91-114, repr. in AIS. Tork' Dalalyan's brilliant doctoral thesis, *Hay-Osakan lezvamšakut'ayin ar'nc'ut'yunner* ("Armeno-Ossetic linguistic and cultural relations"), Institute of Linguistics, Erevan State University, 2002, supervised by Professor Garnik Asatrian, analyzes the numerous features of interaction between the two peoples.

¹⁷ See R.W. Thomson, *Rewriting Caucasian History: The Medieval Armenian Adaptation of the Georgian Chronicles*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996, pp. 53-54. In this text, Artasēs I, early second century B.C., has been conflated with his Armenian Arsacid namesake of the late first century A.D.

however, neither the name of Argawan nor the incident concerning him and Artašēs to be considered presently, appears in the Georgian sources. So in the area of epic literature, direct contacts between Armenians and Alans, which were frequent and easy, seem to have been the most likely route of transmission.

Nartae

The Ossetes still sing a cycle of heroic songs about the clan of the *Nartae*, literally, “manly ones,” the descendants of the lady Satana.¹⁸ The bards use the twelve-stringed *faendyr*, cf. the *p’andin* of the Armenian *gusans* that Movsēs Xorenac’i heard (both words are probably loans from an ancient Lydian original, meaning “lyre”). The Alan lyre was used first by the water-born Nart Syrdon; and the *xidgās*, “bridge-guard” has one. (Oss. *xid*, “bridge”; cf. Av. *haētu-*, “idem,” in the river-name Haētumant, modern Hilmand.) In Zoroastrian literature, the souls of the departed must cross the *činvatō pərətū*, “Bridge of the Separator” into the next world. The third-century Sasanian high priest Kartīr describes in his inscription a visionary trip into the next world where, thanks to his spiritual powers, he succeeds in opening passage of the bridge for his royal patron. Overcoming obstacles and transporting souls is a shaman’s job; so the complex of functions of the bardic lyre of the Ossetes can be seen to include shamanistic features, with the employment of old Iranian symbolism. The Ossetic word for an epic song is *kadāg*; the word, passing into Georgian as a loan, *kadagi*, means “foreteller”: this suggests that the Ossetic bard had some mantic power; and indeed the *faendyr* is spoken of a horse one can ride, like the horse-headed fiddle that becomes the “mount” of Turco-Mongolian shamans. The recitation of the Nart sagas occupies the niche filled in antiquity by both bards and shamans.¹⁹

¹⁸ There is a French translation by Georges Dumézil in the UNESCO series (*Le livre des héros: Légendes sur les Nartes*, Paris: Gallimard, 1965); and his *Romans de Scythie et d’alentour* (Paris: Editions Payot, 1978) is still the best overall study of the epic and its ancient sources. The authoritative scholar of Ossetic, V.I. Abaev, chaired the editorial committee that published the Russian translation of the epic: *Narty: Epos osetin-skogo naroda*, Moscow: Academy of Sciences of the USSR, 1957.

¹⁹ See K.K. Kochiev, “Syrdonova arfa,” in G. Gnoli, ed., *Studia Iranica et Alanica* (Festschrift Vasilii Ivanovich Abaev), Rome: Istituto Italiano per l’Africa e l’Oriente, 1998, pp. 221-240; and J.R. Russell, “Kartīr and Māni: a Shamanistic Model of Their Conflict,” in *Iranica Varia: Papers in Honor of Professor Ehsan Yarshater*, Acta Iranica 30, Leiden: Brill, 1990, pp. 180-193, repr. AIS. I have argued that the *ēwēn mahr* “ritual mantra” Kartīr used was the Avestan formula *humata huxta hvaršta*, “good thoughts, good words, good deeds” (J.R. Russell, “A Parthian *Bhagavad Gita* and its Echoes,” in J.-P. Mahe, R.W. Thomson, eds., *From Byzantium to Iran: In Honour of Nina Garsoian*, Atlanta: Scholars

Profs. Scott Littleton and Linda Melcor published ten years ago an audacious and fascinating book, *From Scythia to Camelot*, in which they advanced the hypothesis that certain episodes in Arthurian epic that are evidently alien to wider Celtic tradition might have been borrowings: the ancient Celts heard Alans in Western Europe (some of them, presumably, the descendants of the cavalymen settled there by Marcus Aurelius) chant songs related to the modern *Narts*, where these aspects are present. Some of them are: the rock-birth of the heroes (of Sanasar and Baldasar in the Armenian epic of Sasun), their sea-goddess mother (cf. Armenian Covinar, lit. “Lady of the Lake,” parallel to Satana), and the casting of the heroes’ magic sword back into the water it came from at the end of the epic (in a legend about P’ok’r Mher from the Šāhbāyī district of Van)²⁰—appear as integral features of the Armenian Epic of Sasun. What is more important, they are attested also in Armenian sources relating to the period of the beginnings of Armenian Christianity (that is, they are pre-Christian images and tales used to shape the national legendry surrounding the birth of the new faith on Armenian soil) or in foreign writings of the pre-Christian era whose locus is Armenia and whose ultimate source is ancient Anatolian mythology (the *De fluviis* of Ps.-Plutarch, on Mithra and *petrogenesis* on the banks of the Araxes; cf. *Mec* and P’ok’r Mher, i.e., Mithra, in the Sasun epic: Trubetskoy studied the Old Anatolian material to explain the *De fluviis*, but missed the Armenian connection). On the basis of the chronological priority of the old Anatolian and Armenian sources and the thematic integrity of the Sasun narrative as a single and unified epic poem, I propose that, unless and until evidence to the

Press, 1996, pp. 24-25, repr. in *AIS*). H.S. Nyberg in his *Die Religionen des Alien Iran*, 1938, used the ethnographic data on shamanism to explain aspects of the activity of Zarathustra. The Nazis considered shamanism a religious complex of “primitive” peoples and derided such treatment of an “Aryan” prophet. Some of this attitude shadows the later writings of W.B. Henning and others; but there is no *a priori* reason to consign shamanism to pre-literate peoples and to reject it in complex societies. The Jewish mystics who composed the pre-Kabbalistic Hekhalot texts, for instance, who emerged within the most intellectually sophisticated religious tradition in human history, can best be studied as shamans: see James R. Davila, *Descenders to the Chariot: The People behind the Hekhalot Literature*, Leiden: Brill, 2001, esp. chs. 2-7.

²⁰ The Armenian epic of Sasun mentions rock-birth, magic sword, and so on, but does not relate the subsequent of the fate of the sword, so important to the Arthurian and Nart cycles. This writer discovered them in other folk texts and in one oral narrative: on Armenian legends of the hero’s sword cast back into the lake, or of its protrusion from a stone—both having undergone heavy secondary Christianization—see J.R. Russell, “The Scepter of Tiridates,” *Le Muséon* 114.1-2, 2001, pp. 187-215, repr. in *AIS*.

contrary can be produced, we are compelled to accept that Armenian Anatolia was the *primary* source, of which the Alan epic of the Caucasus was but a *secondary* recipient, of the materials that Littleton and Melcor term Alan/Old Ossetic in the Arthurian cycle.

The Narts may be considered, then, the principal surviving literary monument of the North Iranian culture of the early Alans, shaped some two millennia ago under the partial influence of the earlier oral literary culture of ancient Armenia. The Nart sagas and their reciters occupied the privileged niche in Alan spiritual culture that had belonged to the bards and shamans of earlier Scythian society. This cycle of epic songs or sagas was received and elaborated by the various indigenous minority peoples of the Caucasus, whose secondary elaborations of the tales are the subject of a new book: Prof. John Colarusso, *Nart Sagas from the Caucasus: Myths and Legends from the Circassians, Abazas, Abkhaz, and Ubykhs*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2002. Later arrivals in the area—Turkic tribes like the Balkars—also have versions of the *Narts*. Colarusso and several colleagues have produced an English translation of the Ossetic *Narts* (Madison, WI: Turko-Tatar Press, in publication). The present volume, under a Princeton imprint, will see very much wider distribution in the English-speaking world than that of Dumézil's earlier French translation, so it is regrettable that the author, bafflingly, underplays and sometimes even undermines the North Iranian (which he often calls, imprecisely, Indo-Iranian) origin and essence of this epic cycle. He does this to such a degree that the overall presentation should mislead the uninitiated reader to suppose these secondary versions to be the primary sources.

In fact it is the North Iranian Ossetic tradition that is the *fons et origo* of all the others—Abkhaz, Adygei (i.e. Cherkess, Circassian), etc. The great Ossetian scholar Abaev was right to stress this: it is manifestly wrong to suggest otherwise. The *Narts* are the only surviving *native* voice of the literary culture of once-vast Scythia. (The large corpus of written literature of Khotan Saka is overwhelmingly Buddhist.) Prof. Colarusso does acknowledge the true provenance of the Nart tradition in his voluminous, learned footnotes, where Iranian etymologies predominate. So perhaps his intention in stressing the non-Iranian narratives is to preempt and counteract a presumed Iranist chauvinism, and to argue, reasonably, that the recipients of another tradition can be seen to have dealt with it so creatively that it has become fully their own. There is certainly nothing superficial or parasitical about the role of the Narts among the non-Iranians of the Caucasus. The appropriation of Christianity from Semitic-language traditions into the Indo-European world is a fair example of such full and deep absorption of a tradition whose origins are in another culture and language-family, though the example points up the stresses and distortions that can occur in such a transfer. There are no such major distortions in the sharing of the *Narts*, though: the way of

life of the Ossetes is not appreciably different from that of their various neighbors. The rival nationalisms of the Caucasus are a poisonous brew and Colarusso's humanistic bid for pluralism is decent, even if perhaps he exaggerates his case at the expense of strict accuracy.²¹

The tales about the Narts are related to each other, and the chronicle of the clan (there are usually 101 Nart-men) has a clear beginning and end: both are features identical to those of the Armenian Sasun epic. But the numerous separate episodes are independent enough from one another for scholars to have described them as "sagas"; and Colarusso has judiciously adopted this term for his material. (The four principal "branches," or chapters, of the Armenian epic of Sasun form one coherent narrative. But there are independent episodes within; and many recitations contain additional, unrelated narratives, called by the Persian

²¹ The Caucasus, a turbulent region throughout history, is wracked by unprecedented conflict today. The Ossetes, many of whom are Orthodox Christians (see Kulakovskii, *supra*, on the conversion of the Alans to Christianity), are overtly sympathetic to Russia, and have suffered for their loyalty: the terrorist massacre of schoolchildren in Beslan, North Ossetia, in September 2004 was aimed as much at the Ossetes as at the Russians. Prof. Colarusso's political sympathies seem to lean away from the Russians. This writer's point of view is rather different. For the Christian Armenians, and even for most Georgians, the Russians were welcomed as liberators. But to the Muslims of the Caucasus, the Tsarist Russian takeover in the 19th century was seen as an imperialist conquest: many Circassians fled to Turkey, Syria, and Jordan; whilst numerous Ottoman Armenians migrated to the Russian-ruled Transcaucasus. The mass deportations of Chechens and others during World War II by the Soviet government was a savage policy one cannot justify. But the post-Soviet government of Russia signed a peace treaty with an autonomous Chechen authority that the latter immediately violated by invading neighboring Daghestan and by sponsoring terrorist attacks against Russian civilians. The sad history of the past cannot be invoked to justify the actions of a Chechen resistance that is not nationalist, but jihadist in its ideology and aggressive aims. In the Fall of 2003 a Chechen physician named Khassan Baiev came to Harvard Book Store to promote his memoir of the war. It began with a slide presentation of the Caucasian range, which "divides the Christian north from the Muslim south"—as though Armenia and Georgia simply did not exist! But this was merely the prelude to an excursion into the realm of malign fantasy. He informed his polite audience of Cantabrigian liberals that there are no Wahhabites, no foreign terrorists, and no fundamentalist repressions in Chechnya. So the veiled women and other suicide bombers in a Russian theater or hospital or commuter train, the slave-traders, the hostage-takers, the lawless mutilations and murders carried out under the draconian interpretations of the *Sari'a* law are all figments of one's imagination. It was appalling that a respected journalist, Nicholas Daniloff, participated in this farce, which the audience greeted with murmurs of sympathy.

term *dāstān*.) The late Professor Ilya Gershevitch, a scholar of Ossetic, argued that there was “a Saka epic cycle centered around a predatory tribe called the Nart,” and that “the originality of the main motifs of the cycle, combined with the straight line which linguistically connects the present-day Ossetes with Sarmato-Alanic tribes of the beginning of our era, encourages the view that we are basically dealing with ancient Saka ‘oral-literary’ material.”²²

The Narts were born of divine twins, Āxsärtäg and Āxsärt, whose names contain the pan-Iranian term for kingship, *xšathra*. They kill each other, after which their mother, the lady Satana, gives birth to further progeny. According to one variant, she is naked in the river Terek, washing clothes and drying them on a rock. A shepherd on the opposite bank is so aroused by the sight of her beauty that he ejaculates powerfully. She flees behind the rock; but his semen flies across the river, striking the rock, and a son is born of it. In the Armenian Sasun epic, Satana’s equivalent, Covinar, declares she is thirsty, at which point a stone spurting a milky liquid rears up out of the waters of Lake Van. She wades in, drinks one-and-a-half handfuls, and gives birth after nine months to twins, one of whom is half the size of the other. But note that in Movsēs Xorenac’i’s narrative Artasēs takes Sat’enik—i.e., Satana with a diminutive suffix—to wife by casting a red leather strap across the Kura river and lassoing her around the waist. This is clearly a variant of the original from which the less aristocratic Nart story of shepherd and ejaculation emerged. On the SW face of Zimzimdagh, Van, near the spot where Covinar went into the lake for her drink, there is a carved blind portal, an Urartean “gate of the god”: the Armenians call it *Mheri duin*, “the Gate of Mher/Mithra” (Tk. *Meher kapisı*), and the last of the heroes of Sasun, P’ok’r Mher, waits behind it till Doomsday. And that narrative might in turn have had a religio-mythological basis. A cuneiform inscription of kings Išpuini and Menua on the portal invokes the divinities of the Urartean kingdom, including one *su-i-ni-na-u-e DINGIR*, the Sea God (from the Urartean word *sue*, pronounced *l’tsue*/ comes Armenian *cov*, “sea, lake”).²³ The Armenian and Ossetic incipits to epic are perhaps variants of an older type of a *hieros gamos*, in which a sea god captures and weds a woman who becomes the sea goddess. (In Scythian art, this is perhaps Argimpasa, who may be the divine being represented as a Siren-like woman above the waist; a Hydra-like congeries of writhing snakes, below.)²⁴

²² See Ilya Gershevitch, “Old Iranian Literature,” in *Handbuch der Orientalistik*, 1.4.2.1 (*Iranistik-Literatur*), Leiden: Brill, 1968, pp. 3-5.

²³ See N.V. Arutyunyan, *Korpus urartskikh klinoobraznykh nadpisei*, Erevan: Izdatel’sтво “Gitutyun” NAN RA, 2001, p. 45 (text 38.1, line 19) & pp. 49 n. 22, p. 52 n. 75.

²⁴ See Yulia Ustinova, *The Supreme Gods of the Bosporan Kingdom: Ce-*

The semi-divine Narts wander about, hunting and feasting and fighting against enemies and, occasionally, each other. They foregather in a kind of mead-hall, the *nixās*, where they drink deep of the intoxicant potation *rong* from a magic grail-like cup, the *nartamonga*, which never empties and allows no coward to sip from itself. There is an echo here of Herodotus' account (*Histories*, 4.66) of the bowl of wine the Scythians gave to the brave as a reward but withheld from cowards. The *nixas* contains also a stone slab: when one lies upon it, one forgets all sorrow. The Narts fight various monsters (this writer's favorite is the *uayg*, a chthonic thing that grabs at your ankles and drags you down to be smothered in dirt) and ride around on miraculous and ordinary horses, occasionally shooting their arrows at angelic beings, the *watsillas* (from *vaxš* "spirit, saint" Elijah) and *wastyrjis* (St. George). (The Ossetes dedicate shrines called *dzuar*, from Georgian *jvari*, "the Cross," at places where such spirits are believed to dwell.) Whenever God (Oss. *Khutsau*, cf. Persian *Xodā*, "Lord") has had enough of Nart hubris for the time being, He throws the *tsalkh* ("wheel," cf. Persian *čarx*) Välsäy at their knees, which kills them. (In Indo-European the word for knee [Gk. *gonu*, Arm. *cunr*, Rus. *koleno* meaning both "knee" and "generation"; etc.] is considered a genital organ, etymologically, socially, and symbolically: the Narts preserve this feature.) The metaphorical *čarx-e falak*, the Zodiacal wheel of fate of the Persians, is in Ossetia a literal discus. The epic of the Narts is all a ripping good read, without the artificiality and preciousness that mar J.R.R. Tolkien's rather pre-Raphaelite characters and landscapes of faërie (if you please). The Caucasians are interesting, full-blooded people who like strong drink, mettlesome horses, and honor.²⁵ Prof. Colarusso is a magnificent writer and story-teller, and he and his Caucasian informants and assistants have given us a wonderful book.

A large part of the volume is devoted to discussion of northwest Caucasian linguistics and to the morphological and grammatical analysis of terms and passages in the several languages of the texts. In a work meant to introduce the learned but

lestial Aphrodite and the Most High God, Series Religions in the Graeco-Roman World 135, Leiden: Brill, 1999, and esp. pl. 6.

²⁵ The appropriate offering at a *dzuar* is an **empty** vodka bottle. My friend, the great St. Petersburg scholar of ancient Mesopotamia, Prof. Mukhammad Abdelkadyrovich Dandamayev (his Ossetic surname, with the Russian -ev ending, means "subduer of rivers"), is a native speaker of Lak, a language of Dagestan. When he first visited me in America, he accepted a glass of vodka, which, unlike wine, is not mentioned—and, therefore, not prohibited—in the *Qur'ān*. This is the traditional and flexible Muslim society of the Caucasus that the imported Saudi preachers of Wahhabite extremism are undermining and destroying in Chechnya and elsewhere.

general reader to the material, this might seem distracting and somewhat self-indulgent. A student of Caucasian languages might benefit from these parts of the work, but then—mused a Persianist friend about the book when I showed it to him—would a student of Persian reading a book in English of *dāstāns* from the *Šāh-nāme* epic benefit from a breakdown of the phrase *kār hamī konīd*, for instance, into “work (indef., acc.) [marker of continuous vb.] do (pres. 2 pers. pl.)”? Not much, but then Persian is easier and more accessible than, say, Svan. And if one can wade through Tolkien’s appendices on his invented Quenya language (or put up with the actor Viggo Mortensen on the silver screen making subtitled comments in it, which sound more like lilting, cloying Irish than the intended Finnish, for that matter), then notes on Caucasian will have to do.

There is still much from an Iranist point of view to question. On p. 16, Colarusso wonders whether Ossetic *don* might perhaps be a North Caucasian borrowing. This suggestion is wrong: see Olr. *dānu-*, modern Oss. *don* (as in Mikhail Sholokhov’s *Quiet Flows the Don*—and the Dnepr, Dnestr, and Danube, all Alan riparian names). The Arm. river H(u)razdan, whose name comes ultimately from Frāzdānu, a lake mentioned in the sacred history in the Avesta of Zarathushtra’s missionary career, also contains this base. The river, called the Zangu by the Tatars, flows in a deep gorge through modern Erevan.

Colarusso says Vedic *Tvashtar*, the name of a creator-god, comes from a term meaning “two stars”: this is most unlikely. On p. 195, Ved. *vrtra-* means not “strangling” but “opposition.” The Middle Iranian form of the divine name *Vərəθrəyna-* is not Baram but Bahrām; and if the name Barambox is Iranian, as seems certain, then it should derive from Bahrām-boxt “granted (or saved) by Bahrām” (p. 195). Colarusso offers a convoluted explanation of the name Wardana on pp. 136–137, mentioning Odin and Ved. *vrddhana-* “giver of booty,” without noticing that it is simply Parthian-in-Armenian Vardan, a very popular name of the great Mamikonean *naxarar*-clan,²⁶ whose native appanages in Tao-Klarjeti

²⁶ Arm. *naxarar* (<Olr. **naxwa-dāra-*, “holder of primacy”) is the title of a landed hereditary dynast: most nakharardoms occupied hereditary positions at the Arsacid court. The Mamikoneans held the office of *sparapetut’iwn*, “commanders-in-chief” (<Olr. **spadha-pati-*, cf. Phi. and Pers. *spāhbad*), under the Arsacids: St. Vardan Mamikonean commanded the Armenian armies on the field at Avarayr, in Persarmenia, in the spring of 451. Though he and many of his men suffered martyrdom, the desperate Armenian resistance put an end to the campaign of Yazdagard II to return Armenia to the Zoroastrian fold. Vardan is still celebrated as a hero of the Church and nation. The father of St. Mešrop Mastoc’, inventor of the Armenian, Georgian, and Caucasian Albanian (Ałuan) alphabets, was named Vardan also. Few names could be more famous or common in the country.

included Georgian-and Caucasian-speaking lands. The name means “growing, flourishing,” and derives from the Middle Iranian act. part, *vardān*. There is a Mid. Pers. reflex of the name, Valān: cf. Arm. Varazvaṇan with the latter form. He suggests the name Batraz is from Turco-Mongolian *baatyr*, the latter Indo-European because of Rus. *bogatyr*, Pers. *bahādur*. This explanation is, I think, wrong on all counts: Batraz is not from *baatyr*, and the Russians and Persians got the latter word from the Mongols, not the other way around. These assertions, presented often as statements of accepted fact, somewhat undermine one’s confidence in Prof. Colarusso’s care in the consideration of things Iranian, and in his overall methodology. They do not detract, however, from the value and importance of the texts themselves, about which he always has illuminating things to say in his brilliant and important book.

A Noble Swineherd, or the Road to Eumaios: Argawan and Argwana

Movsēs Xorenac’i (*History of the Armenians* 2.44–51) relates that Argam, a prince of the Murac’ean clan and a descendant of Aždahak (here Astyages the Mede, whom Cyrus overthrew), fought for the Armenian king Eruand (Orontes) against Artasēs (Artaxias I). Some Medes had been settled around Mt. Ararat; so Argam had not come from afar. Artasēs, counselled by his wise tutor Smbat,²⁷ persuaded Argam to change sides, and, after victory, rewarded him richly and gave him second rank in the kingdom. (If Arm. *bdeašx*, Gk. *pitiāxēs*, etc., is to be explained as from OIr. **duvitya-xšaya-*, “ruling second,” then that may have been the office promised Argam. But another possible derivation is **pati-axša-* “over-seer,” with no implication of a dual monarchy or even acknowledged second position.) After these events, Artasēs confronted the Alans at the Kura river and abducted Sat’enik, who became queen. She bore him a son, Artawazd. The latter came to be jealous of old Argam, and incited a quarrel between him and the king at Argam’s banquet, fabricating the rumor of a plot.²⁸ Artasēs

²⁷ Movsēs wrote for a noble patron, Sahak Bagratuni. The Bagratids, whose Iranian name comes from *baga-dāta-*, “God-given/made,” held the hereditary office of coronant under the Arsacids; and the god from whom they initially had claimed descent was the ancient Anatolian divinity Tork’-Tarkhundas-, equated with Heraklēs-Nergal. But in Christian Armenia they invented a Davidic genealogy through a Jew named Šambat’ (“Sabbath”: the form is good Aramaic, for the name Shabbetai) supposedly martyred in “pagan” Armenia—and this Šambat’ was equated with the Iranian name Smbat. So Movsēs introduces shadowy proto-Bagratids into his narrative wherever feasible.

²⁸ In “Two Notes on Biblical Tradition and Native Epic in the ‘Book of Lamentation’ of St. Grigor Narekac’i,” *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 22, 1990–1991, pp. 135–145, repr. in *AIS*, I have called attention to the

confiscated Argam's possessions thereafter; and the prince, Artawazd, gained the coveted second rank of the realm. Sat'enik's role in the stratagem against Argam is ambiguous: Movsēs alludes to the epic songs sung in Golt'n (a district in modern Naxijewan) about the ostensible passion of the queen for the descendants of Aždahak who later were slaughtered—that is, presumably, for Argam himself.

Xorenac'i explains, believably, that Argam is the same person as the Argawan of the epic songs;²⁹ and an epic fragment cited earlier in the *History* (1.30) containing a number of enigmatic terms suggests Sat'enik desired passionately a crown or wedding veil³⁰ to be woven from certain herbs from Argawan's pillow or banquetting-cushion (abl. pl. *barjic'*). That is, she might have slept with the man whom Artawazd contrived to show was a rival to his father Artasēs. And if she was made pregnant by him, then Artawazd might have been his son, rather than the true crown prince and heir of Artasēs. Certainly Artawazd later betrays some anxiety about his inheritance: much later, when Artasēs is dying, Artawazd objects, greedily and impiously, to the destruction accompanying the rites of mourning.³¹ His father pronounces the curse that Artawazd be seized by the *k'aḵ'*, the mountain giants who dwell within Azat Masik' (Mt. Ararat). When Artawazd goes hunting, they seize him; and he is imprisoned in the mountain till the end of time.

The episode of father-son conflict followed by a curse and suspended animation till an apocalyptic *dénouement* finds a late echo in the Sasun epic (whose legendary-historical setting crystallized around the events of the Armenian rebellion of 851 against the Arab Caliphate). Artawazd is to remain imprisoned in Mt. Ararat, rather like Aždahāg in Damāvand, till the end of time, when he will emerge to ravage the world. P'ok'r Mher, cursed by his dead father, Davit', is imprisoned behind the blind portal at Van that bears the Urartean inscription mentioned above: it is believed to open yearly on Ascension Eve; but only at the end of time will

expressive and archaic epithet *setananeng*, "deceiving at table," which the tenth-century Christian saint employs in his mystical meditations, echoing perhaps the epic tale.

²⁹ Such an abbreviated form might be compared to Arm. Aršēz=Artasēs; or Argam may derive from a voc. sg. form of *argāwan-*, **argāum*.

³⁰ What she wants is an *artaxoyr xawarci*. The first word clearly contains *xoyr*, a NWMr. l-w, deriving ultimately from Olr. **xauda-*, "tiara." The prefix could mean "outer"; or it might also be a Mlr. l-w, as suggested by Perikhanian, cf. Sgd. *rēt*, "face," which would then mean a veil.

³¹ The Arm. *sug* "mourning (rite)" (<Mlr., Pers. *sūg*) involved self-mutilation and the deliberate destruction of furniture and so on, as elsewhere in greater Iran.

Mher emerge. In the interim he is covered with hair, like the abominable snowman type of Caucasian legend. He holds the *čarx-i falak*, the Zodiacal wheel (cf. the Zodiacal arch above the tauroctony scene in Roman mithraea, and of course the divine discus of fate in the *Nartae*) and rides his faithful magic horse. At the beginning of the Sasun epic, also, there are two Sat'enik-like figures, Covinar ("Lady of the Lake") and *K'ārasun Deļjun Cam* ("Forty Golden Locks"). The former provides the rock-birth of the founding twins; the latter is a sorceress who has to be won from her city that is difficult of access. One is progenetrix; the other, a sort of magician like the scheming Sat'enik of Movsēs' narrative.

Thus the theme and structure—the ancient inner armature—of the Sasun epic can be seen to reflect the old Artaxiad cycle. Several narratives of the *Narts* mention the black³² hero Warzamaeg's³³ courtship of Satana, who lives in a labyrinthine city and has a magical table. She will not marry him; so he sends an Armenian (*ermol*)³⁴ trader to fetch Argwana the Ugly, the Lord of the Pigs. He arrives mounted on his "boar-saddle"—that is, either a saddle fit for a wild boar or one made of boar leather—conquers the city, seizes Satana and her table, and carries them off. The maiden cries out in disgust that she will marry Warzamaeg if only the Narts will save her from the swineherd. They do; but later Argwana returns, finds her bathing in a stream, and rapes her. When Warzamaeg finds out what has happened, he makes war on Argwana and kills him (Colarusso, Saga 4 "Setenaya and Argwana," pp. 34-48: an amalgam of four saga-variants).

The Argawan of Movsēs Xorenac'i is not a keeper of pigs and does not ride on a boar-saddle. Argwana of the Narts does; so it is important to examine the function of the sign of swine in the structure of the tale. Let us consider the play of these functional sym-

³² His page is called *šawa*, which if it is Iranian (Avestan *syāva*, Ossetic *sau*, Arm. loan-word *seaw* and modern *seu*) means black, too. The Black Youth (on whom see J.R. Russell, "The Armenian Shrines of the Black Youth (*t'ux manuk*)" *Le Muséon* 111.3-4, 1998, pp. 319-343, repr. in *AIS*), is an Indo-European type of the powerful lover on the boundaries of society, associated with the watercourses. Cf. the Ossetic *sawj dzuar*, lit. "Black Cross"—a Black Youth spirit with a traditional sanctuary. Colarusso does not recognize the figure and consequently finds blackness in the text perplexing.

³³ The name is Ossetic in origin and may contain the base *varz*, "miraculous," which is found in Armenian in various contexts of myth and epic legend also: see my articles on Narekats'i's term *šaržvarženi* and P'awstos' *varženak*: "A Poem of Grigor Narekac'i," *REArm* 19, 1985, pp. 435-439, and "Problematic Snake Children of Armenia," *REArm* 25, 1994-1995, pp. 77-96, both repr. in *AIS*.

³⁴ Cf. the honorary surname of the conqueror/liberator of the Caucasus, General Ermolov!

bols—pig, banquet, bed—in another epic tale better known to the Western reader. It is the one involving the “glorious” swineherd of Ithaka, Eumaios. The latter, whose name is clearly marked to stress his positive role in the epic—it means “striver after good” or “kindly one”—is of noble blood: the son of a *basileus*, “king,” he was kidnapped in childhood and reduced to slavery (*Odysseia* 15.413-414). He welcomes Odysseus with a feast of pork before the hero, disguised as a beggar, goes down into town and wages the *selananeng* (“deceit at the table”) battle of all time. The suitors of Odysseus’ wife, Penelope, have been feasting in his own house—continuously, it would seem—since the hero’s departure for the war against Troy. They have thus violated the sacred law of hospitality, *philoxenia*, and of social restraint in every way, specifically against Odysseus’ family (his wife), his home (his table), and his kingdom. Elsewhere in the *Odyssey* the metamorphosis of Odysseus’ companions into swine provides a dramatic foreshadowing of the danger of the loss of human social identity that attends violation and excess. The suitors’ behavior is itself swinish: they wallow in the hall of the king enjoying themselves and indulging their gluttony.

Odysseus, demonstrating once more the qualities of his frequent epithets *ekhephron* “keeping his mind under control” and *polytropos* “versatile in his ways” employs the boundary between human and swine at the point of the *nostos*, instead of falling victim to it. He disguises himself as a beggar, and, with the help of the swineherd Eumaios, effects entrance into his palace, bearing the taunts and abuses of the suitors. There he traps and destroys them, regains Penelope, and recovers his kingdom. The later fortune of Odysseus is somewhat mysterious, involving places as uncannily alien as those he visited on his way home from Ilium: it is prophesied that death will come to him from the sea in some wholly ordinary way, but only after travel to climes so distant that their denizens will not recognize an oar but think it a winnowing fan. Presumably, Telemachus will rule as king, but this is never related. Moreover, when the goddess Athena comes early in the poem to Ithaka disguised as an old family friend and questions Telemachus about his absent father, the boy replies ruefully that he has heard he is Odysseus’ son, but nobody knows his own father. We know from the framing story of the Homeric epics that Telemachus is Odysseus’ legitimate son, but the long absence of the king has introduced a dramatic uncertainty. This is something a Greek reader would have stopped to think about: after all, the fateful triangle of Oedipus, Laius, and Jocasta is central to the Hellenic tradition. The *topos* of a royal couple, interloper, and son of ambiguous origin is durable in later Greek literature, too: in the *Alexander Romance*, Alexander is the son of an Egyptian priest, Nectanebos, who comes in the guise of the god Zeus Ammon to Olympia, a woman in the harem of king Philip of Macedon. There is a battle later on at a banquet, where Alexander is accused of being a bastard—and Movsēs Xorenac’i, in turn, drew upon this scene

for a description of a brawl involving an Armenian Bagratid prince!³⁵

In the *Odyssey*, then, the disposition of characters in the drama is: Odysseus, the dispossessed king seeking to restore his lands; Telemachus, the son anxious to restore his father's position and his own, but not quite sure of his own identity; Penelope, a *regina otiosa* weaving and unravelling, as though she were a remote goddess of fate; the helpful swineherd Eumaios; and the swinish suitors who seek to gain Penelope and supplant Odysseus. In the Artaxiad epic, as we have seen, Artašēs, Artawazd, and Sat'ēnik play out their analogous roles; but in the place of the multiple, swinish suitors there is the single Median nobleman Argam/Argawan. The latter is not marked by association with pigs; but the Argwana of the Nart saga is.

In the notes to this essay I have cited a study on a figure called in Armenia the Black Youth, in which I employed a method analogous to triangulation, considering Greek and Indian phenomena in their context at western and eastern poles from Armenia in order precisely to define an Indo-European prototype and then to explain its particular local development and permutation in Armenia. It is possible to employ the same method in the present instance, since there is Indian attestation of the *topos* of royalty and interloper, as well as a cultural dichotomy of boars *vs.* pigs: Prof. Stephanie Jamison has pointed out that ancient Indian legal texts deal with the issue of how long a woman need wait for an absent husband, how her suitors must act, who is entitled to give

³⁵ See J.R. Russell, "The Mother of All Heresies: A Late Mediaeval Armenian Text on the *Yuškaparik*," *REArm* 24, 1993, pp. 273-293, repr. in *AIS*. Xorenac'i, in turn, inspired another great creative writer, the Armenian Romantic poet Bedros Tourian (1851-1872), to revise a poem of dull despair, changing it into what was for him a most unusual celebration of requited love. He composed and produced a play about king Artaxias, also. Perhaps the most modern echo of the banquet-fight in the *Alexander Romance* is Kafka's: *Heute—das kann niemand leugnen—gibt es keinen grossen Alexander. Zu morden verstehen zwar manche; auch an der Geschicklichkeit, mit der Lanze über den Bankettisch hinweg den Freund zutreffen, fehlt es nicht...* ("Today—nobody can deny it—there is no Alexander the Great. Many, to be sure, know how to murder; also there is no lack of skill in hitting your friend with a lance from across the banquet table...") (Franz Kafka, "Der neue Advokat," *Parables*, New York: Schocken, 1947, p. 28.) Kafka elsewhere reduces the god Poseidon to a bookkeeper who may get a chance to see the seven seas just before the world's end—apocalypse becomes a long work week. And in this case the modernist of Prague declares the heroic type of Alexander extinct—deeds rendered base by being shorn of their epic context remain, though, base and absurd. Alexander has, like Mher and Artawazd, apocalyptic overtones: Greek fishermen when they see a mermaid are supposed to say *O Meghaleksandhros zi ke vasilēvi!* ("Alexander the Great lives and reigns!")

her away to a groom, and what the instruments emblematic of assumption of authority are to be (bows and arrows: Odysseus' chosen weapons).³⁶ The suitors are, in her view, not without a case; so what Odysseus accomplishes is therefore a kind of lawful abduction. She regards the episode of Eumaios the swineherd as "a subtle underlining of the kingship theme," with the pigs foreshadowing, as it were, the great recognition scene when the nurse Eurycleia recognizes Odysseus by the scar given by a boar during a hunt long ago. That scene of recognition, so masterfully analyzed in Erich Auerbach's *Mimesis*, restores everything to the long-gone, nearly nameless Odysseus at once: his maternal grandfather Autolykos ("Lone Wolf," so like him!) with whom he was hunting, who had named him from the word *odyssamenos*, "causer of pain," and the boar-symbol of his kingship.

Argwana, Lord of the Pigs, is not just a swineherd, else how could he share the noble company of the Nart heroes? He must have a *boar* saddle, too: this second kind of pig is a royal, even divine, totem. The dangerous boar is particularly appropriate to the Persian royal hunt, and the boar (Av. *varāza*, Arm. 1-w *varaz*) is in the Avesta a totem of the god Vərəthraŋna; it served as the emblem of the Armenian Arsacid dynasty. But the domestic pig is not so noble; and Dionysius bar Salibi, a Syrian Christian writer who lived at close quarters with Armenians at Melitene, took advantage in his anti-Armenian polemic of the kinship of boars and pigs to declaim, "Your head [not a king!- J.R.R.] Tiridates was a pig [not a *varaz*!- J.R.R.] and so are you."³⁷ As Prof. Nina Garsoian noted long ago,³⁸ the myth in the *History* of the conversion of the Armenians of Agathangelos of the transformation of King Tiridates IV the Great, persecutor of St. Gregory, specifically into a boar— on the Biblical model of Nebuchadnezzar's metamorphosis into an ox, modified by local, Iranian symbolism— served to invert the Arsacid image. The divine boar became a sign of disgrace rather than nobility. In the Nart tale of Argwana, the same dichotomy may be employed to the opposite ef-

³⁶ See her pathbreaking study "Penelope and the Pigs: Indie Perspectives on the *Odyssey*," *Classical Antiquity*, Los Angeles: UCLA, 18.2, Oct. 1999, pp. 227-272.

³⁷ See my articles "The Armenians, the Holy Cross, and Dionysius Barsalibi" (*St. Nersess Theological Review* 8, 2003, pp. 1-12) and "The Scepter of Tiridates" (cited above), both repr. in *AIS*. The virulence of the hatred and the foulness of the language of Dionysius towards the Armenians—his fellow Christians—may astonish one; but as Wilken notes in his study of John Chrysostom (see n. *infra*), such rhetoric in antiquity was considered to be within the bounds of propriety.

³⁸ See N.G. Garsoian, "The Iranian Substratum of the 'Agat'angelos' Cycle," in N.G. Garsoian et al., eds., *Ease of Byzantium*, Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1982, pp. 151-174, repr. in *Armenia between Byzantium and the Sasanians*, London: Variorum, 1985, art. no. XII.

fect, without depriving the story, at the same time, of the special symbolism of pigs. For there is a vulgar and deprecatory sexual over-tone attaching to pigs: cf. Boccaccio's "order of the Porcellana" in the *Decameron*, a jocular euphemism for clerical sodomy; and the modern American slang usage "porking," used of intercourse generally. This is perhaps because these intelligent and inoffensive creatures, so close socially³⁹ and physiologically to human beings, perform without inhibition acts such as eating (in English a person without table manners or restraint "eats like a pig") and copulating that human society surrounds with taboos of propriety and privacy.

I would suggest that the function of the pig or swineherd at the point of sexual conquest (of Sat'ēnik/Satana, by Artašēs or Warzamaeg) or re-conquest (of Penelope, by Odysseus) in an epic narrative is to signal the use of a force that is natural and violent but immediately contiguous to the social sphere and thus meaningful to its functions, of the necessary sweeping-away of social inhibitions that have become obstacles. Pigs are the perfect symbol of the marginal wild animal. They are not so domesticated as to live in the very same room as their masters, as cats and dogs do; yet they live often under the same roof. Pigs eat, pigs copulate, not in faraway fields, but often within the same buildings humans inhabit. Swineherds take pigs out to graze on acorns, yet to the mediaeval commentator the accepted symbolism was so potent that the scene was interpreted as emblematic of gluttony and sexual excess, as well as the barrenness of unnatural intercourse.⁴⁰ Violate the rules of the table or the

³⁹ I do not mean only that pigs often act as humans do. I mean that we have lived from earliest times in closer proximity to pigs than to most other creatures. Pig bones are those most often found in the excavation of ancient Armenian houses. Sogdian borrowed as *x'* from Chinese the word *kia*, "family," which is represented by the character depicting a pig beneath a roof (see N. Sims-Williams and J. Hamilton, *Documents turco-sogdiens du IXe-Xe siècle de Touen-houang*, *Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum* 2.3.3, London: SOAS, 1990, p. 27).

⁴⁰ See Michael Camille, *Mirror in Parchment: The Luttrell Psalter and the Making of Medieval England*, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1998, pp. 336-338 and pl. 151. In mediaeval Christian Europe, Jews—who, it has often been observed, occupied the difficult position of the closest foreigner, the domestic alien—were explicitly associated with pigs and were killed in the same manner as homicidal pigs, by being hanged upside-down (see Mitchell B. Merback, *The Thief, the Cross and the Wheel: Pain and the Spectacle of Punishment in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1999, pp. 188-190 and pl. 80). The *locus classicus* for this demonization is the Gospel according to John, followed by the latter's namesake St. John Chrysostom, who in his invectives compared Jews to pigs, gluttonous dogs, vicious hyenas, and demons, and claimed that synagogues attracted "effeminate men" (see Robert L. Wilken, *John Chrysostom and the Jews: Rhetoric and Reality in the Late 4th Century*, Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1983, esp. pp. 121-122). So the imputation of abnormal sexuality adheres to the complex, porcine image: a

marital bed, and you risk becoming a pig— or having the wronged party in an epic tale sweep custom away and use the direct force of swine against you. The suitors insist on manipulating the propriety of the table? asks Odysseus. I will show you how to play dinner politics! You are too fastidious to accept my suit, Satana, and hide in your labyrinth? asks Warzamaeg. I will let Argwana kidnap you, then! The outrage of the rape here, subsequent to the abduction, seems also to be a kind of breaking-in of a recalcitrant bride: one recalls that in the Ossetic Nart sagas Satana is naked in the river Terek when a shepherd on the opposite bank sees her, is aroused, and ejaculates. She hides behind a rock, but it is impregnated and her son, the first Nart, is born. So hesitancy, necessity, and result all find the locus of a river, as in the incident with Argwana: the setting mitigates or shades the meaning of the rape, perhaps. And one notices how in both the Armenian and Nart epics— as in the *Odyssey* and *Alexander Romance*— the banquet plays a role, as a human institution that has been violated.

The late Prof. C.J.F. Dowsett, who studied the Armenian material,⁴¹ points out an incident in the Ossetic *Narts* parallel to the episode in Movsēs Xorenac'i involving Artašēs, Argawan, and Sat'enik: the Boratae family of Narts seek to kill Satana's husband Uryzmaeg (=Warzamaeg) by ambushing him at a banquet in the Narts' hall, the *nixās*. Satana and the hero Batraz thwart the plot. Dowsett suggested that Argawan is Sat'enik's Alan father and not the same person as Argam even if Movses claims he is. Though I do not agree with the latter division of the two, Dowsett was surely on the right track in other respects, not only in citing the Nart parallel, but also in stressing that the "Armenian" Sat'enik of Movsēs Xorenac'i is older and nobler than the character Satana in the recently-recorded Nart sagas. He did not have access to the variants (presumably Ossetic at first, and perhaps also older than the existing Ossetic story Dowsett cites, but now attested only in extra-Ossetic *Nebenüberlieferungen*) that include the name Argwana, though. In these, it is Argwana's son, Shebatinuquo,⁴² who replaces Batraz/Pataraz and, with Satana,

particularly absurd charge, given the Levitical strictures against sodomy that separated the Jews of antiquity so decisively from their Hellenistic neighbors! John was equally scathing about Manichaeans and other enemies.

⁴¹ See his article, "Little Satana's Wedding Breakfast," in D. Kouymjian, ed., *In Memoriam Haig Berbérian*, Lisbon, 1986, p. 248.

⁴² If Shebatin is a form of the Iranian name Smbat, Hebraized by Movsēs to Šambat' (from Shabbetai or a similar name) to justify the claim of his Bagratid patrons Davidic ancestry, then we have here the name of Artašēs' *dayeak* (tutor, surrogate father, nurse) in Movsēs' narrative.

saves his father from an attempt by the Narts to poison him at the banquet-hall (Colanisso, Saga 10). So the role of the swineherd in the thwarting of the scheming banqueters is present, though displaced by one generation. And Colarusso, who seems to be unaware of Dowsett's and others' studies of the Armenian epic sources, consequently fails to notice that the Nart tale is simply an intriguing retelling of a legend attested first in the ancient Armenian Artaxiad cycle. Not even the odd cameo appearance of an anachronous Armenian merchant sparked his curiosity, though it indicates to me that the tellers of the tale associated it still, obscurely, with the traditions of their southern neighbor.⁴³

In the tale collated by Prof. Colarusso, Sat'énik, a magic table, Argawan, sexual misconduct, and the killing all occur more or less in their right order. Instead of acting as the turncoat whose betrayal of Eruand secures Artasēs' victory, though, Argawan here is the conqueror for Warzamaeg of Satana—a telescoping of the two stories of war and abduction. The sexual betrayal and punishment follow. Colarusso, not recognizing the Armeno-Iranian name, speculates about the etymology of Argwana, which he thinks an "extraordinary" name "clearly" linked with Greek *Gorgon*. But Argawan/Argwana and the Gorgons really have nothing in common. Nor is Colarusso's ingenious etymology from Ubykh yielding the picturesque and functional *"vagina-crammer" likely to be accurate, when the source of the tale is—as I have shown here—a historical episode of the pre-Christian period cast in epic, involving an Armenian nobleman of Median descent with a respectable and straightforward Iranian name, rather than an archetypal saga with a villain named Rapist. It has over centuries of retelling gradually been absorbed, rather, into the milieu such a tale, with the enrichment of the dynamic symbol of the swine—a feature whose function in epic narrative I think one can now define by recourse to the parallel case of the Homeric poem.⁴⁴

The etymology of the name Argawan is straightforward. It means "Valuable" or "Precious" (as the wistful Sméagol, back in J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle Earth, calls the Ring), or, more precisely perhaps as the appellation of an ancient *naxarar*, "Noble." It is, as one would hope and expect, a Northwestern Middle Iranian name—suitable for an Armenian of the second century B.C. or later, or a descendant of speakers of "Middle Median." The late Prof. D. N. MacKenzie observed that **rg'w* "noble" in the Parthian documents from Turfan derives from **argāwan*, cf. Ossetic *āry*, "worth."⁴⁵

⁴³ Colarusso mentions modestly in his Preface that he "looked at" Armenian when he was a graduate student at Harvard.

⁴⁴ If Argawan was indeed a "Grabber," then one might suggest an etymology, with metathesis of the consonantal cluster, from the Iranian base *grab-* "seize," as in Ossetic Digoron dialect *aryāunā*, Iron *ārghāc'k*, meaning "pin-cers." But this is just unnecessary.

⁴⁵ Review of M. Back, *Die sassanidischen Staatsinschriften*, in *Indoger-*

Hrač'ey Ačařean in his *Dictionary of Armenian Proper Names*, vol. 1, pp. 271, 301, regards both Argawan and Argam as variants of each other (Argam < Argaw?) and considers them related to the name Arjewan, which we find attested in Armenian: Arjewan was a scholarly companion of Koriwn (the disciple and hagiographer of St. Mesrop Mařtoc', 5th cent. A.D.) who travelled with him to Jerusalem. This form, Arjewan, is well known and very old: it appears in the Avesta as the name of a Zoroastrian believer, Arəjavan (Vast 13.117; and see M. Mayrhofer, *Iranisches Personennamenbuch*, vol. 1, 1.23 s.v.). His name means "possessing worth" (Av. *arəjah-*), and is analogous to and synonymous with Argawan. The Armenian usage of the name Arjewan would seem to have been a conscious Avesticism of pious Zoroastrians at some point. Another Zoroastrian name in the same list in the *Fravardīn yašt*, Arəjānghant, means the same thing. The verbal base *arg-* means "to be worth," and is very productive, both in Iranian, and in Armenian loans such as *y-argem*, "I esteem," *argoy* "precious, honorable," *an-argem* "I dishonor," etc.⁴⁶ Argawan, "Noble," is not an Avesticism, just a suitable and normal appellation of a *naxarar*.

There remains to be considered the route of transmission of the Argawan episode. The first consideration of the data must be chronological priority. In this regard there is no doubt that Armenia is the source of the episode of Argwana in the Nartae, as the tale is first attested in the *History* of Movsēs, centuries before the first written record of the Ossetic epic—never mind the transmission and translations of the latter into Northwest Caucasian languages. However the clear rules of filiation of written texts cannot with equal certainty be applied to the development of oral literature; so a recently-transcribed oral text may well be as old, or older, than one that has been set down anteriorly in writing. And while it is the case that Movsēs himself insists that the entire tale is an oral epic he is transcribing from a recitation he has heard with his own ears, it is still possible that the parts of the story that he retells, rather than transmitting them in poetic form, and are, therefore, his own words rather than words he has heard, have been subjected to recasting. After all, Movsēs was no stranger to the *Alexander Romance* and other Hellenistic literature. Given his fondness for the devices of Euhemerus—the rationalization of ancient myths as human, earthly events—it is possible that Movsēs took an Ossetic figure of legend, a swineherd Argawan, stripped that character of all refer-

manische Forschungen 87, 1982, p. 283, repr. in C. Cereti and L. Paul, eds., *Iranica Diversa*, I, Roma: IsIAO, 1999, p. 162. From an OP. form may be derived the Akkadian 1-w *argamannu*, "purple" (scil., *royal* purple, cf. *porphyrogenitus*, etc.), and Heb. *argawan/argaman*, "purple."

⁴⁶ See A. Meillet, *Études de linguistique et de philologie arméniennes, I: Recherches sur la syntaxe comparée de l'arménien*, ser. Bibl. Arm. de la Fond. C. Gulbenkian, Lisbon: Imprensa Nacional, 1962, p. 119.

ences to boars and pigs, and made of him another kind of animal, a *politikon zōon*, a Median nobleman moved more by affairs of state than by lower passions. Such a change might have made sense to Movsēs as a clarification of the historical record, rather than a distortion of an epic text with mythological elements. The Armenians' rivalry with the Medes is a leitmotif that pervades the various epic fragments relating to the Achaemenian and Artaxiad periods. The epic of Tigran II ("the Great," r. 95-56 B.C.) is the best and most obvious example. Tigran's first problems and triumphs were both to the southeast of *Mec Hayk'*, "Greater Armenia," in Media Atropatēnē. It was simple enough to make of Ast-yages/*Rštivaiga (lit. "spear-caster") both a political opponent and a mythical Avestan dragon-man (Aži Dahāka > Aždahak). The *Drachenkampf* has till recent times been durable political propaganda.⁴⁷ Against the argument that Argawan was first proto-Nart swineherd and only later a Median nobleman in a rationalized Armenian historical text, one can note that the "Median," pig-less component of Movsēs' *History* exists, in respect of Argawan, in both the metric and prose passages; so there is no good reason to suggest that Argawan-the-Mede was Movsēs' own innovation and was not known that way to the oral bards to whose songs Movsēs listened. The innovation, if there was one, might have been theirs, but guessing at a stage remotely previous to the evidence would seem a febrile undertaking. It should scarcely be worth mention, save for other aspects of the tale where the Armenian bards might possibly have resorted themselves to euphemism—though the euphemism is mythological, not real-world political—to escape calling a king a bastard. They sang that the progeny of the dragon (Arm. *višapazunk'*, i.e., the brood of Aždahak—the Medes!) stole the infant Artawazd and put a demon (*dew*) in his place. The narrative in the Nart epic makes it plain that the character parallel to Artawazd is not a changeling, but an illegitimate son. On the level of the logic of storytelling, that circumstance explains his later, anxious efforts to dispose of embarrassing witness better than his simply being a demon-child might do. Not that demonic children are alien to Armenian epic narrative: Pap, son of the fourth-century king Arsak II in the *Buzandaran*, has snakes writhing round his bedposts. And demons are as bad as pigs—maybe worse, if the demons are Medes besides.

The basic Indo-European *topos* of the episode is of a king, his abducted queen-bride, their son, and an interloper of noble birth or nature (a prince, son of a *basileus*, association with the sacred *varāz*-animal) compromised by station (slavery) or degrading associations (Median birth, common swine). In the *Odyssey*,

⁴⁷ In the First World War, both England and Russia used the icon of St. George fighting the dragon as a symbol of their resistance to German aggression.

the function of the interloper is displaced onto the suitors, but the trace of an older pattern remains in the swineherd Eumaios, whose character is manipulated in such a way as to play out the tricky versatility of Odysseus. In Vedic India, the *topos* becomes the occasion for the discussion of legitimate claims in marriage. In Armenia, the role of the interloper is absorbed into the large theme of Armenian struggle against the Medes, in the narrative of Movsēs Xorenac'i. The recurrence of the tale in a Circassian narrative deriving from a lost version of the episode in the Ossetic *Nartae* shows a borrowing from Armenian through the presence of a character named Argwana (i.e., Argawan); but the latter's association with **pigs**, and the recollection of his compromised nobility by mention of a **boar**, would indicate a *secondary archaization*—the reapplication of an older set of images to a narrative that might have been pre-existing but that was reinforced by borrowing from Armenian oral epic narrative. Such recrudescence of archaic material in the Caucasus of the Golden Fleece, Prometheus, and a local legend of a Cyclops, is unremarkable. But the discovery of an independent witness of Armenia's Father of Histories after over a millennium is worth these remarks.

A nobleman founds a dynasty, or a king returns home to reconquer his kingdom. He must acquire, or recover, a wife. The woman is mysterious and obscure—maybe a witch, or a goddess, certainly an autonomous sexual being. Her husband can never entirely conquer or know her. Just beyond the boundary of sight, or social station, or civilized propriety, is an ambiguous figure who is both needed and threatening—a source of both powerful help and of violence and lust. The issue of the royal couple, or of the tense triangle, is a son. The latter is anxious to establish his own position against his father, and he is not really certain who his father is, or who besides his supposed, legal father has diverted the passions of his mother. So he resorts to stealth and violence himself, ironically reinforcing by the character of his methods the ambiguity in his situation that he seeks so urgently to overcome. This Indo-European *topos* is played out in the armature of epic; and the plot retains its actuality, its relevance. It will be of perennial interest to any person interested in the nexus of family relations, political power, and human ignorance. And it is not unknown in the more dramatic moments of English literature: "... The base / Shall top th' legitimate. I grow, I prosper. / Now gods, stand up for bastards."⁴⁸ But that is another—though related—story.

Texts and summaries

1. *Movsēs Xorenac'i: the Artaxiad epic cycle.*

⁴⁸ William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, I.ii.20-22: Edmund, *solus*, with a letter.

(M. Abelean, S. Yarut'ıwnean, eds., Movsēs Xorenac'i, *Patmut'ıwn Hayoc'*, Tiflis, 1913: all translations my own.)

1. 11.44-46. Artasēs (Artaxias I) rebels against the king of Armenia, Eruand (Orontes). Argam, a nobleman of the Muracean clan, of Median descent, is persuaded by an emissary of Artasēs to switch sides, with the promise that he will be given second rank in Artasēs' kingdom as a reward.

2.11.50 Later, Artasēs has captured an Alan prince: the latter's sister Sat'enik comes to the opposite bank of the river and pleads for his release.

Բեզ ասեմ, ալը բաշ Արտաշէս, որ յաղթեցեր բաշ ազգին Ալանաց. եկ Հասանայ՝ քանից
աշազեզոյ դստերս Ալանաց՝ տալ զպատանիդ. դի վասն միտ, քիտու ոչ է աւրն
դի ցազանց՝ զայլոց դի ցազանց դարմից բառնալ զկենդանու թիւն, կամ
ժառանգութեանդ ի ստրկաց կարգի պահել, և թշնամու թիւն յախտենալան ի մէջ
երկրցունց ազգաց բաշաց Հաստատել:

"I tell you, brave (*k'aj*) man Artasēs, who have conquered the brave nation of the Alans, come and agree to the words of the lovely-eyed daughter of the Alans and give back the youth. For it is not the custom (*awrēn*) of heroes (*diwuc'azanc*)⁴⁹ to deprive of their life other races of heroes, nor yet to keep them in the rank of slaves by subjugating them to servitude and establishing thereby an eternal enmity between the two nations."

3. Artasēs then desires Sat'enik (Ossetic, Satana) and sends to the Alan king asking for her hand in marriage, but he replies that she is too precious.

Եւ տասի՝ տալիս բաշն Արտաշէս Հազարս ի Հազարաց և քիւրս ի քիւրոց ընդ քաշապզոյ
կոյս աւրիւղդիս Ալանաց:

"And from where will brave Artasēs give thousands of thousands and myriads of myriads in exchange for this virgin maiden of heroic race (*k'ajazgwoy*) of the Alans?"

⁴⁹ Arm. *diwuc'azn* "hero" literally "noble progeny" (Arm. *azn* < NWMir., cf. Av. *āsna*-; cf. Arm. *azn-iw* "noble" with inst., *aznawor* "idem") of the gods, *di(w)c'*, nom. *di-k'*. This reflects the common idea that kings and heroes were of divine origin, cf. the MPers. formula used of the Sasanian kings, *ke cīhr az yazdān* "whose seed is from the gods."

4. So Artašēs abducts her.

Հենաւ արի Արտաշէս ի սեան զեղեցիկ, և հանեալ զոսկէսոյ շիկափոկ պարանն՝ և
անցեալ որպէս զարծու ի սրաթն ընդ զհտն, և ձգեալ զոսկէսոյ շիկափոկ պարանն՝ ընկէջ
ի մէջք աւրիւրդին Ալանաց, և շատ ցաւեցոյց զմէջք փափուկ աւրիւրդին, արագ
հասուցանելով ի բանակն իւր:

“The noble (*ar*) Artašēs mounted a beautiful black [steed], and, taking out the red leather lasso adorned with gold rings, and crossing the river like a swift-winged eagle, and casting the red leather lasso adorned with gold rings, he cinched it round the waist of the maiden of the Alans, and he caused much hurt to the waist of the delicate maiden, speedily bringing her to his encampment (*banakn*).”⁵⁰

5. The wedding of Artašēs and Sat’ēnik.

Տեղ ոսկի տեղալլ ի փնաւոր թեանն Արտաշէսի, տեղալլ մարգարիտ ի հարսնութեանն
Սաթինիկանն:

“Rain of gold rained when Artašēs was groom; pearls rained when Sat’ēnik was bride.

6. Sat’ēnik’s mysterious passion and the reappearance of Argam/Argawan.

Այլ և տենչալ, ստեն, Սաթինիկ տիկինն տենչանա՝ զարտախալ ի խաւարս և զտից
խաւարի ի թաթիկցն Արգաւանայ:

“But they say Sat’ēnik also desired a strong desire, for a *tiara/veil (*artaxur*, var. *artaxoyr*) of greens (?) and shoots of straw (?) from the banquetting-pillows (*barjic’ē*)⁵¹ of Argawan.”

⁵⁰ Arm. *banak* “camp,” from Mlr.: the Iranian and Armenian kings of old preferred the martial and outdoor life, so the proper locus for Artašēs’ wedding is the *banak ark’uni*, the “royal encampment.”

⁵¹ Arm. *barj* “pillow” cf. Av. *barziš*, etc. The Pers. for “feast” is preserved in Arm. *bazmem*, “sit down (to dinner)”. In Armenia and Iran one reclined on a couch at a feast, resting on a stack of pillows.

7. 11.61 Artawazd is born: but is he the son of Artašēs or of the “dragon” (i.e., the Mede— Argam/Argawan)?

Եւ զայս ետին երգիչքն յառասպելին ասեն ախպէս. եթէ Վիշապազունք զողացան զմանուկն Արտաւազդ. և դն Վոխանակ եղին:

“And the singers tell this same thing in the bardic tale (*yačaspelin*) thus: The progeny of the dragon (*višapaxunkʹ*) stole the child Artawazd, and put a demon (*dew*) in his place.”

8. 1.30 Argawan plots against Artašēs.

Այլ և ճաշ ասեն զործեալ Արգաւանայ ի պատիւ Արտաշիսի. և խաբարտանակ լեալ եմին ի տաճարին Վիշապազ:

“But they also say Argawan made a feast (*čaš*) in honor of Artašēs, and plotted treachery against him in the palace (*tačarin*)⁵² of the dragons (*višapacʹ*).”

[In 11.51, Movsēs claims Artawazd, son of Artašēs, was jealous of Argam’s second rank in the realm and falsely accused him at the feast of plotting against the king. Artašēs kills him.

Movsēs further explains:

Այս Արգամ է, որ յառասպելին Արգաւանն անուանի.

“This is Argam, who is called Argawan in the bardic tale (*yačaspelin*).”]

9. The elegy of the dying Artašēs (cited by Grigor Magistros Pahlawuni, d. 1058, *Letter* 33).

Ո՞ր տալց ինձ, ասէր, զժուր ժխանի և զառուստն Նաւասարդի, զվազին եղանց և զվազին եղչեալուաց: Մեք փոյ Հալուաք և Թմրկի Հարճանէաք, որպէս արլենն է Թաղաւ որաց:

“Who would give me— said he— the smoke of the smoke-hole and

⁵² Arm. *tačar* “palace” (only later, “cathedral” or “temple,” thus rendered anachronistically by Thomson in his tr. of Movsēs), from OP. *tačāra*, cf. MP. *tāzār*. The Arm. *tačar mayri* of P’awstos is the palace hunting preserve.

the morning of Nawasard,⁵³ the running of hinds and the galloping of stags? We blew the horn and struck the drum, as is the way (*awrēn*)⁵⁴ of kings.”

[Cf. the Middle English elegy of the Wanderer: “Were is that lawhing and that song,/ That trayling and that proude gong,/ Tho havekes and the houndes?/ Al that is joye is went away,/ That wele is comen to weylaway,/ To many harde stoundes.”]

10.11.61 The funeral of Artasēs: Artawazd complains to his father about the destruction of property by the mourners.

Մինչ դու գնացեր, և գերկիրս ամենայն ընդ քեզ տալար, ես աւերակացս ո՞ւմ
թաղաւորեմ:

“Now that you have gone and taken the whole land with you, to what purpose shall I reign over these ruins?”

11. Artasēs then curses him, and the epic cycle reaches its apocalyptic dénouement.

Եթէ դու յորս Հեծցիս յԱզատն ի վեր ի Մասիս, գրեզ կապցին քաշք, տարցին իԱզատն ի
վեր ի Մասիս, անդ կալցես, և զյորս մի տեսցես: Զրուցեն զամանէ և պատառունք, եթէ
արգելեալ կայ յայրի միում, կապեալ երկաթի շղթայիս ք. և երկու շունք Հանապազ
կըծ ելով զշղթայան՝ Հանայ ելանել և առնել վախճանն աշխարհի. այլ ի ձայնէ

“If you ride to the hunt on Greater Ararat (*uAzat... Masis*), may the titans (*k’ajk’*)⁵⁵ seize you and take you up on Greater Ararat: there

⁵³ *Nawasard* “New Year,” from OP. *nava-sarda*–“idem” (cf. NP. *sāl*): the name of the first month of the ancient Armenian calendar, corresponding by accepted reckoning to late August, though in antiquity the Zoroastrian vernal New Year’s feast, *Nō Rōz*, celebrated in late March, could have been called also *Nawasard* in Armenia.

⁵⁴ *Azat Masik* “Greater Ararat,” the larger of the twin peaks of Armenia’s national mountain. The epithet means literally “free, noble” (< Av. *āzāta*-); *masi-k’* may derive from OIr. **masyah*–“largest,” in the sense of a very big mountain, since Mt. Sip’an, N of L. Van, was anciently called *Nex Masik’*, “First(? cf. *nax*, from OIr. *naxva*–) Big Mountain.”

⁵⁵ *K’aj*: “hero, titan.” The word may be of Ir. origin, cf. Sgd. *krz*; in Arm. it is used both as an epithet of kings and heroes, and as the designation of a race of supernatural titanic beings, the *k’ajk’* (cf. Geor. *k’aj*, a loan from Arm.) who dwell in the mountains and lead a regal and otiose life, riding, hunting, and feasting.

may you stay, and may you not see the light!’ Old women (*paṛawunk*)⁵⁶ tell about him the tale that he stays imprisoned in a cave, bound with iron chains; and as two dogs daily gnaw at the chains, he tries to get out and make an end of the world. But, they say, from the sound of the smiths striking their anvils, his chains are strengthened. For this reason even in our time many smiths, following the bardic tale (*aṛaspelin*), on the first day of the week strike their anvil three or four times, so that, they say, the chains of Artawazd may be strengthened.”

[NB. This must be the **ghost** of Artasēs speaking; so the parallel to the Sasun epic is exact: the **dead** Dawit⁵ curses his son P’ok’r Mher (Mithra the Younger) with immortal confinement in Agrawuc’ K’ar, Ravens’ Rock, at Van till the end of time.]

II. The Circassian Version of the Narts: The Saga of Setenaya and Argwana.

(John Colarusso, tr., *Nart Sagas from the Caucasus: Myths and Legends from the Circassians, Abazas, Abkhaz, and Ubykhs*, Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 2002.)

1. Saga 4. The widowed Nart Warzameg⁵⁷ desires to marry Setenaya [i.e., Satana, Sat’enik], who has a magical table that brings food whenever one wants it. But she refuses him, so he decides to conquer her city, Ghund-Ghund, and abduct her.

2. The city cannot be conquered without the help of the *swineherd* Argwana, so an Armenian (*yarmal*) trader goes to get him.

3. Argwana is mounted on a boar-saddle. He leads the Narts and captures the city, abducting Setenaya.

⁵⁶ Arm. *paṛaw* “old woman,” as in ancient Greece the keeper of old tales. The word can in some dialects mean also an old man; and I derive it from Av. *paṛnayu-*, “adult,” lit. “full of years.” In old Mod. Arm. journals folkloric columns were called *paṛawašunc’*, “old women’s breath” (cf. the designation of the Bible, *Astuacašunc’*, “breath of God”!).

⁵⁷ Warzameg: the Nart hero of Ossetic epic who corresponds in the Circassian narrative to Artasēs. His name is of uncertain etymology: one notes Abaev’s suggestion of a relation to Arm. Varazman (the name of a Mihranid noble, grandson of St. Vardan Mamikonean). The name may contain the element Av. *varəcah-*, Mlr. *warz-* “magic, wonder,” Arm. l-w *varž-*, cf. the apocalyptic hero Bahrām i Warzāwand; one Varž son of Dat figures as the tutor in the arts of war of Tigran, son of Artasēs. His descendants are the Varažnuni *naxarars*.

4. Argwana relinquishes Setenaya to Warzameg but comes back secretly and ravishes her: she will give birth to a son from him, Shebatinuquo.

5. When Warzameg undresses Setenaya on their wedding night, he sees her bruises and she explains her rape by Argwana. Warzameg has him killed.

6. Saga 10. Setenaya and Shebatinuquo save Warzameg from an attempt by the other Narts to poison him in the banquetting-hall.

III. The Odyssey of Homer.

1. While Odysseus is away fighting at Troy, the young noblemen of Ithaka try to force his wife, Penelope, to remarry. They take over Odysseus' palace and consume his possessions.

2. Odysseus' son Telemakhos ("fighter from faraway") tries to defend Penelope against the suitors' encroachments. Athena visits him and he avers that though he has been told Odysseus is his father he does not really know.

3. Odysseus returns secretly to Ithaka: the *swineherd* Eumaios ("Well-intentioned"), who is the son of a king and was abducted as a boy into slavery, receives him and helps him to return to his palace masquerading as a beggar.

4. The nurse Eurykleia ("Wide-Famed") washes the beggar's feet and recognizes him as Odysseus by the scar left by a wound from a wild *boar* when he went hunting as a boy with his grandfather Autolykos ("Lone Wolf"), who had named him (from *odyssamenos*, "causer of pain").

5. Odysseus and Telemakhos ambush the suitors in the banquetting-hall of the palace and kill them all.

6. Odysseus regains his kingdom.

THE MEMORY PALACE OF ST. GRIGOR NAREKAC'Ī.

James R. Russell,
Harvard University,
Cambridge, MA

“A sense of unspeakable security is in me at this moment on account of your having understood the book... By what right do you drink from my flagon of life? And when I put it to my lips they are yours, not mine. I feel that the Godhead is broken up like the bread at the Supper, and that we are the pieces. Hence this infinite fraternity of feeling.”¹

The pioneering work of the late Frances Yates, developed and refined by Mary Carruthers and an increasing number of other scholars, has shown how important a role the *ars memorativa*, the art of memory of Classical Antiquity, played in the intellectual and spiritual life, both of European mediaeval Christendom and of the Renaissance. I would like to explore its use in the work of St. Gregory of Narek, Arm. Grigor Narekac'Ī. Aristotle, though not the first Greek to employ mnemonic techniques, was the first who articulated the theory on which the art was to be founded: the presence of an image, *phantasma*, is necessary, he suggested, to the function of *mneme*, memory. Order and regularity then facilitate recollection, *anamnesis*. Sensation and the more voluntary exercise of imagination (he calls the latter *phantasia aisthetike*, evocation of a felt image, as it were) are linked to memory; and he adds that memory seems to proceed from *topoi*,

1- Herman Melville, letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne, upon receipt of a letter from the latter, to whom he had dedicated *Moby Dick*, praising the novel. Cited by HARDWICK 2000, p. 66.

places.² Cicero describes anecdotally how the Greek poet Simonides employed the art of memory; and the Latin texts *Ad Herennium*, generally attributed to Cicero, and Quintillian's *De institutione oratoria*, following Aristotle's principles, teach the art systematically. It was a very practical skill. A Roman lawyer or politician did not deliver a speech from a written text: had he done so, his argument would have lost its force in the reception of his hearers. He orated from memory; and the technique suggested was to memorize one's planned speech while walking through the furnished rooms of a deserted house, associating the progression of ideas with the harmonious elements of the three-dimensional picture through which one moved. This was not the rote memorization that Erasmus and Montaigne, at the far end the mediaeval period, were to deplore as an impediment to the exercise of an active intelligence: in the proper exercise of the art, linkages of active and flexible reasoning and feeling went together with precise recollection of the factual details and rhetorical armature— aesthetic fantasy indeed.

This exercise required of the practitioner a deliberate cast of mind, *intentio*, which Carruthers explains as a creative tension that makes the mind taut, prepared to engrave a new memory or to recover a stored one. This mental attitude is not value-free: it has certain moral overtones, reminding one of Jewish *kavvanah* and Buddhist Mindfulness, and I will come to these presently— but there were purely practical considerations that made the art important, before its religious possibilities. I have already noted the social factor: an audience lost its respect for an orator reading from a written text, much as we might today disdain an actor who cannot remember his lines. (Americans long ago gave up expecting our politicians to be masters of rhetoric: most of our leaders these days cannot manage complex, coherent sentences in English.) There are other aspects as well that made memory important in ways one must make a conscious effort now to appreciate. There were in antiquity few inexpensive or durable recording media or means of transmission and dissemination of information, and the average human life span was very brief; so the work of acquisition of knowledge and its transmission from one generation to the next, without which the maintenance of civilization should have been impossible, required efforts of Herculean prowess. It is not surprising, then, either that classical mnemonics long persisted, or that the mediaeval culture that inherited the art was itself memorial in character; for the material condition of culture had not changed appreciably from antiquity. Christianity added to the practice of mnemonics an explicitly moral dimension that is not stressed by the ancients— not so much because morality was absent from their conception of life as that paganism was innocent of the dogmatism that imposes its morality explicitly and universally. The new forms of the art might have acquired this moral facet, then, from Athens; but the propensity to articulate it came forth with the Law from Jerusalem.

Ancient Judaism valued mnemonics: the faith was from early times as much an

2- ROSSI 2000, p. 7.

intellectual system of books and of learning requiring powers of acquisition as it was a spiritual discipline of faith and practice. The two purposes were not really separable, either. Memory, Hebrew *zikaron*, is a moral imperative as well: the act of remembering Creation, the Exodus, the Covenant at Sinai, and other events is an essential aspect of the celebration of all festivals, from the weekly Sabbath to the high holidays of the New Year. This memory infuses the believer with consciousness of the grace of God towards the cosmos, mankind, and His chosen people. The flux of history in the light of patterned religious memory is seen thus as the growth of a relationship, the refinement of the soul, and the strengthening of the ties of responsibility and care that bind the worshipper to his God and the members of the community to each other. Each ritual act also is made by memory to enter the numinous realm, *in illo tempore*: the ruinous, separating aspect of time is erased. We shall see presently how the Christian theory and practice of memory deal similarly with the burden of time passing.³

Though one ought to speak properly of Judaism in the present tense as a religion that has continued to grow over millennia, mostly without theological reference to its younger siblings, Christianity and Islam, Israel became in the Christian cosmology a fixed substrate of vital relevance only to the past: Christians, creating for themselves the appellation of the New Israel in an act of appropriation, absorbed the morally tinged charge to remember of the Old, whilst categorizing the various events of the Old Testament as a fixed set of symbolic, almost code-like prefigurings upon which the parallel chain of events in the New Testament might be superimposed as perfections and fulfillments. These events concern the incarnation of God Himself and His self-sacrifice for us. The large themes of Divine love and care adumbrated by the Hebrew Bible in chronological progression, for the large universe first, for all mankind next, and then more specifically for Abraham and his legal progeny—Israel—continue in Christian symbolism to narrow, as it were, to the irreducibly specific point and emotional climax of the life of the single God-man. With Him, the focus widens again to the entire cosmos, the Covenant limited no longer to any particular nation. Armenian Christians have often perceived themselves as new Maccabees and a new Israel, not in a universal sense, but in a very special, national, particular way. I will return to this point below; for now it is important simply to stress that in Armenian writings the

3- In the thirty-third prose poem of *Le Spleen de Paris*, Charles Baudelaire prescribes oblivion, not memory, against the pain of time's passage: *Il faut être toujours ivre. Tout est là: c'est l'unique question. Pour ne pas sentir l'horrible fardeau de Temps qui brise vos épaules et vous penche vers la terre...* In the novel *To the Lighthouse*, Virginia Woolf's heroine mends the terrible rent of the chapter "Time Passes" by completing a painting which seeks and recaptures the past, and which is also the perfection of a vision. The work of art freezes time, as religious sensibility strives to do. But carnal, realistic memory cannot perform this mental trick, and stares into the face only of the deleterious power of time—the only salvation from horror in such a case is then either compassion for the universal suffering intrinsic to the human state, or else the cold courage of the existentialist's acceptance (the former option, which has much in common with Buddhist philosophy, takes courage also). The memorious archaeology of looking up a lover of one's youth who has since aged and changed, is the kind of real and personal ritual recollection that stands in contrast to the mythological mnemonics of the Abrahamic religions: see, for instance, the novel by Mark Merlis, *Man about Town*, New York: Fourth Estate, 2003; and, on the level of literary history, Gilbert Adair, *The Real Tazio*, New York: Carroll and Graf, 2003.

issue of memory is pulled in two directions: there is Armenian national memory, in which the history of St. Gregory the Illuminator, artificially elevated to the rank of an Apostle, the revelation of the Armenian script to St. Mesrop Mashtots, and the martyrdom of Sts. Ghewond and Vardan and their companions, are equated with— and often elevated above— Old Testament (and, sometimes, even New Testament!) paradigms. The second is general, Biblical, Christian; and when employed with political purposes it represents the striving of the Armenians, often an embattled and isolated Christian island in an Iranian or Moslem sea, to gain recognition by others as a part of Christendom and of Western civilization. This aspect stresses Armenia's belonging, rather than its separateness.

There is also a third aspect of the treatment of memory, conditioned by the Iranian, Zoroastrian cultural substrate in Armenia that includes stress upon the significance of religious memory. The Gospels themselves are called in Armenian *awetaran*, for which an etymology from Middle Iranian meaning “a collection of memorials” has been reasonably suggested by Prof. C. de Lamberterie. This would correspond, not only to a known— if somewhat rare— Greek designation of the Gospels, but also to the pre-Islamic Iranian practice of entitling epic narratives about legendary heroes of Zoroastrian sacred tradition as memorials, *ayadgar-an* (with the same etymon, Phl. *ayed*, as seems to be reflected in an earlier form in the Armenian *awet*—). If the word *awetaran* waited long for this proposed etymology from Iranian,⁴ the common Armenian base *yush*— “remember” (*yishel*, *yishatak*), at least, has long been recognized as a Middle Iranian loan. So Armenian tradition focusses doubly, from the Iranian substrate and from Christian learning, on the aspect of memorial in Scripture. The Christian theologian is then charged to extract from the Gospels' four-fold narrative of a precious single life all its cosmic meaning, in all its divine symmetry. Associated to the *ars memorativa* of the orator now is a kind of subset of it, the homiletic craft, the *ars predicandi*, which pursued the “practical aims of rhetorical persuasion, and need to construct images able to provoke controllable emotions.”⁵ Forgetfulness, by contrast, is for Christians not just disadvantageous but morally perilous, and *lethe* is the vile sleep that makes for perdition. The various philosophical cults characterized as Gnostic, to a greater or lesser degree Platonic in their disposition and intersecting more or less thoroughly with the diverse types of nascent Christianity or Iranian dualism, agreed

4- A problem of the suggestion, DE LAMBERTERIE 1996, is that the very common Arm. *awetik* means “good tidings” and is semantically connected to the idea of memory only through the sense of a “happy reminder” or the like. It may be that this is a wholly secondary meaning, affected by the understanding of the Greek name of the Gospels, *Euangelion*. But if that is not the case, then one might propose, very hesitantly, a pre-Arsacid borrowing, with a devoicing in speech of the intervocalic -d-, from Iranian **a-vaed-aya*-, “to proclaim forth”, yielding Arm. *aweti(k)*, probably in the Achaemenian period— though the evidence for treatment of -d->-r- in Arm. certainly predates the loans from Middle Iranian. And in Clas. Arm. this putative form would rub shoulders, of course, with the religiously potent (and regularly formed) loan *nuer* “consecration”, cf. Av. *ni-vaed-aya*- in Yasna 1.1! We encounter in Arm. the same form from different periods: cf. Arm. Spandaramet, “Dionysos”, from NWMlr., vs. *sandarametk*, “chthonic demons”, from OP.; or *pashtpan*, “defender” from NWMlr., vs. *pushtipan*, “bodyguard”, from MP.

5- ROSSI 2000, p. 14.

that the tragedy that lies at the base of the human predicament is not so much primordial sin and its effects as ignorance of what happened to get us where we are— Wordsworth’s “a sleep and a forgetting”. Gnosis is a martial reconquest of usurped memory. Here one can compare the Christian ascetic and saint, whose vigilance and wakefulness— strivings not to sleep, not to forget— are so often evoked in athletic and military terms. St. Gregory of Narek knew well the Greek meaning and sense of his name, *gregoros*, “awake, alert” (Arm. *artun*, *hskogh*: in Arm., accordingly, the *Zuartunk* are the watchful angels, Gk. *Egregoroi*): this understanding combines with the fact that it was also the Christian name bestowed upon the Arsacid prince who became the Illuminator of Armenia, to whom Narekac’i dedicated hymns, and who was for him so much the exemplar of the holy champion and priest, and theologian.

It is of passing interest that it is only in these and a very few other liturgical poems and orations that Narekac’i uses the terms “Armenia” and “Armenian” (*Hayastan*, *Hayk*, *Askanaz*, *Torgom*, etc., the latter two being of course Biblical Ashkenaz— the Scythians— and Togarmah).⁶ There are oblique allusions in his major work, the *Matean oghbergutean*, “Book of Lamentation”, to the local lore of the region of Lake Van. He describes a typical Armenian house. One prayer is patterned upon the form of a *gaylakap*, a folk spell against wolves. He mentions Ararat— but it is a Biblical mountain, as well as an Armenian one. The name of his people and country never appears there at all. The *Narek* has been praised as an Armenian *Divine Comedy*; its author, as an Armenian Dante, or even a Dostoyevsky. Such comparisons are so wide of the mark that they distort more than illuminate: Narekac’i’s language in the *Matean* (the *taghs* can be more idiomatic) is as pure a *grabar* as his age allows; Dante departed from Latin to write *The Divine Comedy* in Italian, with much loving specificity about Italians. St. Gregory of Narek has none of this.⁷ His focus is inwardly personal and vastly cosmic: the world that we inhabit in between the two extremes is of interest to him only insofar as monastic establishments (*vank*, *krawnastan*) or images useful to personal reflection and salvation are concerned. In the *Matean*, ch. 72.4, he declares: “I was called Awake at the baptismal font, and I fell asleep in death’s slumber; on the day of salvation I was proclaimed Vigilant, but I shut my eyes fast

6- An example is Narekac’i’s oration on the Cross of Aparan in Mokka, the mountainous district south of Narek and the Van district, where the Armenians are called the progeny of Ashkenaz (Gen. 10.3): see TASNAPEAN 1999, p. 10.

7- Prof. J.-P. Mahé has written judiciously of Narekac’i and Augustine. Comparisons may be made, but the danger is that people eager to praise the Armenian saint by comparing him to any world-famous Western classic will not be likewise judicious. So let it be said here that the differences between the Roman of Thagaste of the fourth century and the Armenian of the tenth are incommensurably greater than the similarities: Augustine’s *Confessions* are the first realistic autobiography in Christendom, the work of a man who lived pagan and classical life to the fullest and could be descriptive and candid and fell about the physical minutiae of his existence. Nobody till Montaigne did that again, or could do it, in the lands beneath the shadow of Cross or Crescent. If you read the *Matean*, you will never discover such things as the theft of pears by boys on a lark, the flapping of a curtain during a lesson on literature at school, or a youth’s embarrassment at his first erection when he is at the *thermae* with his pleased father. There is no house shared by eager young professionals, no garden, not even an angelic voice bidding the author “Take it and read.”

against sobriety.” The passage renders two terms, Gregory and *egregoros*, variously into Armenian; and the linkage of the underlying Greek words heightens the sub-text: neither as a baptized man, Gregory, nor as a consecrated priest elevated to the company of the Illuminator, even to the angelic orders, *egregoros*, is the lamenting petitioner capable of that memory without which alertness is of no use. Memory within religious practice is so critical that it cannot be merely factual, but must have a determining moral content. What is it, in the *Narek*? It is in its way like that of the Gnostic: my failure is on the same scale as the primordial cosmic tragedy. They are one. The difference is that for the Gnostic, to hell with the cosmos; for the Christian, the cosmos is my personal responsibility and guilt. But neither has time for what is in between my microcosm and the universal macrocosm—the sounds of vendors in the morning on a street in fourth-century Alexandria, for the Gnostic, perhaps, or, for St. Gregory, the plowman and his oxen, just below the monastery hill in tenth-century Vaspurakan.⁸

In a recent monograph, *The Ethics of Memory*, the philosopher Avishai Margalit suggests that most specific remembrance is ethical and has to do with those near and dear to us— what he calls “thick relations”— while less of our memory, both as to content and precision, is moral, and has to do with “thin relations”— that is, humanity in general, people we do not know. Margalit suggests the Christian project is to make **all** relations “thick”, to make the sphere of meaningful and intense memory include every being.⁹ It would seem to be a romantic intention, more emotionally appealing than practicable; but it would appear that Narekac’i’s method of effecting it is to telescope Biblical allusions and the varieties of actual imagery (his vices as swarms of vermin and bugs; his spiritual crisis, as a shipwreck) into himself and, by extension, into the imagination of the reader, the drama of damnation or salvation of this soul then becoming the entire concern of Heaven. In Ch. 3 he addresses his words to all classes and people at all times and in all countries. This implication is all there is of the middle between individual and universe: exclusion

8- The choice between foci of memory is similar to the ethical decision anyone committed to a great cause must make about the degree to which she will allow abstract principles to impinge on the importance she accords to the small things of her own home, to the local, even the national. This is the dilemma the philosopher Richard Rorty takes on in his famous essay, “Wild Orchids and Trotsky”. Faust’s great, world-denying macrocosmic effusions deny the local, and they are hypocrisy— he wants this world and its love. So the little demons cry in gentle mockery, *Weh, weh, du hast sie zerstört, die schöne Welt*. Reflections on Faust long ago, and on Rorty, later, owe much to conversations with my friend Robert Briscoe.

9- MARGALIT 2002. In the Preface, on p. viii, the author recalls his parents in Israel during World War II debating what life was to be like after the extinction of the European Jews. His mother thought it right to do nothing more with life save dwell on their memory, as the Armenians had been doing— she asserted— since their genocide a generation before. His father disagreed, asserting one must carry on in the future, even if that requires a certain amount of intentional forgetting. Margalit began to wonder after that conversation how much and in what contexts it is proper for people to remember. It is an interesting, if painful, jumping off point: for Jews and Armenians at the time of this writing, detailed memory of one’s murdered people has become a sacral imperative. In a sense, Narekac’i enjoyed the luxury to ignore being Armenian in the *Matean*, and focus upon his soul: his Armenia was a given— vast, secure in its sophisticated culture, seemingly eternal, unshadowed by any horror approaching that of the twentieth century.

of any more specific mention of that middle— as Armenia, or whatever— makes all cosmic ties “thick”; detailed evocation of the middle would “thin” them. Mention of Armenia would make the *Matean* national, self-involved, exclusionary, defeating its purpose and ill serving the readers of Armenian. The morality of memory in the *Narek* precludes dwelling upon the actuality of the tenth century or the author’s native land. That is how all relations become thick.¹⁰

For the patterning required by a memorative, homiletical art, it is the architectural and geometrical metaphors Cicero and Quintilian preferred, that still offered to Christians the most effective system of images; except that instead of a quiet villa off the Via Appia, with its rooms as paragraphs and chairs and tables as individual rhetorical points, the practitioners of the *ars predicandi* employed bigger structures: the hierachically-ordered cosmos of Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite, with the hosts and circles of the angelic orders; the Garden of Eden, its four rivers, and the dimensions of the body of the primordial Adam (explored in the Hebrew *Shiur Qomah*); the levels and measurements of the Ark of Noah (with the dimensions of Christ’s body superimposed upon it); the holy Tabernacle and the tablets and other sacred objects it contained; the Temple of Solomon and its decorations, images, and furniture; Ezekiel’s vision of the Divine Throne, with its divine figure, the four holy animals, and the divine Chariot (cf. the sophisticated Jewish mysticism of the *Merkavah*); and Christ Himself, His Cross, and His tomb. Paul’s metaphor is the Christian *locus classicus*: he is a master builder, and man is the Temple of God, in which his spirit dwells (I Cor. 3.10-17). Carruthers comments that architectural patterns, thus employed, then become “dispositive heuristics”— devices for discovering further meanings.¹¹ That is, the images have their own intrinsic complexity and can be understood as more than one-on-one representations of the ideas they represent, leading the suitably prepared imager to envisage further symmetries and deeper symbolisms. The letter killeth, as it were, but the picture giveth life. In a way, it is alive itself. One speaks of the suitably prepared examiner and memorizer, since it is quite possible to possess an astonishingly sophisticated capacity to memorize a chain of data of any length, employing an array of synaesthetic mechanisms whereby a sound becomes a light, color, taste, tactile experience or object, distributed along a given imagined space— all without ever once having any of those elements lead to a second level of elaboration of reflection. Such is the case of the famous patient, known to us only as S., of the Soviet psychiatrist Alexander Romanovich Luria. According to the latter’s case histories, compiled over decades, this man could memorize a list of nonsense syllables of almost any length, distributing the sequence of associated synaesthetic phenomena along familiar Moscow streets in the guise of various

10- In recent years, Armenian literature and journalism have often been absorbed in a narcissistic omphaloskepsis, pondering the identity and fate of Armenia and Armenians, to the exclusion of other topics; but before modern times, Armenian writers tended more to write about human concerns, just doing so in a particular language and from the midst of a particular culture. So one may recall that in authentic Armenian homes, if there were books, they were, first the Gospel, the Psalter, and the *Narek*— none of which focusses on an Armenian theme.

11- CARRUTHERS 2000, p. 18.

things, colors, and sounds, and then retrieve them many years later, in order and with perfect exactitude. It was a monstrously enlarged rote of the sort Erasmus might abominate, without that free play of thought whereby man raises his mind from the mechanical to the artistic.¹²

Twelfth-century Europe provides several striking examples of the use of architectural symbolism in tracts of mnemonic-homiletic type. Hugh of St. Victor's *De arca Noe mystica* provides detailed instructions for the mental construction of a model of the tripartite Ark of Noah, which is itself likened to Tabernacle and Temple. The schema includes lists of Old Testament figures, Biblical books, the stations of the Israelites in the desert, the angelic orders, the Tree of Paradise, the four directions of the compass (which the letters of Adam's name spell out in Greek; so he is here the Primal Man), ladders of ascent, and Christ Himself at the center. The exercise has been likened to the Indian and later Tibetan Buddhist practice of visualizing a *mandala*, a circle with gates at the four cardinal points and many other details, to which it is strikingly similar. The psychiatrist C.G. Jung found that patients drew such complex mandalas without prior training or knowledge and derived therapeutic benefit from them. Characteristically he sought an explanation in the theory of archetypes; but one might reasonably argue that the circle as a symbol of perfection (or a halo) is sensibly ingrained in European imagination; as are, of course, the various quaternities of directions and the Cross. The store of geometric figures available to human meditation is generally rather limited. Another brother of Hugh's monastery prepared a similar mnemonic treatise in which the object of mnemonic visualization is the divine Throne in the vision of the prophet Ezekiel; and Alan of Lille focussed upon one of the Seraphim in a work which employs a mnemonic based upon the six wings of the heavenly being to list the stages of penance. Alan was a poet; so the terms in his lists are also chosen so as to be alliterative in sound, allowing an aesthetic and emotional affect to facilitate further the process of memorization.¹³

We can observe some similarities in the great monument of Armenian spirituality, the *Matean oghbergutean* ("Book of Lamentation") of the tenth-century mystical poet and theologian, St. Gregory of Narek, and in some other, shorter works of his. It has long been recognized that the overall structure of the *Matean* corresponds to the three parts of a church— porch, nave, and altar— and, simultaneously, to the three stages of the Divine Liturgy; so that the worshipper employing the prayers of the book proceeds in his imagination spatially, temporally, and imaginally through the perfecting stages of the Christian mystery. Since this progress is an ascent, one is reminded also of the three levels of the Ark of Noah; and of earth, the middle air of the sky (Arm. *anjrpēt*),

12- See LURIA 1968. What is most striking about his famous study is its deep humanism and compassion, which remind one of the great American neurologist and writer, Oliver Sacks. The question arises, What makes the book so heartbreaking, why is Luria's capacity for pity so apposite? It is perhaps because the capacity of S. might have become art, had he possessed the greater freedom to enter those mental Moscow streets and dream and play. Instead the talent, monstrously, possessed him— so one sees a human being from whom the good of the intelligence has been cruelly torn.

13- CARRUTHERS & ZIOLKOWSKI 2002, pp. 42-47, 50, 69, 84.

and heaven. Litanies of alliterative images superimposed upon each other produce the emotional, cathartic abreaction of tears sought by Christian mystics, and in Armenian tradition particularly known through the writings of St. Ephrem Syrus; whilst the author refers obliquely or by chapter and verse to Biblical passages and characters. It is possible either to pass over these strings of references or thoroughly to research each; and if one takes the latter option, it quickly becomes clear that the meanings of the Biblical texts, or of the Scriptural images evoked, comment upon each other, creating a second level of complexity, of a textual, rather than pictorial, “dispositive heuristics”. It is thus possible to employ most of the *Matean* as a book of prayer alone, or as a theological work as well: Gregory at the outset declares that his work is intended for all classes and stations of believers in the world. The qualification “most” is necessary, because the great theological meditations on the Nicene Creed and on the Holy Chrism in the culminating third of the book are perhaps less accessible than shorter chapters to the untrained.¹⁴

Memory and architectural metaphor frequently go together in the *Matean*: Narekac’i speaks of his book as a (*mah*)*ardzan*, literally, “(death) monument”—to a resident of New England this evokes the rather dismal image of a thin, small tablet of slate emblazoned with a skull and crossbones or winged hourglass; but in Armenia the object is more often a lofty stele with scenes in relief of Biblical and local sacred history, or else the noble *khachkar*, a Cross-stone. The latter is often a cosmogram: the Cross, blossoming as a Tree of Life, surmounts the cosmic symbols of a stepped mountain and a disk inscribed with radiating spirals. And in any case the term *mahardzan* in Arm. lost early its exclusive association with death, coming to mean any towering monument or even decoration.

If, however, we consider Narekac’i’s use of *mahardzan* in its literal sense, the association with death raises some interesting aspects that are relevant to this exploration of his use of memory. A number of mediaeval European sarcophagi are constructed as *simulacra* (the same word employed for images in the *ars memorativa*) of houses, sometimes with scenes in bas relief separated by arcades—enabling the viewer to proceed from one scene to the next as though progressing through a house used for the mnemonic art. The Armenian monumental steles have separate scenes in bas relief, divided vertically, of sacred history; and there are a number of tombs, belonging to a school that flourished, notably, in the regions of Zangezur and Artsakh, with horizontal scenes of the life of the departed. The imagery of these is sometimes very archaic, suggesting a longer tradition than the relatively late date of the ones studied might otherwise imply.¹⁵ The tomb of

14- For discussion of these themes, see RUSSELL 1996-1997. The long chapters, especially no. 75, on the Creed, differ from other prayers in the Book sufficiently for one to suggest that Narekac’i did not so much compose the whole in later life as arrange, and edit diverse meditations composed over the years, adding within them the occasional mention of “this book” (*aysr mateni*, etc.) to pull the chapters together, much as a scholar now might make a book of studies written at different times, inserting cross references in the course of her editing. For why else would it have been necessary for Narekac’i’s brother to work on the Book with him? Gregory perhaps read from a previous text, making oral insertions his brother duly took down as he recopied.

15- See RUSSELL 2001.

a saint might be screened, in the manner of the Catholic *fenestella confessionis*— and this raises the association, frequent in the *Matean*, of recollection with *khostovanutiwn*, confession. The *Subvenite* hymn of the Catholic funeral service asks angels and saints to raise (*suscipere*) the soul: the verb is the same the Romans used for a father raising a newborn child from the ground to acknowledge it.¹⁶ In the Armenian case, Narekac'i prays thus to be raised up at death: "If I direct my gaze upwards onto the all-seizing and frightful path, may your angel of peace meet me in sweetness. Show me, O Lord, on the day of departure, the release of my breath, a spirit of purity arisen in light from amongst the blessed heavenly ones, coming and arriving with the gifts of your love" (*Matean*, 2.2). The common Armenian belief is that the angel Gabriel, armed, with the written decree of death, comes and removes the soul, which is in the form of a swaddled baby (cf. the Latin association with a newborn child). The epithet *amenagraw* is used by Narekac'i in Ch. 8.1 of *Tartarus*; and this characterization of Hell, literally the hollow place under the earth, into which all is taken, is probably of common Indo-European antiquity, though the Arm. adjective includes a Mlr. loan, from *grab*— "seize" (cf. NP. *gereftan*). The old Armenian ballad of prince Aslan and Gabriel, the angel of death, is a local treatment of the mythologem of Alcestis; and in Greek both her name ("seizing") and that of her husband, Admetus ("indomitable"), are good epithets for Hades (as indeed is the name of Eurydice, lit. "of wide-spreading justice", in the related mythological complex of Orpheus).¹⁷ Narekac'i's use of the epithet thus introduces a subtle contradiction, or perhaps conflation of two contradictory realities: when he looks up to heaven, he sees a path that will lead sinners down to hell. It is possible here too to imagine the archaic conception of the night sky as a dark, inverted world: how else, indeed, can the angel, the light spirit rise (*ambarnam* > *ambardzeal*) to descend to Gregory to take his soul at the "release of the breath" (literally *nirvana*!)? The word *ardzakman*, gen. sg. of *ardzakumn*, from Mlr. *harz*— "release" (cf. also the Arm. loan *apaharzan*, "divorce"), in the second strophe may encode *ardzan*, "monument", to which it is probably etymologically related as well; and the visual aspect is stressed by the preceding imper. 2 sg. *tsoys*, "show!" It is true Gregory wishes his soul to see the angel; but there is another implied beholder— the reader— of the truly monumental scene. The image of the grave monument for Narekac'i is thus one of memory for the beholder, and of the reminding of future events for him— and this memory-in-reverse is apposite, since the Cross of the grave-stone becomes, literally, the Gate (Arm. *drunk*, see below) into the otherworld that reverses and inverts this one. "The things of this world must be looked at in reverse, to be seen the right way round."¹⁸

The *Matean* itself begins, appropriately, with a preface, or Theses (*Drutiwnk*), or Doors (*Drunk*, as the title is also frequently given in MSS.), into which the image of the Cross is verbally encoded, the literal or symbolic attributes of Christ's body and the Cross upon

16- See VALDEZ DEL ALAMO 2000, esp. pp. 4, 22-23, 46, 53.

17- See RUSSELL 2002, esp. p. 170 and n. 27.

18- Balthasar Gracian, cited by Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Who killed Daniel Pearl?* Hoboken, NJ: Melville, 2003, p. 11.

which He is splayed mentioned exactly at the points on the page where they might be, had one drawn a picture: a textual *khachkar* and *mahardzan*.¹⁹ And the Cross, with its complex symbolism and centrality²⁰ to Armenian Christianity, is not only the gate of passage, outward into the otherworld and inward into the heart at prayer from which the words of the Narek emanate. It becomes also an object of memorious contemplation throughout the book: in Ch. 90, for instance, Narekac'i prays, "Let all these gifts of grace come for the sake of your tree of the blessing of life, upon which you, unencompassable God, were tied down, by the memory of the nails by which you, Creator of heaven and earth, were fastened in the work of death, by your dominical blood, by which you fashioned a hook and hunted the great dragon..." In the passage Christ bleeding on the Cross becomes bait on a hook to snare the sea-monster in whose hellish maw the dead languish. Narekac'i has the reader use the nails to remember the Biblical text, where God challenges Job to catch Leviathan with a hook. That memory links one to another watery scene: that of the Baptism, where Christ in the Jordan treads Leviathan underfoot; or the evocation in Ezekiel 29 of Pharaoh as a fat crocodile lolling in the Nile, caught by God's hook and tossed into the desert to rot.²¹

In Ch. 28, Narekac'i enumerates the sufferings of Christ on the *ashtarak* "tower" of the Cross: by the *yishatak*, recollection, of each Satan is to suffer pain and be driven out of the *shinuatsoy khoran*, the edifice of the tabernacle of God's dwelling— "And may [the devil] remember the incurable blow, by which the resistance of the dragon's poisons died." Here is a mental picture of the Cross as the towering tree of life and the center— Jerusalem— of the tabernacle of the edifice of the cosmos. It employs the conceit of impressing Biblical realities upon one through the reversal of images: the blow that killed Christ (whose right hand in the verbal icon of the *Drutiwnk* is labelled "healing")— what could be more "incurable"— was in fact the cure, specifically the antidote to the dragon's poison,²² which is of course death itself. But the reversal has an aim beyond that of instruction of believing men: it is Satan himself, in this passage who is to undertake the exercise of memory, from cosmic edifice to tabernacle to Cross to wounds. And now the expulsion of the archdemon from the imagined building at the start of the string of images makes sense: it is a reversal of the expulsion from Eden, of which he had been the cause. And the human reader, following Satan's act of memory, is accordingly to regard the

19- See RUSSELL 2000-2001, esp. pp. 32-33.

20- The Armenian veneration of the Cross was so extreme, by comparison to the reverence accorded the Holy Sign by other, neighboring Christian communities, that it was condemned as akin to idolatry by the Syrian divine of Melitene, Dionysius Bar Salibi: see J.R. Russell, "The Armenians, the Holy Cross, and Dionysius Bar Salibi," Symposium on the 1700th Anniversary of Armenian Christianity, St. Vartan Cathedral, NYC, Dec. 2001 (in publication, *St. Nersess Theological Journal*).

21- On portrayals of a *vishap*-monster in the Jordan in Arm. MSS miniatures of the Baptism of Christ, see RUSSELL 1998. On the Armenian version of the passage in Job and its interpretation, see RUSSELL 1996.

22- The association of the dragon with poison can have entirely Christian associations; but etymologically the word *vishap* itself, an Iranian loan, "poisonous water (creature)".

khoran, the Tabernacle, as the Church: an Eden re-entered and a world restored. None of this is particularly original: the progress of restorative time and the remedy of the vices of the fall of man through mystical ascent, all portrayed symbolically, is standard Dionysian theology.²³ It is the *koine* of Christian mysticism generally. St. Gregory, with his poetic and linguistic intricacy and intellectual mastery, expresses these verities nobly. It was not originality he strove for.

Let us return to the metaphor discussed earlier, of *mahardzan*, of monument and death: in his meditation on the Christ, Narekac'i inverts time (and, thus, frustrates death), making Jacob's prototype an object present in the memory of the future: "He constructed the monument, anointing it, his aim a demonstration for the memory of those to come" (Buenos Aires ed., p. 252, section 5). Jacob foreshadows the *Narek* itself, whose author prays: "... make me become strong by the frequent repetition of the aroma of confession of this book, having an influence upon many, in the form of a house that spreads all over, extends everywhere, and fills the world, according to the example, by comparison, of their own memory" (Ch. 33.1). Narekac'i's book becomes a house of all the nations and a universal memorial, extending spatially and temporally, pervaded by the sweet savor of incense that serves as the synaesthetic representation of the soul engaged in the work of perfection within. The smell of incense should remind one of the first chapter of the *Narek*, in which the author introduces the complex image of burnt offering and of incense in a censer, whose several parts adumbrate the structure of the book as a staged progression through the actions of the Divine Liturgy, the theme of ascent, and the contradictory senses of burning and refinement the soul is to undergo.²⁴

A further conceit of reversal of direction introduces the important theme of crying at prayer that, as was mentioned earlier, pervades the *Matean*: it is tears falling, not smoke rising, that will incline God, one hopes, to lift the soul. (Cf. Ch. 4.3, where Narekac'i cites Isaiah, "for I will mercy, and not a sacrifice", and adds, "Therefore ascend now, offered incense anew, through the memorial of this.") The image, common enough in its context to be gracefully harmonious rather than awkwardly outlandish—as a more artificial word-picture might have been—is fertile, a true *aisthetike phantasia*, itself inspiring further consideration and remembrance of liturgical symbolism.²⁵ Narekac'i often calls his work

23- See, for instance, ZINN 1975.

24- The Armenian *burva* ʿrr censer, has a bowl which contains the coal and incense, and a perforated lid, often made in the shape of the dome of a church. The two parts are connected to each other and suspended by three chains (NERSOYAN 1950, p. 246). The church is censured before a ritual (ORMANIAN, pp. 47-48); so the metaphor has also a temporal symbolism. See also CENSING 1991.

25- The image comes naturally to the makers of mnemonic Christian emblemata at the far end of Europe, in space, and of the mediaeval period, in time: the late-16th-cent. English *Basilikon Doron* of Henry Peacham, an emblem book, has as one of its pictures a domed well and a bucket on a rope. The Latin motto *Ascendo ut descendat*, "I rise so that it [i.e., grace] may descend," is elucidated by a further epigram, translated: "While you may see a fountain raised out of Parian marble, here an urn signifies prayers that burn for Christ. Let sighs rise, and grace will descend from heaven. In vain, let Arabian incense [try to] move God." All Narek's verbal mnemonic symbol is here, in an explicitly drawn one. See YOUNG 1998, p. 5.

a *khostovanutiwn*, “confession”; and it is worth noting that St. Nerses Shnorhali (“the Graceful”), the twelfth-century poet and patriarch whose compositions may be viewed as a continuation— and, stylistically, a simplification— of the tradition of Narek in the changed circumstances of Cilician Armenian culture, is rightly best remembered for his great credal poem, beginning precisely with the words *Hawatov khostovanim*, “In faith I confess...” Keeping in mind that “confession” is a marker of the Narek, we note the request of Grigor in Ch. 72.1 that his brethren of the clergy accept his *awandutiwn khostovanutean*, “bequest of confession”, “into the edifice of the salvation of souls”— a complex architectonic image incorporating memory and memorial (it is a bequest) and evoking both the Church itself as a heavenly Temple not built by hands and its corpus of literature. But they are to receive the offering of the book also into themselves, since they are themselves the Temple of the Lord: in the second chapter of the *Narek* we read of the Scriptural inner room into which one should retreat for prayer, this room standing for the solitude of the monk and the inwardness of the heart at once (on which the Armenian version of the *Commentary* on Matthew of St. John Chrysostom discourses: Narekac’i probably read the translation).²⁶ Indeed, every chapter of the Narek begins with the title, “Speech with God from the depths of the heart(s).” From the image of the heart as the inner room within every man Narekac’i moves gradually to the concept of the special and sacred being who is entirely esoteric, the *nerkin mard*, the “inner man”, who becomes visible in the forms of the saints.²⁷ In Ch. 71.1 he calls the saints, thus, *andams Kristosi*, “limbs of Christ”, “as it were, inns of the Holy Spirit”, whose *kerparans* “(bodily) forms” and *yishataks* “memories” are to be invoked. (Compare Ch. 5, where the postlapsarian human visage is yet that damaged and distorted sign, *nshanak aghartac’eal*, that sees in a glass darkly and is itself obscured from its pristine original nature.)

The closing section of Ch. 12, so explicitly vivid in its imagery that it is employed by the Armenian Church and the lay faithful as a prayer for protection of the home at night, speaks both of the actual house and of the body itself as a house, forcing the reader

26- *Matean*, Ch. 2; and cf. CHRYSOSTOM 1849, p. 249: “Enter your room. Now they will say, How is this? Is it not necessary to pray in church? It is indeed so, but in every place with such will, since God searches one’s thoughts. For if you enter your room and close also its doors, it is still possible to display oneself praying to people, and then closing the doors avails naught. See how precisely he qualifies it here: For they will appear, he says, to people. For this is the correctitude he wishes first to establish: before shutting the doors, first close those of one’s thoughts, so that one may reject entirely the diversion of vainglory. It is well everywhere to distance oneself from that vice, especially at prayer.” The passage not only illuminates Narekac’i’s allusion to the Gospel, but also focusses upon the architectonic metaphor, adding allegorical doors to it— and this at the gateway and moment of preparation for prayer, of the *Matean* itself!

27- See TAMRAZYAN 1998. In Ch. 46 of the *Matean*, Gregory envisions head as a lamp upon a candlestick and speaks of the body’s 360 parts: this is a symbolic and idealized type, with the perfect number that of the perfect year (the numbers 365 and 366 are also common in Armenian as expressions of entirety— the total number of diseases in the world, etc.). One recalls that the ancient Iranian world-mountain Terag has 360 windows, which are the days through which the Sun shines over the year. Narekac’i’s idealized vision of Adam has him, thus, as a pillar at the world’s center (with the four letters of his name interpreted early as symbolic of the Greek words for the directions of the compass; the quaternity itself is expressive of the four elements and of the Cross). On eyes and windows, see the passage of Ch. 12 cited here.

imaginally to connect macro- and micro-cosm, enabling him to remind himself through the living interplay of the images that both are mutually reinforcing symbols recalling spiritual realities. In the passage, the parts of the house receive, as one would expect, metaphorical meanings, as for instance: “Surround and enclose the window of the visions afforded by my senses of intelligible things, by placing them, defended from harm by the memory of your hope, beyond the terror of troubles’ agitation, the cares of everyday life, dreams in slumber, and senseless fantasies.”²⁸ The window²⁹ of a house should thus remind the reciter of the meditation of one’s eyes; and their vision of temporal things is then to remind one of the vision of imaginal things: the chains of images of reveries and daydreams to which the anxieties and concerns of life give birth, as well as the dream-images that come in sleep. The mindful, associative memory of window as eye as inner eye of thought receives its specific moral power through the associated operation of memory of the hope of salvation that comes from the Scriptures.

The twelfth chapter of the *Narek* discussed above follows Paul and evokes a mass of Biblical imagery behind him, in calling the metaphorical house also a *tachar*, meaning both a Christian sanctuary and the prototypical Jerusalem Temple. Having noted above the importance of the metaphor of sacred architecture in the theology of Christian mysticism, and its use for mnemonic purposes within the *ars predicandi*, we may consider it now in two hymns composed by Narekac’i, with a prefatory comment. The ninety-five prayers of the *Book of Lamentation*, whether employed privately by a celebrant of the Divine Liturgy for purposes of internal purification and illumination, chanted in the context of the liturgy itself, or used in the devotions of lay people, are in essence penitential. Intense remorse and guilt pervade every chapter; and if tears do not well from the worshipper’s eyes at some point in his recitation, he is accursed, obtuse, or insincere. However this work does not stand alone as the sole expression of Narekac’i’s theology or mysticism: many of the hymns he composed for festivals of the Church are ecstatic and joyful, evoking the wonder of the chariot of Ezekiel’s vision, the beauty of the Tabernacle, and the serene joy of the Nativity;³⁰ far from bewailing alienation, they celebrate the glory and luminosity of the divine presence. In this respect, his mysticism belongs to the same stream as that of Vardan of Ani, whose commentary on Ezekiel’s vision was published by Mnac’akanyan.³¹ The frequent portrayal of St. Gregory as a lachrymose, tortured soul merely is surely as misleading as the facile comparison to Dante. Let us consider here two

28- See RUSSELL 1994 on Ch. 12 of the *Narek* and folk prayers for protection of the home at night in general; and now also LA PORTA 2001-2002, esp. pp. 189-190.

29- The word used is *patuhan*, literally, a hole let into a wall. This becomes the common Western Arm. for “window”. In the same passage Narekac’i uses also *lusanc’oyc’*, literally a passage for light (cf. Mod. E. Arm. *lusamut*, window, lit. “light-entrance”), making it plain that the latter is the smoke-hole in the ceiling of the traditional Armenian *glkhatun*, where four pillars around the hearth support a conical dome of squinch construction, with a smoke-hole on top.

30- See Narekac’i’s “Song of the Nativity” (*Tagh Cnndean*), for instance, in RUSSELL 1987.

31- See MNAC’AKANYAN 1971.

hymns attributed to Narekac'i that employ images familiar from the *Matean*, presented in familiar configurations, yet suffused, not by penitence, but by the sense of triumph and glory, ecstasy even. Both are dedicated to the Church; and that physical and supernatural reality binds the successive architectural metaphors together. The theology is that of Ps.-Dionysius the Areopagite—divine thrones, hierarchies, extravagant and verbose evocations of luminescence. The Armenian version of Dionysius would have been easily available to Narekac'i: there is no indication that he relied upon the Greek original.³² The translations that follow are based upon the text published by Kyoshkeryan: the first is attested in a sole manuscript.³³

HOMILY³⁴ OF THE CHURCH AND THE ARK OF THE LORD, OF GREGORY OF NAREK.

We who are all gathered into the holy, universal, and Apostolic church,
Sing in it, we in the earthly circle in glorification, with many choruses,
In spiritual multitudes, by miraculous birth
Conjoined to the rings of the races aglow like the sunlit sky.
(5) We bless the coming into you,
Most holy Trinity, we do beseech.

You who are upraised in the arches of the watchtower of the four-faced cherubim
And receive proskynesis by all the circles and the races wondrous in aspect,
Three-fold reality,
(10) You willed through the holy Apostles to establish this rock,
City undefeated, by miracles performed at will,
Four-fold, in the midst of the cosmos:
You made it resplendent upon foundations that scatter rays
Commingled with heat and dazzling with light,
(15) And you ordained this noble queen into being, splendidly adorned and glorious in
comeliness,
Daughter of the heavenly Zion,
From whose midst the cohorts in many voices that are in her
Acclaim loud their superiors in heaven.
We bless...

32- See THOMSON 1987.

33- KYOSHKERYAN 1981, pp. 184-188. I have followed her versification, though Abraham Terian (remarks at the Narek Conference, 11 Oct. 2003) is certainly right in his observation that Narekac'i was writing metric prose, not blank verse.

34- Arm. *karo*, Syriac *karoza*. This has become the designation of a genre of Armenian hymnography, so my rendering is somewhat arbitrary.

Tabernacle built by the one without beginning, universal, holy,
 Who wast founded in the cosmos on this day, holy Church,
 In example of the paradise made by the Creator, lovely in appearance,
 Planted in Eden, place of delight,
 (25) Which the Seraphim and Cherubim, by the command of the Uncreate,
 Surrounded, guarding the ways to the tree of knowledge.
 Opened are the joys of the great and strongly-hidden paradise,
 And we, with boldness aglow in joy, in the earthly circle,
 Joined to the ring of the Seraphim aglow like the sunlit sky,
 (30) Bless...

Ineffable tabernacle, in this wondrously bright illumination
 Thou wast established in the midst of the cosmos this day, holy Church,
 Exemplar of the high-domed Ark
 (35) Which the patriarch Noah, by the command of the Creator,
 Founded of unputrefying wood
 And built, the Ark for the salvation of the many throngs of animals,
 To rescue in life those who sought refuge
 From the sweeping billows of the waves of the waters of wrath.
 (40) Today, brought into being by Him who creates the sunlit sky,
 Instead of the Ark there was revealed to us holy Zion—
 To us, the nation of rational sheep,
 Stair of miracles aglow with light. Ranks united in glorification,
 We bless...

Tabernacle aglow like the sunlit sky, torch set ablaze with the wondrous beams of the solar
 orb,
 This day, holy Church, in the midst of the cosmos:
 Exemplar of the banquet-tent of Abraham the patriarch
 Seated at the threshold of heaven's gates,
 Seeing into heaven and into earth:
 From there the Lord appeared with *egregoroi* twain,
 Came, attained the shady tree,
 Repaying his lovèd ones the recompense of good—
 At which Abraham came running,
 (55) Nursing calves and three loaves
 He proffered in sacrificial offering to the Lord God.
 This day, itself, holy Zion, comes, God, unto thee:
 Heaven-like place of the sinners' atonement,
 Suckling thy children at the waters of repose,
 (60) From which the generations of the font
 And the principalities in Seraphim abounding, of the wonders on high

Are joined together in the circle.

We bless...

(65) Four-cornered temple, surpassingly wondrous at its dawning,

Ablaze with interpenetrating light,

Holy Church, this day in the midst of the cosmos,

Art exemplar of the Ark that Moses made

Amongst the congregation of Israel's host,

(70) Placing within the incense-burner with gold pillars shining all around,

Which exhaled the perfume of frankincense within;

The golden vessel full of manna;

With the stone tablets of the Commandments.

And the flowering staff therein

(75) Today by the hand of Melchizedek's priest

Appears in you always, instead of the tablets that the Lord inscribed.

The Table, shining like the sun's orb, upraiser of the offering sweet to savor,

Is transferred and established in thee, holy Zion, mother church,

In which the ranks of earthborn living creatures

(80) And the hosts of the lofty, rich in Seraphim, are joined together in the circle.

We bless...

Temple of four torches

Illuminated in the midst of the cosmos by miraculous, supernal rays, holy church,

(85) Example of the wondrous globes and halls light-bedecked and censed, of molten gold,

Which Solomon the wise

Taking cedar wood and juniper

Shaped into the Temple, glowing with gold,

All dazzling in appearance, with candelabra of seven lamps,

(90) And wonders lovely roundabout, in the shape of lilies made,

The gilded Seraphim:

And he establishes them in God's house.

We bless...

(95) Stronghold for the fleeing, domicile and home,

City of refuge and house of atonement,

We beseech the heavenly king, who in unsundered unity within thee dwells,

To grant us peace: heavenly, spiritual, and intelligible,

Protecting us now

(100) From them that war against us: visible and invisible opposing powers—

And at the dawning of the glory of great power on the day that will have no night,

In the company of those raised, holy, in light, may we be glad in unconditional rejoicing.

Now may you remember and have mercy on the departed,
In hope of resurrection, we pray.

(105) And moreover
Grant us exhortation to love and good deeds, we pray.

And let us dedicate ourselves and each other
To the omnipotent Lord God, we pray.

By the intercession of the all-blessed lady Theotokos
(110) And forever Virgin, Mary;
By the petitions of the great prophet, John the Prodromos;
By the prayers of the sharer of Thy Cross and torments,
Stephen, Thy Protomartyr;
By the requests of Thy confessor
(115) St. Gregory, faithful archpriest;
By the general plea of them who love Thee,
Apostles and Prophets:
And have mercy on us now, O Lord our God,
In accord with your great mercy.

The final list of invocations and intercessions seems to me most likely Narekacæi's, though abbreviated from similar lists elsewhere; and the rest is still more probably his own composition, since many of the same words, in a somewhat different order but still forming a hierarchical progression of pictures together, can be found, for example, in Ch. 29.1 of the *Matean*:— powerful **stronghold**; **gate** of loftiness for me in my waverings; **stairs** of blessedness for me, the wretched; **way** of roads, forgiving **king**. The hymn combines Dionysian imagery of the heavenly orders and of light with evocations of the great and powerful buildings, both physical and imagined, that were the hallmark of mystical vision, even power, of old, and which still have a sense of mystery and wonder: Noah's Ark, Abraham's tent and the visit of the three angels, the Ark of the Covenant, the Temple of Solomon. All these symbols occur in other hymns of his, too.³⁵ Each is a forerunner of the Church; so Narekac'i wherever possible stresses quaternities. Each is a sign of the reconciliation of all earthly creatures with all the denizens of heaven; and Narekacæi uses the circle or ring to express this *pleroma*. The circle may imply also the sense of the dance, which seems to me justified by the more explicit image of the dance in other, shorter songs of the saint (the *tagh* of the Nativity, for instance), and by the celebratory character of the hymn. Cross and circle: mandala, spiritual wholeness and perfection. The luxuriantly alliterative compound adjectives for light, *arpiapayl* and the like, that Armenian is so good at— and at which Narekac'i especially excelled— are intended to induce a sense of

35- E.g., KYOSHKERYAN 1981, p. 165, lines 41-45, lines 50-53.

ecstasy as well; whilst the facts of the descriptions and their Biblical allusions challenge and the intellect. The three orders of perception and being line 98, *erknayin*, *hogewor*, and *imanali*— heavenly, spiritual, and intelligible— are thus engaged simultaneously: the most favorable state for operation of the *artes memorativa et predicandi*.

Here is a similar, longer hymn to the Church, this one more amply attested in several MSS.³⁶

HOMILY OF THE CHURCH, SAID BY GRIGOR NAREKAC'I.

Desirable treasure³⁷ of great good, found and concealed:

Pleroma without deficiency, bringer of all; and you yourself are within the entirety—

Which not even highest heaven could bear,

Your atopic canopy³⁸ is the unattainable aether.

(5) You were shown defined, the non-intermediate space³⁹ of the races of fiery nature beneath you.

Image unquantifiable of providential loving care,

On the throne of glory the king of the heights, above and beyond the mind,

Might you receive now supplications of prayers compounded with incense

In this consecrated place, holy Church, we pray.

(10) Splendid feast and intimate summons,

Delectable voice, unencompassable,

Which on the light wings of the windy air⁴⁰

By surest helmsmanship, enthroned in lordly fashion,

You have cast forth your throne in mystic parables of the completion of the outcome of good tidings.⁴¹

36- See the ed. of KYOSHKERYAN 1981, pp. 162-172.

37- Arm. *gandz*, a Mlr. loan, "treasure", means here the long form of a spiritual song, of which the more abbreviated and lyrical type is the *tagh*.

38- Arm. *khoran*, a loan from the Parthian for a banquetting tent, is intensely polyvalent, so any single alien equivalent must render it pallid: for it is at once the celestial *chahartaq* dome, revealed in light, of the Illuminator's vision, the similarly-constructed stone dome above the high altar in an Armenian church, as well as the supra-celestial palace of the heavenly bridegroom of the *unio mystica*.

39- Var. *ananjrpēt*, "without intermediate space". I prefer this reading, since the heavenly beings do not dwell in that separate, dividing space that keeps this world from heaven and subject to demons. See also Narekac'i's use of *ananjrpēt* in line 130 of this hymn.

40- Arm. *or i tewes tetews hoghmayin awdov*: this onomatopoetic evocation of the wings of the Seraphim raising aloft the divine Throne recalls also Narekacæi's invented compound to describe the same vision, *tewatrohatew*, "wing beating wing" (see RUSSELL 1994(a), p. 138. In the present case, note also the alliteration of the round o-sound of the howling whirlwind in the last two words of the strophe.

41- This strophe would seem to suggest that the tetramorphic scheme of the Throne vision embraces the four directions of the created universe, the four elements of which it is compounded, the four symbolic letters

You who guide the determined manner to its perfection,
 Regarding the place of your dwelling,
 Eternally sky and always in our souls:
 A certain one, throne; the other, footstool—⁴²
 Place of elemental light, of all the races.
 (20) Might you...

Maker of wisdom, creator without mistake,
 Fashioner in fitting construction of all,⁴³
 Who was pleased to be first the inhabitant of this form of the matter miraculously adorned,
 First made with hands, constructed before, and then, the one enthroned.⁴⁴
 You have stretched forth the heavens, and there, the heavenly ones:
 You established Eden, and, thereafter, Adam;
 The structure of the ark, and in it, those who lived;
 The Tabernacle of the primordial hospitality of Abraham,
 (30) Anointed stele⁴⁵ and house of God,
 The ladder of our ascent and the trace of your descent
 And the tent of Aaron's service;
 The testament of the book, the judge of the speakers of high Gerizim, [place] of election.⁴⁶
 Light-bearing Temple of the great Solomon,
 Mountain of the Lord and house of God,
 Sign raised aloft to distant peoples,
 Trumpet call summoning the world:
 Your ineffable mystery, according to its seers.
 Might you...

Tower erected in excellent beauty,

of Adam's name, the harmonization of Adam, the elements, and all the world in the Cross, and the Cross also of the Parousia and the end.

42- That is, the Church is of both heaven and earth, while heaven is God's throne; man, His footstool, cf. Ps. 104.

43- Though the line may do no more than praise the Creator, if one considers that Narekac'i both preached against heresy and himself weathered an accusation of it, it may be that the statement is a refutation also of the idea, common to Marcionites and Manichaeans, of an imperfect Demiurge and of a material Creation flawed *ab initio*.

44- Since the Ancient of Days who sits upon the Throne is anthropomorphic, the two strophes may suggest that God the transcendent, in Whose nature Christ is pre-eternally present, is first the dweller (*bnakn*) in the throne's abstract shape, then incarnating as the human form enthroned (*zbazmealn*) upon it.

45- This is the pillar of Beth El, in Genesis.

46- In Deuteronomy, Mt. Gerizim at Shechem (modern "Nablus", from the late Greek name of the place, Neapolis) is a place of blessing; Mt. Ebal, of curses, for the Israelites entering the Land promised by God to His Chosen People.

Indestructible⁴⁷ pillar of iron and strong bulwark made of brass,
 Tower of light, cast of gold,
 Island surrounded by fortress-like breakers,
 According to Ezekiel's second vision:
 Come with a new summoning out of Tyre,⁴⁸
 In search of wisdom coming out of Sheba,
 From Canaan's races of alien seed,⁴⁹
 Hastening eagerly from Babylon
 (50) Wounded to the quick for love of the Bridegroom.
 Gate hewn of cedar planks,
 Stones of crystal with rubies,
 Orbs sun-inscribed on steles⁵⁰ of silver,
 Living city built of God,
 (55) By the impulse of the Spirit; by Jesus, spoken:
 Mountain of fatness, with holiness slathered,
 Might you...

Rejoice, O queen, glorious bride,⁵¹
 (60) Woman of great wonder diademmed:
 Rejoicing in many children whilst retaining your virginity,
 As you were traced there at the beginning,
 Now in this new time you are clothed in splendid being shining with gold:
 In the manner of the call of Hagar,
 (65) Serving woman taken from Sinai to Salem
 As the Father's first-born came Himself,
 He takes you in place of the rejected race of Jacob,
 Making your foundations the worshipful assemblies of the Apostles,
 Beautifying you with illumination by the stars' light,

47- Arm. *ankorcaneli*: Kyoshkeryan prefers the reading *ankarceli*, "unthinkable", which makes nearly as little sense as the other variant, *ankarcveli*, "non-hardening" (which even the most bleary-eyed copyist could scarcely have found a desirable quality for an iron pillar— unthinkable!).

48- Ezekiel 26 is a prophecy of the doom of Phoenician Tyre, then Sidon. In the *Matean*, whose primary tone is of introspective contrition rather than of exultation in the Church victorious, Grigor uses the image but decries his own sins and iniquities as worse than those of Tyre and Sidon.

49- The Queen of Sheba, whose nation, according to the reckoning of Genesis, were the of the race of Canaan, from the progeny of Ham, came to learn wisdom of Solomon. He shamed her ignorance by sitting on a throne on a floor of glass over water: she was afraid to advance. The passage is related to the things of marble in the divine *Hekhalot* that seem to the unworthy be water, in the *Himmelsreise* of R. Akiva in *Hagigah*, which reappear in the transitional, visionary chapter 33 of the *Matean* as the *loycn macuac* of the "final veil".

50- Arm. *mahardzanawk*.

51- Arm. *dshxoy*, by which is meant the Church: the image is repeated, and evolved in detail, in the Narek ch. 75.1, 8; where she is also *iskuhi*, "female Being", Gk. *ousa*.

(70) Making you splendid in a veil of dazzling fire.
 Clean in womb and without vice in birth
 Whence you bring forth in labor God's heirs,
 This is the very example to hand of hopeful expectation
 That verily found its peace.
 (75) Might you...

Lord of light, mighty king, celestial bridegroom,
 In ineffable mystery at the festive gathering encircling
 Ordained unchanging canons for you:
 (80) And example in diverse particulars of the forms
 Of the same scheme of all existence,
 In myriad kinds for the universal Church's construction.
 The statures of diverse races are humbled in a single assembly,
 House and place and hidden chamber
 (85) That is a remedy from the burning heat, the rock of aid to us traced into bodies by
 the Spirit.
 You who make God familiar to mankind,
 Hope for the atonement of the condemned for all races gathered of like name,
 The bold emerging first,
 The band of perfected souls.
 (90) Might you...

Dwelling-place of the Father's wisdom,
 Built upon the pillars of the seven stars,
 In which the blessed One is offered in sacrifice on the altar of will for the taste of bread—
 (95) On the palanquin of the holy table—
 Manna of life and celestial Lamb,
 Who removes sin from the living and those gone to sleep:
 He Himself is all, and the sacrifice in all is greater than Abel's—
 He gathers in His economy the dispersed
 (100) In uncompelled arrival to the embrace at His bosom,
 Summoning with His hand in sweet love, to the unapproachable fortress.
 He is refuge to the fleeing, in the high palace-hall borne by Spirit
 Where He inscribed in wonder the Disciples,
 And where the the enthroned elders in authority will be ranged in power,
 (105) Rejoicing in honor of this, your day,
 Who turn in the circles of the pure:
 Our lord Patriarch [name],
 With bishops, elders and deacons,
 Teachers of the schools and all servants of the Church,
 (110) Our king with his progeny,

And those who are rulers and princes under arms at his command,
 Blessed by all with your own sacred love.
 Remember now and have mercy upon the souls of the departed,
 We pray, in hope of resurrection.
 (115) And also we ask there be granted us
 Exhortation to love and to good works.
 We ask for those rejected by you to be gathered in again
 By the intercession of the one who sits with you.
 {Var.] The Holy Mother of God found the precious jewel, the pearl
 (120) By ineffable energy in the sea of this world—
 Daughter of light, mother of Zion,
 Faith's foundation not built by hands, true eidolon,
 By whose name in this type you were anointed and sealed.
 Bridal-chamber of the sole incarnated God from you,
 (125) Accept your intercession for the reconciliation of us, the condemned,
 The scion of immortal life, the Forerunner of the calling of the Saints
 And crown of Martyrs, with the Apostles and Prophets
 And him who is our Illuminator,
 With the ascetic hermits who are God's heirs,
 (130) Those born into adoption by your holy font, with membership in spiritual kinship
 unseparated by space,⁵²
 In which again you will behold the renewal of the small
 Into the wideness of enlargement of glory in uncontainable expansion,
 Mother with children pure,
 Marriage-crowned with the covenant in that celestial chamber
 (135) On the day of your awful appearance, great God.
 And our Lord God have mercy upon us,
 As befits your great compassion.

The study of the art of memory invites one to consider a possible solution to a problem of the image of St. Gregory of Narek within Armenian tradition: the aura of heresy, even sorcery, that clings to this holiest of Armenian divines. The theological density of the

52- Arm. ...*surb awazanawd ananjrpēt hogetohmteamb*. This complex image relies upon the symbolism of water: the *awazan*, "font", contains Iranian *ab*, "water". One is totally immersed in it, so indeed there is no hiatus or space, *anjrpēt*, which means literally "domain without water" (the air that separates the world from the upper waters of Heaven). This space-realm is also that of the evil spirits of the air; so it separates the world from God in more than a spatial way. Baptism is release from this lesser dominion above us and membership in a spiritual clan (*tohm*) by an adoption which is, as Narekac'i stresses, entire and as immediate as sonship by birth. So one recalls that the word *tohm* is a loan from Iranian, where it means "progeny, semen". The ancients regarded the father's watery seed alone as parentage, the womb being merely a place where it grew. But the Church, the *harsnaran*, is more than this earthly motherhood: above, it is she who has found the pearl of great price, the divine semen-drop, in the midst of a different kind of liquid—the dark and vexed world-ocean of oblivion and perdition, and has brought it forth. (On this symbolism of the quest for the Pearl and the sea, see RUSSELL 2001-2002.)

Matean makes it, *inter alia*, a massive Scriptural mnemonic, on the scope of Raymond Lull's schemata for the acquisition of universal knowledge. Narekac'i's use of the Throne Vision and related material links him to those seen to have gained access to direct knowledge of divine mysteries veiled from the unworthy and uninitiated. One may note here that at the mention of Lull we touch upon the *ars notoria*, a slightly disreputable relative of the *ars memorativa*. Practitioners of the former often created their systems of symbols with the purpose of facilitating, not pious learning, but the all-encompassing and therefore necessarily amoral knowledge of universal reality. The *ars notoria* then became a tool of occultists seeking power by acquiring intelligence beyond man's proper ken altogether. This aspect may help to explain why the vast, potent, eloquent *Matean* in Armenian popular religion came to be regarded as a magical book: the belief was that to master one's fate, one must trace a circle, stand within, and recite forty chapters of the Narek in a row (folkloric shorthand for "a lot") without stopping or heeding the demons who will gather just beyond the charmed perimeter and try to distract one from the task; for if one yields to them, one is damned.⁵³ There is a ballad, too, in which two inquisitors from Sis come, rather anachronistically, to investigate Narekac'i for heresy. He makes fire burn in water, resurrects from the dead a skewer of roasted pigeons, and curses a dying man, telling him the earth will not accept his corpse. It doesn't; later the revenant repents and the saint lifts the curse. Armenian folk prayers, many of which really qualify as magical spells, often include a Cross and Seraphic choir, or the Throne Vision of Ezekiel itself.⁵⁴ Such symbols of power, of which the latter was regarded already in Jewish tradition with an ambiguous unease, are common in Gregory's writings, too, as we have seen. His own prayers find their way into talismanic scrolls, Arm. *hmayil*, a few centuries after his death. The usual explanation for the tradition is that Narekac'i was considered a *cayt*—that is, a Chalcedonian, a sympathizer with the Byzantine Church. But that explanation, while not at all beyond the realm of possibility, when one considers the wild excesses of fantasy that the least suspicion of heresy might provoke, still seems scarcely sufficient to justify his reputation, which is that of a magician. No other Armenian saint shares it. I think the image comes from the sheer prodigiousness of the *Matean*, the vastness and depth of his knowledge, his familiarity with the angelic world.

So we have observed the great work of a penitent, a visionary, a prodigious intellectual and master of the art of teaching and of memory, an ecstatic poet, of such spirit and gifts that to tradition he was not merely a saint: in a culture where the small books containing the story of the conversion of the magician Cyprian of Antioch are still bestsellers— and yes, Dr. Faustus seems to come from Gregory's vicinity— it is perhaps inevitable that Gregory is seen also as a magician. I think the idea that great sages were instructed by supernatural beings contributed strongly to the aura of awe with which tradition surrounded them. In the Talmudic period and probably earlier (since earlier Greek magical texts which bear

53- RUSSELL 1981, p. xiii.

54- See RUSSELL 1998, p. 153.

the marks of Jewish influence offer their testimony), Jewish sages adjured an angel they sometimes called *Sar ha-Torah*, Master of the Law, to come and assist them in the labor of learning and memorizing. This being bore also the name Yofiel, which appears to combine the Hebrew word for beauty with the customary divine suffix. He it at all events always described as brightly shining, young, and handsome: in some texts he is the brilliant archangel Metatron. In the high and late Middle Ages (with even swift Metatron perhaps too busy to attend to a growing clientele), rabbis are often visited by preternatural but less beautiful *maggidim*, angelic narrators of information.

Something similar happens in Armenia. In the seventh century, the Armenian scientist Anania of Shirak fell asleep one morning in a chapel at Trebizond (he had come to the seaport to study the profane sciences with a Greek, Teukhikos), and had a vision of the Sun descending as a radiant, beautiful youth: he asked whether there were inhabitants of the Antipodes. The boy informed him that there were not, and quoted God (from the book of Job) to the effect that waves crash on uninhabited shores. The citation from Scripture seems a mild rebuke to Anania for his inquisitive audacity, and it also suggests that the creature was either an angel or a piously Christian planetary being. No matter: Teukhikos strongly advised Anania not to discuss his experience, as though, one thinks, a stigma of sorcery attached to it. He had a point, for Anania was to gain an uncanny reputation in posterity: the *Vec' hazareak*, a mathematical table he compiled based on the eschatologically important number 6000, later gave its name to the most dreaded manual of Armenian magic. Over half a millennium later, Kostandin of Erznka describes in an unusual lyric poem such a vision of a sun-like, angelic youth: this one gave him his poetic gift. He goes on to lament the hatred, fear, and envy his talent provoked amongst monastics. Ominously, that poem is unfinished. In the eighteenth century, the great bard of Tiflis, Sayat Nova, records that St. John the Prodromos came to him in an initiatory dream and taught him to play musical instruments. (This was standard practice: Muslim *ashiqs* ["lovers", i.e., minstrels] in training waited for a vision of Khidr: for Armenians, *Surb Karapet* is the patron, not only of poets and musicians, but of tightrope walkers and entertainers generally.) Sayat Nova's dream-vision, which he records in his own hand, proudly, in his divan, was considered proper and necessary, and he got into quite another sort of trouble later in life— he had an affair with the queen of Georgia, after which the penitential prayers of St. Gregory came to his help and consolation: before his death, Sayat Nova copied the *Narek* at Sanahin monastery, to whose precincts the *ashugh* had been confined.⁵⁵

The most famous short hymn, or *tagh*, of Narekacæi is the Song of the Resurrection, which describes an ox-drawn cart, upon which stands a throne. These mystical images, of God's throne and *merkavah*,⁵⁶ are drawn from Habbakuk, Ezekiel, and Isaiah, and they haunt even mediaeval Armenian doodlers in model-books;⁵⁷ and in the concluding

55- For a translation of Kostandin's poem and references to the visions of Anania and others, see RUSSELL 2001-2002.

56- See RUSSELL 1997.

57- See SCHELLER 1995, Appendix cat. no. A4, "Armenian workshop in Constantinople, 16th century"

stanzas the poet explains their Christian metaphorical meaning. But the cart is still, till its charioteer makes its oxen move. This is a powerful, radiant youth described by Narekac'i as *khartishagegh*, having beautiful blond tresses: in the explanatory stanza, he is revealed as *Surb Karapet*, St. John the Prodromos. The epithet *kharteash* belongs to the hymn preserved by Movses Khorenac'i on the birth of the old Zoroastrian divinity Vahagn (Avestan Verethraghna), who had reluctantly surrendered his shrine at Ashtishat, near Mush—perhaps two hard days on horseback from Narek— and his attributes to *Surb Karapet* in the fourth century. But perhaps it is for Narekac'i foremost in the tradition that the ancient solar *angelus interprans* is specifically St. John, and, presumably, Gregory's teacher. Now, Prof. Abraham Terian once advanced what I will call the principle that "Sacred events either take place first and best in Armenia or else repeat themselves there better than they were the first time around elsewhere in the Bible and the world." We can see it at work in Koriwn's *Life of Mashtoc*, where the saint who invents the Armenian script produces heavenly letters better than those Daniel saw, and brings them on a tablet more propitious than those that Moses bore down the slopes of mount Sinai to an ungrateful mob. I've applied it in a study of the story of St. Gregory the Illuminator and its iconography: Armenia's patron saint spends a longer time in his pit, and with more dragons, than did Jesus Christ in Hell before His Resurrection.⁵⁸ But the song continues and the cart is moving. What is its itinerary? The divine Throne on its wheeled Chariot, descending first out of heaven, creaks down the right flank of *Ararat*, and only thereafter proceeds, from Armenia, that is, to the other holy mountain— Zion— at Jerusalem. The theophanic vision of Throne and Chariot thus comes to the mystic hymnologist St. Gregory, as it were, and to Armenia, even before it is vouchsafed to th prophet Ezekiel.

(Vanice, Mekhitharist MS. 1434), fig. 260, fol. 44r— a cart; and fol. 46r— the Throne. The other drawings include scenes from Jonah (esp. fig. 261, fol. 45r), a text popular in Armenia also, esp. in the Van area: aspects seem localized to the lake, on the Aghtamar reliefs. There is also a tenebrous *vayri mard*, "wild man" (fig. 263, fol. 30r). Fig. 264, fol. 39r has a nicely-drawn Chinese dragon and a few lines of fake Persian. Interest in mystical things seems often to be related to interest in the exotic and the outré generally: one may recall that the only thing Anania of Shirak asked of his angel was whether there were creatures in the Antipodes. Not a very pious question, and more the sort of thing an avid reader of the Alexander Romance might have wanted to know. I have discussed Armenian Wild Men in RUSSELL 2003; and the question of transmission of Chinese, Mongol, and Islamic material is addressed by Priscilla Soucek in an art. in the vol. containing Russell 1998 and in my article "Frik: The Bridge of Poetry," forthcoming in R. Hovannisian, ed., *Proceedings* of the UCLA Conference on Cilicia. Arthur Machen, in his story "The White People", suggests saints desire to know what once man properly knew before the Fall, and are patient in learning it; whilst the evil (and here include magicians and heretics) try, impatiently, to know what the angels do— and what was never intended for us and is therefore unnatural. It is, of course, a fine line to cross, and one that is correspondingly hard to draw when observing another.

58- This is an article (forthcoming in R. Hovannisian, ed., *Proceedings* of the Conference on Kars and Ani, UCLA, Nov. 2001) on the Church of the Holy Apostles erected at Kars by king Abas Bagratuni. One of the figure in bas relief on the drum has snakes to either side of him. I have argued— not for the first time, but offering the nuance of the Iranian substrate and some supporting data from similar figures in mediaeval Christian art— that this is St. Gregory the Illuminator, who, as Prof. Terian has noted brilliantly at the 2003 Narek Conference at Harvard, is celebrated as both Apostle and martyr, though he was born centuries after the former and did not die like the latter. The ingenuity of his elevation in status testifies to the active operation of the "better than" principle— and complements as well the literal elevation of his image on the church building.

(And presumably Grigor Narekac'i has also in mind the vision of Christ by his namesake, Gregory the Illuminator, in Vagharshapat, at the foot of Ararat— hence the present name of the town, Ejmiacin, the place where God's sole-begotten Son descended.) Such usurpation by a sacred mountain of the Armenian highland of a lofty Biblical *locus classicus* has a parallel, though not, chronologically, a precedent, in a mediaeval Armenian prayer which combines lines of the Paternoster and Psalm 133. The latter evokes the dew from heaven that falls on Mt. Hermon, in Israel, and the oil of the flowers that grow there is used to anoint the high priests, sons of Aaron, at the holy Temple. In the Armenian poem, this dew comes to the Armenian mountain Sukawet first, where Alano-Armenian disciples of St. Thaddeus— the Oskeank and Sukiaseank— were martyred; and from their blood grows the magic *hamaspiwr* flower of Armenian mythology, a native complement to Hermon's blossoms and a nod to the particular composition of the Armenian *miwron*, "chrism", which, indeed, Narekac'i praises in the long 93rd chapter of the *Matean*. The mountain's name is itself theophoric: and Avestan Saoka (> Arm. *Soyk) happens to be precisely the divinity through whom, according to the Zoroastrian Pahlavi *Bundahishn*, heavenly blessings are channeled down to earth. Though the prayer is in late middle Armenian, and cannot therefore formally be a precursor to St. Gregory of Narek's own hymn, it contains material unquestionably anterior to him, from both pre-Christian past and the legendry of the Apostolic tradition.⁵⁹ And Narekac'i's present example of the usurped *locus classicus* is, albeit in encoded form, a proud *exegi monumentum*; and it reminds one that, however absorbed was Narekac'i in the art of remembering the intimate and the cosmic, that he was an Armenian, of the race of golden-haired Vahagn and of king Artawazd imprisoned in Ararat and of the Illuminator who saw the temple of light at Ararat's base, he did not forget.

59- See RUSSELL 1997(a).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of Images, 400-1200*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
- Censing= *Khnikarkutean ughec'oyc'*, Jerusalem: St. James', 1991.
- Chrysostom= S. Yovhannes Oskeberan, *I meknutene Mattei char XIX*, in *Kaghuacoyk i targmanuteanc' naxneac' handerdz yoyn bnagraw*, Vienna: Monastery of the Order of S. Astuacacin [Theotokos], 1849.
- Mary Carruthers and Jan Ziolkowski, eds., *The Medieval Craft of Memory: An Anthology of Texts and Pictures*, Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002.
- Charles de Lamberterie, "Le nom de l'Évangile en arménien," *Il Caucaso: Cerniera fra culture dal Mediterraneo alla Persia (secoli IV-XI)*, Settimane di Studio del Centro Italiano di Studi sull'Alto Medioevo XLIII, Spoleto, 1996, pp. 779-830.
- Elizabeth Hardwick, *Herman Melville*, New York: Viking, 2000.
- A. Kyoshkeryan, ed., Grigor Narekac'i, *Tagher ev gandzer*, Erevan: Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR, 1981.
- S. La Porta, "Sorcerers, Witches, and Weasels: Grigor Tatewac'i's Definitions of the Magical Arts," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 28, 2001-2002, pp. 171-213.
- A.R. Luria, *The Mind of a Mnemonist: A Little Book about a Vast Memory*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1968.
- Avishai Margalit, *The Ethics of Memory*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- A.Sh. Mnac'akanyan, ed., Vardan Anec'i, *Anec'i Vardana Vardapeti ergel i karrs... (Vasn karrac' astuacutann nerbogh)*, *Banber Matenadarani* 10, 1971, pp. 276-294.
- Abp. Tiran Nersoyan, *Pataragamatoyc' Hayastaneac' Arrakelakan Surb Ekeghec'woy*, New York, 1950.
- M. Ormanian, *A Dictionary of the Armenian Church*, New York: St. Vartan Press, n.d.
- Paolo Rossi, *Logic and the Art of Memory*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
- James R. Russell, intro., Grigor Narekatsi, *Matean oghbergutean* (Facsimile repr. of the

- 1948 Buenos Aires ed.), Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1981.
- James R. Russell, "A Mystic's Christmas in Armenia," *Armenian Review*, Summer 1987, Vol. 40, No. 2-158, pp. 1-13.
- James R. Russell, "Grace from Van: A Micro-Historiola," *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 7, 1994, pp. 35-45.
- James R. Russell, "Gregory Narekatsi," in J. Greppin, ed., *Studies in Classical Armenian Literature*, Delmar, NY: Caravan Books, 1994(a), pp. 128-151.
- James R. Russell, "Armenian *shrawshak*," *Annual of Armenian Linguistics*, 1996.
- James R. Russell, "Armenian Spirituality: Liturgical Mysticism and Chapter 33 of the Book of Lamentation of St. Grigor Narekac'i," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 26, 1996-1997, pp. 427-439.
- James R. Russell, "The Four Elements and the Cross in Armenian Spirituality, with an Excursus on the Descent in Merkavah Mysticism," *Jewish Studies Quarterly* 4 (1997), no. 4, pp. 357-379.
- James R. Russell, "Scythians and Avesta in an Armenian Vernacular Paternoster, and a Zok Paternoster," *Le Muséon* 110.1-2, 1997(a), pp. 91-114.
- James R. Russell, "Truth is what the eye can see: Armenian manuscripts and Armenian spirituality," in T.F. Mathews and R.S. Wieck, eds., *Treasures in Heaven: Armenian Art, Religion, and Society*, New York: The Pierpont Morgan Library, 1998, pp. 147-162.
- James R. Russell, "Bedros Tourian's Cruciform Prayer and Its Antecedents," *Journal of Armenian Studies*, Belmont, MA, Vol. VI, No. 2, Winter-Spring 2000-2001, pp. 27-45.
- James R. Russell, "The Scepter of Tiridates," *Le Muséon* 114.1-2, 2001, pp. 187-215.
- James R. Russell, "The Epic of the Pearl," *Revue des Études Arméniennes* 28, 2001-2002, pp. 29-100.
- James R. Russell, "An Epic for the Borderlands: Zariadris of Sophene, Aslan the Rebel, Digenes Akrites, and the Mythologem of Alcestis in Armenia," in R. Hovannisian, ed., *Armenian Tsopk/Kharpert*, UCLA Armenian History and Culture Series, Historic Armenian Cities and Provinces 3, Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 2002, pp. 147-183.
- James R. Russell, "The Praise of Porridge," *Le Muséon* 116.1-2, 2003, pp. 137-179.
- Robert W. Scheller, *Exemplum: Model-Book Drawings and the Practice of Artistic Transmission in the Middle Ages (ca. 900-ca. 1450)*, Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1995.
- Hrachya Tamrazyan, "*Banasteghcakan arvesti khndirnere Grigor Narekac'u steghcagorcuyan mej*," *Ashtanak* 2, Erevan, 1998, pp. 114-133.
- Tamar Tasnapetean (Dasnabedian), ed., S. Banean, tr., Grigor Narekac'i, *Patmutiwn kensatu khachin*, Beirut, 1999.
- Robert Thomson, *The Armenian Version of the works attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite*, CSCO vol. 488 (text), 489 (translation), Louvain: Peeters, 1987.
- Elizabeth Valdez del Alamo and Carol Stamatis Prendergast, eds., *Memory and the Medieval Tomb*, Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2000.

Alan R. Young, ed., *The English Emblem Tradition, 5: Henry Peacham's Manuscript Emblem Books*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998.

Grover A. Zinn, "De Gradibus Ascensionum: The Stages of Contemplative Ascent in Two Treatises on Noah's Ark by Hugh of St. Victor," *Studies in Medieval Culture* 5, 1975, pp. 61-70.

א לשון פֿאַר שפּרינצעלע (*A loshn far Shprintzele*)

James R. Russell,
Harvard University and California State University at Fresno.

This essay, whose Yiddish title might be translated as “A language for little miss Hope”,¹ considers and compares some aspects of the social, ideological, and spiritual background and purpose common to two languages, Esperanto and Modern Hebrew. The latter can be classified without question as a “Jewish language”; the former, with equal certainty, as an “invented language”. I will argue that Esperanto is also to some degree a Jewish language; and Modern Hebrew, also to some degree, an invented one. Their respective creators, Dr. Ludvik Zamenhof and Eliezer ben Yehuda, were both Russian Jews, close contemporaries, born not far away from each other. Despite obvious differences, both languages display the aspect, to lesser or greater degree, of a *Plansprache* (“planned language”: the German expression embraces both *a priori* and *a posteriori* inventions such as lesser-known Near

1- If that is indeed what the name means. Zachary Baker, a prominent Yiddishist, formerly of YIVO and the Montreal Public Library and now Emeritus Librarian of the Judaica collection at Stanford University Library, Palo Alto, CA, informed me (personal communication, Jan. 2019) that Shprintsele is a diminutive of Shprintse: Alexander Beider, in his *Dictionary of Ashkenazic Given Names*, 2001, s.v., considers Shprintse (his spelling) to be of uncertain origin. He offers two possible etymologies: *Sprinze*, Middle High German for (female) sparrow hawk; and *Speranza*, the Italian form of the name *Esperanza*, meaning hope. “If the second hypothesis is valid, the transformation of *sperantsa* (the phonetic form of *speranza*) to *shprintse* is unlikely to occur within the Jewish community. Salfeld states that German Christians used *Sprinze* as the pet form for the name of the saint (E)sperentia...” He cites evidence of the name *Sprinza* going back to 12th-century Austria, in non-Jewish sources, so “it is most likely that the persons named *Sprinza* were non-Jewish... As a result, it is likely that the name was not created by Jews, but instead borrowed from their Gentile neighbors. Ashkenazic Jews were likely to acquire this name in southeastern German-speaking provinces. Due to migrations from that area, it became widespread in the Frankfurt area and in Slavic countries.”

Eastern inventions including Seh-lerai and Rushtuni,² and the more familiar European Volapük, Esperanto, the latter's offshoot Ido, Interlingua, etc.) The German term seems less radical than "invented language", for even an existing language can be subjected to considerable revision according to a plan. Even though it is also true that Modern Hebrew is the revived, resurrected form of a natural language, it has many of the features of a *Plansprache*. Esperanto is unquestionably an invented language, but I shall argue that, somewhat like Modern Hebrew, it shares features of a Jewish language too— though not of course in the disparaging sense that its detractors (Hitler being the most notorious of them) have intended.

In 1919, two years after the passing of L.L. Zamenhof and three before the death of Ben Yehuda, the American Marxist philosopher Thorstein Veblen (1857-1929) published an essay, "The Intellectual Preeminence of Jews in Modern Europe."³ Though he mentions

2- Seh-lerai is an *a priori* invention intended as a universal language, invented by a colorful early-mid-19th century Armenian Catholic eccentric from Constantinople named Bedros Tenger who had studied in Vienna. Amongst the hundreds of *Plansprachen* hatched over the optimistic nineteenth century, his seems to be the only one from the Near East, though it would seem he was also its only speaker: it is a very complicated system, on present evidence it does not seem he worked it all out, and he endowed it also with a difficult and unwieldy script. Tenger, a reclusive vegetarian misogynist, entertained male friends in his handsomely appointed *Ayzeratand* (in Seh-lerai, "Temple of Wisdom"— perhaps after Mozart's *Weisheitstempel*— one recalls he had lived in Vienna at the turn of the 19th century!) and read them Seh-lerai poems, of which he thoughtfully provided French translations. The invented language Rushtuni takes its name from the argot of Armenian traveling businessmen whose ancestors were apparently from the region of Rshtunik⁴, south of Lake Van: it is another *a priori* language, apparently invented by a lone Armenian in Caucasian Georgia in the late 18th century, not as an international language but, as it would seem, a plaything for his own amusement. It is attested in only one manuscript, which contains also a substitution cipher he designed for it, based on the Armenian alphabet with the letter shapes inspired by *mkhedruli* Georgian. He used the cipher mainly to inscribe magical spells and charms, however. See Russell 2012 and 2013 on these two languages. Relevant to the present study is the fact that the only detailed study of Seh-lerai before my own, except for scattered brief references in works on Armenian literature and history, was an article in a Greek Esperantist journal, *Bizantio*, published in Constantinople in 1921. The preceding sentence is marbled with ironies. The erstwhile metropolis of Eastern Christendom was soon to be renamed officially Istanbul; its already much reduced Greek and Armenian populations, to be decimated by persecution. And in September of the following year the forces of Mustafa Kemal (the later "Atatürk") were to enact the last physical act of the Armenian Genocide with the destruction of Smyrna, where Tenger spent most of his life, and the massacre and expulsion of its Christian population. See Ureneck 2015, with a Preface by this writer. Esperanto was the invention of a Jew, Zamenhof; it is of interest that Tenger, the inventor of Seh-lerai was an Armenian who shared the same lofty aspirations. The Armenians of the Near East shared many of the social and cultural markers that distinguished the Jews of Europe: they were an ancient, close-knit people with a distinct heritage and identity, economically enterprising, cosmopolitan, and progressive, politically engaged but lacking military power or a sovereign state. They constituted a mobile, communications-oriented social element that like Jews, Overseas Chinese, and some others is termed "Mercurian" by the historian Yuri Slezkine. He calls the landed aristocracy, with its conservatism, parochialism, and military values "Apollonian": the *Lumpenproletariat* and peasantry would tend to aspire to the Apollonian and to mistrust and dislike the Mercurian.

3- The essay was printed in the *Political Science Quarterly* 34, March 1919, pp. 33-42, repr. Veblen 1993, pp. 285-292. Veblen uniquely foresaw through his theory of the leisure class and his analysis of consumerism and planned obsolescence how capitalism might prolong its existence despite internal contradictions and flaws that ought otherwise to have ensured its doom. The Russian Marxists, who lacked an intimate, reflective experience of developed capitalism in the USA, tended not to appreciate these insights adequately. This writer's grandfather Sidney A. Russell (born in New York in 1901 as Asher →

neither Zamenhof nor Ben Yehuda, he might well have had in mind both men when he suggested that Jewish achievement in science and scholarship in Europe came about through on the one hand in a state of alienation from the most traditional forms of Judaism; and on the other, in a condition of insecurity and distance with respect to gentile society. This outsider status freed Jewish intellectuals from attachment to conventional views of any kind and enabled them to regard reality with what Veblen called *Unbefangenheit*, a “release from the dead hand of conventional finality”. Although the untrammelled creative urge benefited from these insecurities, the precarious political, even physical, predicament of the Jews engaged both Zamenhof and Ben Yehuda. Both, although they came to diametrically opposed conclusions, interested themselves in Zionism, and the so-called Jewish Question was at the heart of their linguistic projects. Veblen addressed the dilemma of Zionism and Diaspora also in his aforementioned article, arriving at this grim conclusion: if Zionism succeeds, “There should be some loss to Christendom at large, and there might be some gain to the repatriated Children of Israel. It is a sufficiently difficult choice between a life of complacent futility at home and a thankless quest of unprofitable knowledge abroad.” Israel turned out to be better than futile; exile, to be worse than thankless.

The two languages that the two Russian Jews fashioned, in the context of their engagement with 19th-century European civilization as well as their own tradition, are indisputable examples of the preeminence Veblen praised, particularly if one considers the success of Esperanto and Modern Hebrew in comparison to analogous other projects. For out of the hundreds of *Plansprachen* devised in the 19th century alone, Esperanto is the only invented universal language that survives with a significant number of speakers today, even if it has not achieved the high goals its early devotees set for it. And Modern Hebrew, as the official language of the reborn State of Israel, similarly is the only truly successful revived language in the world. (Although various Celtic languages have enjoyed a revival in modern times, English dominates most of the societies where they are spoken.) The proclaimed ideologies of both feature the word for “hope”— Hebrew *tiqvah*, as in the national anthem of Israel, *Hatikvah*; and the word Esperanto itself as well as the hymn of the movement, *La Espero*. This shared hopefulness, animated by more than a tinge of spirituality, can help to explain some of the similarities of these two languages, which as we shall see, are often compared to each other. That aspect of hopefulness is a part of the

→ Zelig Rubinzahl, z”l, of Jewish immigrants from Gliniany and Brody in the Lemberg/Lvov region of Austro-Hungarian Galicia) left high school after two years in order to work full time to help support his family. Some years thereafter he was accepted into Veblen’s seminar at the New School for Social Research in New York City— this would have been just after the Revolution and the end of World War I, around the time the philosopher was writing the abovementioned essay. A few years before, my grandfather had also listened to talks over a glass of tea down on the Bowery by a Russian Jewish revolutionary named Lev Bronstein (*nom de guerre*, Leon Trotsky) who derided the American Socialist party as a tame assemblage of “accountants and dentists”— people, that is, who had undergone Veblenian “co-optation” into the prevailing system. Trotsky was staying in the Bronx, earning a living as a house painter: he went home to found the Red Army. Grandpa became one of the younger founding members of the new Communist Party of the USA and went on to establish Russell & Russell, a venerable scholarly publishing house. He was to his dying day in 1991 a friend of the Soviet Union.

reason why one can consider both as “Jewish languages” as well— the situation of the Jews has perennially been one that we may but hope will improve.

A modern Genesis: Doctor Hopeful.

Leyzer [i.e., Hebrew Eliezer] Levi Zamenhof (1859-1917), *la kreinto de la internacia lingvo Esperanto* (“the person who created the international language Hopeful”), was born into a Jewish family in Belostok, then a provincial city in the Russian Empire, now Białystok, Poland. Roughly two-thirds of its inhabitants were Jews: most of the rest were Poles, Ukrainians, Belorussians, Russians, and Germans. He was sympathetic in his youth to Zionism *avant la lettre* (the term was coined seven years before Theodor Herzl officially founded in 1897 the Zionist movement), opening in 1882 a local, Warsaw, chapter of *Hovevei Tsiyyon* (“Lovers of Zion”) in the wake of the pogroms that swept the Russian Empire. He met his future wife, Klara Silbernik, at a clandestine meeting of the group.⁴ This was a proto-Zionist organization that advocated settlement in the Land of Israel and sponsored the first BILU pioneers. In an article published in January 1882, “What Finally Is To Be Done?” (whose title doubtless echoes intentionally that of the Russian reformer Nikolay Chernyshevsky’s novel of 1863, *Что делать?*), Zamenhof warned that the project of the settlement of Palestine might founder because the secular pioneers would be tyrannized by the religious Jews already living in Jerusalem, who would burden them with demands for the rebuilding of the Temple and even the restoration of animal sacrifices. A Jewish national home on American territory, he argued, would have a freer hand in determining its own destiny. But if the Palestine plan went ahead anyhow, Zamenhof conceded, there were still enough Jews in the world to populate two national homes. The article seems prescient, when one considers the present rise of religious nationalism in Israel (which is, one hastens to add, not necessarily detrimental); but the idea of two Jewish states seems muddled.⁵ Though in his later years Zamenhof ceased actively to champion

4- Masson 2014, p. 34. In an interview with the *Jewish Chronicle*, London, 6 September 1907, Zamenhof said, ... *mi fondis inter la hebrea junularo en Varsovio la unuan societon de Ĥibat-Cion. Mi ellaboris la statutojn, hektografis kaj disdonis ilin, aranĝis kunvenojn, koncertojn kaj balojn, varbis adeptojn kaj starigis patriotan judan bibliotekon. Filioj de nia ĉeforganizaĵo ekkreskis en multaj urboj de Polujo kaj okcidenta Rusujo, kaj de tiuj ĉi filioj mi kolektadis monatajn kotizojn por la koloniigo de Palestino... Kiam nia societo de junuloj suffice fortikiĝis, ni etendis nian agadon al pliaĝuloj kaj sugestis, ke ili starigu en Varsovio societon pli grandan de Ĥibat-Cion. Tia societo estis fondita, kun la advokato Jasinovski kiel prezidanto kaj la verkisto Rabinovicz (Ŝefer) kiel sekretario, dum mi mem estis ĉefo de la plenumkomitato.* “... I founded among the Hebrew youth in Warsaw the first Ĥibat-Tsiyyon group. I worked out the by-laws, made multiple copies and distributed them, arranged meetings, concerts, and balls, enlisted members and established a patriotic Jewish library. Branches of our chief organization grew in many cities of Poland and western Russia, and from these branches I would collect monetary subscriptions for the colonization of Palestine... When our group of young people became strong, we extended our activity to the elders and suggested they establish in Warsaw a group larger than Ĥibat-Tsiyyon. That group was founded with the lawyer Jasinovski as president and the author Rabinowicz (Shefer) as secretary, while I myself was the head of the plenary committee.” (Maimon 1978, p. 81.) Shaul Pinkhes Rabinowitz (1845-1910), who used the pseudonyms Shefer and Aaron Ginzberg, was a writer, Hebrew translator, and leader of Hovevei-Tsiyyon.

5- See Frankel 1981, p. 88.

Zionism, he never actively opposed it. Rather, like many other European Jews in the years before the unimaginable horrors of Nazism, Zamenhof thought quite reasonably that life in the European Diaspora, though very challenging, was ultimately viable. Europe was then the center of the world's progress in science, in culture and learning, and in political reform; and the connection to that continent of the Jewish people, so deeply rooted and so actively involved in and committed to all the facets of its civilization, was surely so vital—as it seemed then—as to be irrevocable. It is difficult in the wake of the Holocaust, and at a time moreover when the small remnant of the Jewish communities left in Europe are subjected to resurgent anti-Semitism, not to regard the Diasporism⁶ of Zamenhof and others as pathetically naïve.

But hindsight warps history, and one must therefore make the necessary effort to recall, for instance, the visible pre-eminence of the Jews in most professions, such as medicine and law, in late-19th-century capitals such as Berlin, Vienna, or Budapest, in spite of virulent popular and official bias. Even as keen an observer as Veblen, though he saw this preeminence as thankless, did not foresee mass murder. Zamenhof was more than aware of the animus against his community—it was the pogroms of 1881-1882, after all, that forced him to interrupt his medical studies in Moscow. Such perennial hardship was seen as a fact of life to be overcome by progress; human atrocity was familiar and the American republic and European empires were practicing genocide against native peoples. But the word genocide itself had not yet been coined and few could have imagined that mass murder might become the policy of a civilized country in Europe against its own citizens.⁷ Accordingly, Zamenhof shared with most of his contemporaries the rational belief that the European scenario was the more practicable and likely one for Jewish life in the future.

6- The term cannot be used any longer without irony, but cf. the First and Second Diasporist Manifestoes of the American Jewish painter Robert B. Kitaj (1932-2007). Kitaj spent most of his creative life in England and is recognized to have been the founder and guiding spirit of the postwar “London” school of painters that also included, among others, Lucian Freud and David Hockney. Kitaj, at the organizers’ invitation, wrote lengthy captions that were hung next to his canvases at a retrospective exhibition of his work at the Tate Gallery in 1994: the British art-critical establishment savaged his work in all but openly anti-Semitic tones, sneeringly calling the learned little essays that were posted to the side of each painting over-intellectual. Kitaj’s wife Sandra died soon after, and Kitaj rightly considered the critics to be her murderers. He took his family out of the UK forever, settling not in Israel but in the Westwood neighborhood of Los Angeles, California—a friendly Diaspora for the time being, in his view—where he continued to paint on Jewish themes and to study Jewish texts with the guidance and moral support of the great writer and thinker Leon Wieseltier, whom this writer is proud to claim as a good friend. Diaspora was for Kitaj a stimulus to creativity, but also a personal tragedy.

7- One stresses here the extermination of people hitherto recognized legally as fellow citizens. The 19th-century European colonists did not consider the Easter Islanders, Tasmanians, Native Americans, and others to be fully human. The next step was to dehumanize citizens—the Jews. Thus, the mass killings of the American Indians by the white settlers of the American West (notably California, Kitaj’s friendly diasporic haven till his suicide) served as a useful model for the Nazis’ “Final Solution”, together with the Armenian Genocide. Raphael Lemkin, a Jewish lawyer from Poland living in the United States, coined the term genocide during World War II to enlarge the terminology of law to encompass what had been done to the Armenians and what was being done to the Jews. It is now employed more generally to include colonial massacres and the enslavement of African-Americans and other people of color.

Bialystok, like many other larger towns in the Tsarist Pale of Settlement, provided a multilingual environment. Zamenhof's educated, secularist family spoke Russian at home, but were also intimately familiar with Yiddish, the language that most Ashkenazi Jews spoke on a daily basis—it was, according to one turn-of-the-century statistic, the native tongue of 96% of the Jews in the Russian Empire. The men of the family were literate also in the sacred tongues, Hebrew and Aramaic, of the Bible, of prayer, and of Talmudic study. Zamenhof's father Marcus, although a *maskil* (secular or “enlightened” Jew), served as a *ba'al qore* (reader of the Torah scroll during services) of the Choral Synagogue in Bialystok, and after the family moved from there to the capital of Russian Poland, the elder Zamenhof worked in Warsaw as an Imperial censor of Hebrew and Yiddish books and periodicals. Leyzer's father thus had a solid grounding in Jewish practice and ritual, and the thorough knowledge of the sacred tongue that reading the unvocalized text of the Torah scroll requires. The Zamenhofs knew also Polish, the native language of most of the gentile population, and German, then the speech of science and progress, of *Denker und Dichter*; and the children learned French and English at school.

Such polyglottism was not unusual among Jews, and, as we shall see in greater detail presently, each language these polyglots controlled occupied a particular rung on the ladder of social hierarchy and had a particular function. By the late 19th century, which we now look back to as an age of optimism, political activism and the belief in social and ethical progress were commonplace in the Jewish community as well. What may seem particularly strange or even absurd to many now, though, is the attachment of ideas precisely about *language* to schemes for social *progress*. Many polyglot idealists in the 19th century proposed that an invented language shared by people across borders would be the key factor in the promotion of other ideals of social reform and international peace. Like the belief most Jews still held of a viable Diaspora, this conviction was not at all unusual for the time, and it seemed eminently practical as well. If only people could understand each other, the line of reasoning went, and not believe their own native language to be intrinsically superior to that of others, reason would triumph over enmity; fraternity, over chauvinism. The idea that a common language resolves differences seems hopelessly naïve now: one can understand one's fellow perfectly and still despise him or even want to kill him.

Language carried a special weight in the age of romantic nationalism that it is fair to say it no longer does: the national language, and the cultural, collective memory it enshrined in sacred texts, and in secondarily sacralized epics, histories, and collections of folklore, were held to be as much the markers of nationality as territorial boundaries. Perhaps because the language battles have been fought to a conclusion in one way or another over much of the world's surface, that is no longer as much the case. In the 19th century, though, an official language was a foundation of national identity, together with a native land and, if possible, a sovereign state. Indeed, for Poles and other national minorities deprived by aggressive imperialism of independent statehood on their native soil, language assumed still greater importance as the bearer of identity. The script in which one's language was

written was of great symbolic importance as well.⁸ By the same token, conflicts between ethnic populations frequently manifested themselves in the form of linguistic clashes. These conflicts were particularly common in the Tsarist Empire, which revolutionaries derided as “the prison of peoples”—and however intensely each minority group, or gang of convicts in the prison yard, as it were, might detest another, they could all agree in a common hatred of the Jews.⁹ Thus in Zamenhof’s childhood and youth, Bialystok was more like Matthew Arnold’s “darkling plain... where ignorant armies clash by night,” amidst the ruins of the tower of Babel, than a bright mosaic of diversity. It is not surprising that language, which was so much at the core of constructions of identity in 19th-century Europe, became the basis for the expression of Zamenhof’s much wider ideals and the arena of his life’s *work* (though he eked out a meager *living* as an oculist). Given the precarious predicament of the Jews, his thoughts about language must of necessity and centrally address also the solution of what was called the Jewish question. The fruit of that noble labor was the invention that has made him immortal—the international language named Esperanto after the modest *nom de plume* of its creator.

Language was to be the vehicle of international understanding and reconciliation, of universal peace and brotherhood. But which of the many tongues spoken or written by the Jews of the Russian Empire was to be harnessed to his chariot of fire? The future father of Esperanto experimented. At first the young Zamenhof aspired to adopt the imperial tongue and become a Russian poet, but gave up his dream because of the pervasive anti-Semitism of the empire. He then turned his efforts inward and toyed for a time with reforming Hebrew, but rejected that, too, as impractical. He worked on a grammar with the aim of regularizing and reforming Yiddish, the spoken language of most Eastern European Jews. But he abandoned this effort, too: fluid, lively Yiddish simply would not bend to his iron grammarian’s will. Besides, no matter what he did with Yiddish, it would be a hard sell for poor Jews interested in breaking out of their physical and linguistic ghetto—the *shtetl* or *мечетько* that later generations were to romanticize—not staying in it. We shall consider presently the anomalous social position of Yiddish, which both surrounding non-Jewish populations and many Yiddish-speakers themselves derided (the former, with contempt; the latter, sometimes with an embarrassment verging on self-loathing) as a *jargon*, an unseemly, slangy, patchwork dialect or patois. The derogatory term has more to do with the lack of official status of Yiddish and the powerlessness of its speakers than with neutral, objective linguistic criteria. Indeed, when the Czernowitz [Черновцы] conference of 1908 indignantly abolished the offending term and pronounced Yiddish “a Jewish national language”, it was the assertion of nationhood that mattered, not some

8- In Ottoman Turkey there were many Armenian communities whose ancestors had been forced to abandon their native spoken tongue for Turkish. But they wrote and printed Armeno-Turkish in Armenian script, much as speakers of Judeo-German/Spanish/Persian/Arabic used variations of square-character Hebrew. Joseph Skibell in his novel *A Curable Romantic* (2010) plays with this alphabet-politics—see *infra*.

9- Readers of my generation will recall the American satirist Tom Lehrer’s sardonic song of the mid-1960s, “National Brotherhood Week”.

redefinition of what constitutes a language.¹⁰

But what use is a sterile objectivity in matters that go to the heart of human life? Zamenhof, although he was a Jew who loved his people, worried about our future, and was sympathetic to Zionism, was not a nationalist *per se*. He stressed the apolitical character of his aspirations, arguing that he was committed to ideals of human equality and social justice that transcended partisan politics. It can be argued that we are political animals whether we wish to be or not, so this assertion of an apolitical stance was as unrealistic as his quixotic dreams themselves, and perhaps even slightly disingenuous. For even though Zamenhof saw himself as soaring over the roadblocks, customs houses, and border fences that divide states—a new kind of airborne *luftmensh* (I spell this deliberately in Yiddish, not German) on the Jewish scene for Marc Chagall to paint—and although Esperanto has no earthly locus other than where a speaker of it hangs his hat, the ideas that inform Esperanto still do have a precise location on the intellectual map of Eastern European Jewry of the period, and the imagined country would lied decidedly to the Left on that map. And many Jews, then as now, particularly those not wedded to Zionism, tended to the progressivist band on the political spectrum.¹¹

10- Harshav 1990, p. 86. And so it was: the Soviet Union recognized Yiddish as the language of the Jewish nationality of the country (thereby detaching the Jews from identification as a religion); and the Moscow literary journal *Sovetish Heymland* was published in the language. Yiddish is still an official language of Birobidzhan, the Jewish Autonomous Region of the (former) RSFSR. Very few native speakers live in that remote Siberian region straddling the fastnesses of Mongolia, but it is enthusiastically studied by some young people there, and the Russian Jewish heritage is cherished—though perhaps more as an antiquarian interest than a living culture. The Soviet choice of Yiddish was dictated by both practical and political considerations. Communists opposed nationalism, and Hebrew was the chosen language of Zionism, the Jewish national liberation movement. Even that aspect of national liberation might have been kosher, had the territory of Palestine not lain outside the frontiers of the Soviet homeland of the Russian Jews, and had the Zionists not worked, in the official Soviet view, with foreign imperialist powers as well. The USSR supported the Arab uprising of 1929 as a manifestation of national liberation, but to most of the *Yishuv* in Palestine it seemed more a classical pogrom. Many Yiddish writers broke with the Party line that year; more and worse was to follow, of course. Hebrew is also bound indissolubly to the Bible and religion, which the official *laïcité* of the USSR discouraged. However in the wake of the Holocaust the USSR strongly supported, diplomatically and militarily, the establishment of the State of Israel. After the period of Stalinist anti-Semitism and Soviet backing of the Arabs, the Russian Federation and Israel are now friends with close and good relations. Jewish life, faith, and learning in Russia face no restrictions of any kind, and anti-Semitic incidents are rarer there than in “pro-Western” Europe.

11- This is not the place to treat the vexed question of the Jews and the left, which involves deconstructing one of many anti-Semitic tropes: the interested reader may consult the recent monograph, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism* (Hanebrink 2018). However the association of Esperanto with left-wing ideas and the Judaism of its inventor were sufficient for Hitler to condemn it in *Mein Kampf* as an instrument of the Judeo-Bolshevik world conspiracy. Nazi Esperantists tried for a time to use the language to spread Hitlerian ideology but their association was closed down. *La interna ideo vinkis*: closet Esperantist soldiers in the Wehrmacht tried, albeit in vain, to render assistance to the Zamenhofs imprisoned in the Warsaw Ghetto. Hitler and his ilk had a point, though it is to the credit of the Jews, of course, not our detriment: it can be recorded with pride that of the 35,000-odd volunteers from 52 countries who fought for the Spanish Republic against Franco, Hitler, and Mussolini, fully over a quarter were Jews (Horvitz 2012, p. 33). Indeed, most of the veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade interviewed by the American Jewish journalist Studs Terkel in his moving documentary of the war, *The Good Fight*, were Jews.

Esperantoland on our imagined chart of the intellect is a left-leaning clime to be situated close to the Bundist and Socialist districts, with their Yiddish and Slavic speech and their cities and towns full of Jews earnestly forging a viable, modern life in the snowy latitudes of Poland, the Ukraine, and Russia. The proponents of Hebrew eschewed class struggle as a central aspect of their program, but the first Esperanto magazine by and for workers was founded in 1906. And in 1910 Zamenhof welcomed an Esperanto Socialist magazine in Germany, declaring that the working class would understand better than others the essence and idea of the international language. In a letter of 1914, turning down an invitation to address a Jewish nationalist group in Paris, he averred that although the nationalism of the oppressed was more pardonable than that of the strong, he still wanted no part of it. Esperantoland was thus far indeed¹² from the warmer, southeastern Zionist paradise of desert vistas, date palms, the sound of Hebrew, the honey-colored stones of Jerusalem, rather more brotherly love, and rather less of a stress on class warfare, economic determinism, and the advance of the internationalist masses. The Zionists, who founded collectivist communities (the *kibbutzim*) and were to be sure no foes of socialism in practice, not to mention liberty, equality, or fraternity, were still convinced that the high aims of Jewish idealists, no matter the ultimate social target, were unattainable without what Americans call the nitty-gritty: securing and defending by force of arms an independent Jewish homeland first. Nationalism came before socialism on their agenda: what mattered above all else was a piece of land. Uganda, the Land of Israel, Madagascar, even a corner of the southern United States—the one place it could not be was in Europe.¹³ Zamenhof's followers, then, were for staying put and making a go of it; Zionism's, for just preparing to go.

Zamenhof invented his new universal language twice. His father found and burnt the first manuscript when the youth was away in Moscow at university. We have but one poem in this precursor to Esperanto; its predictable theme, kindness, fraternity, and romantic striving. Esperantists thus have a small fragment of a proto-language, just enough to be certain that the later invention proceeded from it, as well as so little as to leave room for wondering speculation about what else there may have been in those early writings that were consigned to the flames and irrevocably lost. There is a mystique about loss: it underscores the unrecoverability of the past, and that is part of how memory constructs the image of a golden age. Esperanto as an invented language has no pre-existence, no antiquity *ipso facto*; so its creator's first attempt is the subject of fascinated study, a bit like mystical speculation about the ages that preceded Genesis. We shall see presently how Esperantist spiritualist mediums have conjured a hoary, sacral antiquity and glorious,

12- Masson 2014, pp. 34-36.

13- The Hebrew writer Mordekhai Ze'ev Feiberger (1874-1899) published in his short life a few stories and one novella, *Le-'An*, "Whither?" in which a tortured young Jew tries to escape or remedy the predicament of exile by finding a home in Torah, then in European secular culture. These do not work, the Diaspora is hopeless and the West is degenerate. "Eastward! Eastward!" he cries— but the little Zionist group in his town is disbanded, emigration is forgotten, the man grows old and the divine fire in his heart dims, and death releases him from his sorrow (see Feiberger 1959, pp. 125-126).

otherworldly dignity for the International Language.

On 26 July 1887 Zamenhof published in Russian at Warsaw *La Unua Libro*, the First Book of his fully-formed second try (the Russian title was *Международный язык*), signing it Doktoro Esperanto. The language has a core lexicon based mainly on Latin roots, but it is not an ersatz Romance language, an impoverished or barbarized Latin, at all—for the roots Zamenhof ingeniously selected were specifically those that are more or less readily recognizable to speakers not only of the living Romance languages such as French, Italian, and Spanish, but also to speakers of a spectrum of Germanic and Slavic ones. These would be mainly German, English, Russian, and Polish—and Yiddish. We shall have more to say presently about Zamenhof's lexicon, but for now one may observe that by using common Latinate words the inventor sought to ensure a linguistic equality and neutrality, whereby speakers of different national languages might meet on a level playing field, employing for mutual communication a language supported not by governmental domination, economic hegemony, or military force, but by a humanistic ideal that takes precedence over political power and territorial control. This is *la interna ideo*: when Esperantists salute each other at the end of a letter with the adverb *samideane*, “sharing the same idea(!)”, that is what they have in mind. A person absorbs his mother tongue, no matter what his fully-formed opinions will be. But Esperanto is a choice, and one scholar asserts that almost all Esperantists have learned the language “as the result of an ideological commitment.”¹⁴ The level playing field of Zamenhof's *a posteriori Plansprache* is practical and ingenious, and also political.

In considering the fairly limited sources from which Zamenhof drew his lexicon, some have objected that Esperanto is Euro-centric, with precious few loan-words from other world language families spoken predominantly outside Western and Central Europe and European Russia (other Indo-European languages like Iranian or Indo-Aryan,¹⁵ and Uralo-Altaic, Finno-Ugric, Afro-Asiatic, Sino-Tibetan, etc.). But assembling a global lexicon would be the same in practicality as creating an *a priori* language of extreme difficulty for which most every learner would have to memorize most every single word afresh. The pre-eminence of Europe in world affairs in the centuries before World War I was an established and obvious fact, so those speakers of Chinese, Arabic, Turkish, or Hindustani (as Hindi-Urdu was called then) who were interested in international communication and had the resources and leisure time to learn a new language were likely already to have encountered and learned one or another of the languages of the European imperial powers, and thus to be equal players on the field. For speakers of Polish, Finnish, Hungarian and other European languages that were either very isolated or without the support of state authority, Esperanto had no taint of empire. The attraction of Esperanto for such people was (and for many people still is), then, language *neutrality*; while in Europe (and on

14- Berdichevsky 1988, p. 40.

15- It is an accepted practice of some present-day scholars of the Semitic languages and others to shun the term “Aryan”, which has become irredeemably entangled with racist ideology and stained by criminality and murder; the more innocuous word Arian is thus not a typographical error but a replacement.

other continents where European languages had become predominant or widely used) the very familiarity of much of the vocabulary and the ease of the simple, regular grammar afforded the language a jump start in acquiring a large number of adherents. But Esperanto neither acquired nor aspired to state power.

The great Yiddishist Max Weinreich once ironically defined language as “a dialect with an army and navy”, as opposed, by implication, to a “jargon”. Isaac Bashevis Singer, who escaped from Poland shortly before the Nazi *Blitzkrieg*, had no great love of armed force, and echoed Weinreich’s sentiment in his speech upon receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature: *Der groyser koved vos di shvedishe akademie hot mir aneton iz oykh an anerkenung fun Idish—a shprakh fun golus, on a land, on grentsn, nisht untergeshtist fun keyn shum regirung, a shprakh vos farmogt kimat nisht keyn verter far vofen...* “The great honor that the Swedish Academy has given me is also a recognition of Yiddish: a language of exile, without a country, without borders, unsupported by any government at all, a language that possesses almost no words for weapons...” As Prof. Ruth Wisse, who is both a Yiddishist and Jewish political activist, has pointed out in her monograph *Jews and Power*, a work that is a timely coda after a century to Theodor Herzl’s *The Jewish State*, Jews over the long centuries of exile developed strategies to cope with the predicament of powerlessness, insecurity, and vulnerability. One coping mechanism has been an understandable psychological tendency to make a virtue of these deficiencies.¹⁶ Though this was a way of surviving the Diaspora, one may argue that celebrating powerlessness and homelessness has become a detriment to Jewish political consciousness since the rebirth of Israel. Esperanto, though without any malice, did something like this, by promoting the ideals of peace and cosmopolitanism over self-defense and land.

Zamenhof in his public speeches referred often to *Esperantujo*, adding a geographical suffix to the name of the language, but he probably had in mind the temporary, peripatetic proto-hyperspace of fellow-feeling of attendees at regular congresses and the many bridges of fraternal communication in between—not a plot of land in Uganda or somewhere with the *verda stelo* (“green star”) banner floating over it.¹⁷ These meetings of devotees of the

16- Singer 1978, p. 26. On language and power, see also the remark of the 15th-century Spanish grammarian A. de Nebrija, *infra*.

17- Typically, some Esperantists came to see even the symbol of the green star as somehow excessively militant or quasi-nationalistic and sought to replace it with what they perceived as a more eirenic one: the so-called “jubilee symbol” invented in 1987 by a Brazilian Esperantist that portrays one green E facing another (backward) one. The American Jewish writer Michael Chabon invokes Esperanto and Zamenhof in his counterfactual novel *The Yiddish Policemen’s Union*, which we will discuss in greater detail below, together with Joseph Skibell’s *A Curable Romantic*. Chabon’s novel imagines a Yiddish-speaking temporary Jewish “homeland” in Sitka, Alaska. In an essay entitled “Imaginary Homelands”, Chabon writes that part of the inspiration for his novel came from Beatrice and Uriel Weinreich’s “phrase book for travelers” *Say It In Yiddish*. The book was published in 1958, nearly a generation after the Nazis had wiped from the earth Yiddish as the living, everyday language of a large community. And even when Yiddish was still fully alive, there was no place on earth, no “Yiddishland” where you could buy stamps at a government post office that functioned in Yiddish. Just as there is no “Esperantoland”. (See Chabon 2008, pp. 175-181.) As to the Green Star and Jubilee Symbol, a Hebrew medal struck by the State of Israel to honor Esperanto self-confidently portrays both: the medal is discussed at the end of this essay.

language meant considerably more than the sort of convivial professional conventions on which academics, computer salesmen, or gun enthusiasts converge: Zamenhof went so far as to compare Esperanto congresses to the three obligatory festivals of pilgrimage to the Temple of Jerusalem in ancient Israel, the *Shalosh regalim*!¹⁸ The virtual Esperantoland in his vision became no less than the Holy City, too.

The geographical trajectory of Zamenhof's life matched the Diasporist aspect of his universalist convictions: he traveled within Europe to congresses, but never set foot in the Land of Israel. Indeed, he never lived permanently very far from his birthplace, spending much of his youth and all his adult life in the poverty-stricken Jewish neighborhood of Warsaw where his parents had moved the family in his boyhood. His oculist medical practice, in keeping with his humanitarian ideals, served the community while barely supporting his own family: he charged his patients the nominal sum of 20 kopeks a visit. Like another Eliezer— Ben Yehuda!— he received some financial aid from his father-in-law to augment the meager income with which he provided for his wife and three children. Much of the expense of printing and mailing Esperanto periodicals and other publications came out of his own pocket. This coincidence is perhaps not as striking as it might seem: in the Jewish communities of that place and time (and among the ultra-orthodox still today), it was the accepted practice for the well-to-do father of the bride to support a young groom pursuing his study of Torah at a *yeshiva*. If the young man was an *ilui*, a Torah genius, he was often sought as a match by wealthy families even in distant towns.¹⁹ It was not uncommon for a wife to run a business and support the family so her husband could spend his days in the *beys midrash*, the house of study, discussing the Talmud with other men. Though Jewish love of money is a perennial anti-Semitic trope, wealth among the People of the Book, few of whom were wealthy, was a means to a higher end. Zamenhof's three children, Adam, Sofia, and Lidia, were devoted to their father's cause, even as Ben Yehuda's son Itamar Ben Avi would be to Modern Hebrew, and continued his mission to spread his language after his death in 1917. His gravestone, a handsome monument of gray Aberdeen marble, is still standing in the Warsaw Jewish cemetery. The Zamenhofs continued to live in the same neighborhood. Ben Yehuda had moved to Jerusalem in 1882 and his son Itamar lived and died there, safe from Hitler. But Doctor Hopeful had placed his confidence in the lands of exile, and his children paid the ultimate price for that decision.

One daughter, Lidia (b. 1904), embraced the universalist Baha'i faith, a creed proclaimed by Baha'ullah, an Iranian mystic of the mid-19th century whom his fellow Muslims executed as a heretic. The religion, a sort of Islamic Mormonism with mystical leanings, was popular among Iranian Jews and was favored by the Pahlavi dynasty, but is outlawed by the Iranian clerical regime of the present day. The Baha'i leadership looked favorably on Esperanto: the leader 'Abd al-Baha encouraged it and Mirza Muhammad

18- Forster 1982, p. 99.

19- Harshav 1990, p. 12.

Labib taught it in Iran to Baha'is.²⁰ Lidia traveled to America in 1938 to propagate the new religion and teach Esperanto. Despite the events of *Kristallnacht* in November of that year and the swiftly worsening plight of the Jews in Europe, the American government turned down her petition for an extension of her visa, claiming that her work as a teacher had violated its conditions. The Baha'i leader Shoghi Effendi, her spiritual guide and close friend refused politely, and inexplicably, to help her to find refuge in British-mandate Palestine, where the religion still has its center, a golden-domed building surrounded by Persian gardens overlooking Haifa; so she returned in November 1938 to Poland.²¹

The end came soon. In September 1939 the Germans destroyed the Zamenhof house and its priceless Esperanto archive in their terror bombing of the Polish capital. The family moved to an older home, within the area soon to be demarcated as the Warsaw Ghetto. Zamenhof's son Adam was killed in prison by the Germans as a hostage in the early days of the occupation, and the Nazis murdered both daughters in the death camp at Treblinka later on, during the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942—their house was right next to the *Umschlagplatz*, the space into which the Jews were herded before boarding the trains for deportation, mainly to the Treblinka death camp. The fate of the international language under fascism was grim: as we noted, Hitler in *Mein Kampf* condemned Esperanto as part of the Jewish world conspiracy, and the regime outlawed the international language in Germany. To the east, the situation was little better: Esperanto had flourished in the young Soviet Union, where it was seen as a means of getting the workers of the world to unite. But there too the Stalin regime, suspicious of its cosmopolitanism and the contacts it facilitated between Soviet citizens and foreigners, banned it and executed numerous Esperantists. But the movement and many of its adherents survived the dark years. Esperantists planted a green flag in 1946 after the liberation, on the mound of rubble where Dr. Zamenhof's home had stood.²² His new language survived and survives still—

20- Heller 1985, p. 38.

21- Heller 1985 somewhat glosses over the callous behavior of the Baha'i leader Shoghi Effendi, out of politeness or deference; Schor 2016, to her credit, tells the story with unwavering clarity: Lidia was abandoned, betrayed by those she trusted and hoped in. The Baha'is could easily have arranged safe passage and sanctuary for Lidia Zamenhof to Haifa but evidently cared so little about her very life that despite her long and zealous commitment to the newfangled sect, and its own championing of Esperanto, her desperate pleas were simply brushed aside. As though to add insult to injury, after her murder by the Nazis the Baha'i movement refused to confer upon Lidia the status of a martyr. She is however a martyr to her *own* people, with its *genuine* faith: every Jew killed in the Second World War because of his or her identity is considered Halachically to have died '*al qiddush Hashem*, in sanctification of God's Name.

22- In present-day Warsaw, Zamenhof St. intersects with Mordechai Anielewicz St. The latter was the young leader of the Ghetto uprising that began on Erev Pesach (the beginning of Passover), 19 April 1943, when the Germans and their henchmen stormed the Ghetto. The next day was the birthday of Adolf Hitler, and the final eradication of the remnant of the Jewish community of Warsaw that remained after the *Grossaktion* of 1942 was intended as a present for him. The nationalist Home Army of the gentile Poles did not render effective assistance to the Ghetto fighters, and some Varsovians paraded in Easter bonnets and rode amusement park carousels while the Ghetto burned. After the war, there were scattered pogroms against Jewish survivors returning home; and in 1968, Poland forced most of the Jews who still lived in the country to emigrate. *Po lin*— "Rest here"— the gentle Hebrew *Volksetymologie* for a land many, including Zamenhof, called home, now seems more the evocation of a graveyard. But the →

out of the hundreds invented in the optimistic 19th century it is indeed the only one that has endured. Though there is no physical *Esperantujo*, the Internet (*Esperanto, reto*) has enhanced Zamenhof's vision of a linguistic community with a home in the noosphere: the digital age has provided it in hyperspace.

The high ideals of Dr. Esperanto are as far from more general realization, though, as ever. The only genuine international language of importance at the time of this writing is English. But it cannot be said to be neutral, as it was *ab initio* compromised by the British colonialism that facilitated its diffusion; and it may now fairly be considered a vector of the capitalistic, globalist economic system, and of the consumer culture of Britain's imperial successor, the United States.²³ But there is another, perhaps equally potent factor in the internationalization of English that is not compromised by elitism and imperialism. As Benjamin Harshav pointed out, both Yiddish and English are "languages of fusion"²⁴—that is, they have been open in the course of their development to the reception of abundant lexical, idiomatic, and morphological material from heterogeneous sources. Unlike French, English has no recognized central authority, no academic Cerberus to bar the introduction of foreign loans. (French has resisted "computer" with *ordinateur*, for instance, but has not managed to abolish *le weekend*. Apparently not even General De Gaulle could prevent the Almighty from resting on the seventh day.) In that sense, at least American English, if not the Queen's with its RP ("received pronunciation", the mark of the aristocracy) is a democratic language, a leveler of national and social differences. Zamenhof never gave a name to his new language, perhaps because names help to reify things, to create boundaries and exclusive identities—the very ills he wanted to avoid, transcend, and remedy. He termed his invention simply an *internacia lingvo* and as we have seen modestly employed as a *nom de plume* in his manual of the language the present participle singular *Esperanto*, which means in it "One who hopes". As noted above, that first edition of the manual, the *Unua Libro*, was published in Russian, though translations into other languages swiftly followed—and indeed for the first two decades or so of the existence of Esperanto, about nine tenths of the movement's subscribers and supporters were subjects of the Russian Empire. A majority of those were Jews as well, and though

→ Esperanto heritage is celebrated in present-day Poland by friends of the international language, and one member of the family, Steve Zamenhof, was not trapped by the Germans. Safe in America, he became a prominent scientist. My mother Prof. Dr. Charlotte Russell, a biochemist who is 92 at this writing (she is herself a kind of symbol of progress, having been the first woman chemist to be granted tenure at the City College of New York), knew him well when they were young.

23- This is the point at which one might be mistaken as sounding like an aggrieved defender of the language English knocked down from the saddle—French. But it is to be remembered that when the Persian delegation to the League of Nations proposed that Esperanto receive official status, it was France that vetoed the suggestion, considering Zamenhof's invention an upstart bastard child of the Romance brood. It was a French Esperantist, too, Prof. Couturat, who broke early with the movement, promoting a reformed variety of Esperanto called Ido ("offspring"). When he asked the British philosopher Bertrand Russell to think of a proper self-designation for the Idoj, the philosopher, who evidently disapproved of this deviation from the Esperanto movement, offered the suggestion that they call themselves Idiots.

24- Harshav 1990, p. 26 f.

statistics are hard to come by, it might be fair to estimate that perhaps as much as a quarter of the present Esperantist community is Jewish.

Esperanto, then, emerged in the conditions of the Jewish Diaspora, addressed its concerns, was suffused with its hopes, and was shaped by its linguistic environment. It attracted a disproportionately large number of Jewish adherents and its enemies attacked it as a Jewish language. In many ways, it was.

The past of languages of the future.

No new invented languages to rival Esperanto's scale and cosmopolitan reach are emerging, but even if the idea of an auxiliary *Plansprache* may have an uncertain future, it has a venerable past. For the idea of a universal, perfect language is very old indeed. One might cite as an early expression the vision of Zephaniah 3:9. *Ki az ehpkh el-'amim, safah verurah, li-qro' khulam be-shem YHWH, le-'avdo shekhem ehad* "For then will I turn to the people a pure language, that they may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve him with one consent" (KJV). The verb *hpk-* used in "turn" here is a potent one, often meaning in Biblical Hebrew to overturn things in the sense of a revolution,²⁵ so the prophet seems to have in mind a real Babel-reversing transformation, an Esperanto with Divine sanction that will bring about worldwide spiritual unity. But the word *śafāh* can be the lip of one's mouth as well as "language", even as *lāšōn* can be both "language" and one's physical tongue. Given the propensity of the Lord to scour clean by fire and other painful means the bodies of His prophets, the verse may refer to the physical thing that speaks, or to speech that is not deceitful or wicked though in a natural tongue— and not necessarily to a linguistic system or brand-new lexicon *per se*. If it were a language suitable to Divine worship, then one imagines it would be related to Heaven rather than to some natural earthly idiom. A candidate for such a language might be Hebrew itself, a tongue that endured in large measure because of a collection of holy texts in it that is of importance to the three so-called "Abrahamic" religions: it is the language of the Book of the People of the Same. There are other sacred books in languages thought by other faith traditions to be divine that have not survived quite as robustly— the Old Avestan of the *Gāthās* ("Hymns") of Zarathustra, for instance. The three pre-Islamic Iranian empires championed Zoroastrianism, so we find paraphrases of the Gathas in both the Old Persian inscriptions of the Achaemenids and in Deutero-Isaiah. They are the "Theogony" Herodotus mentions in Greek; and they may underlie the cosmogonic opening scene of the Gnostic *Poimandres*. But the Zoroastrians are now a small and insular community; and the experts on the Gathas, much of whose language is now obscure, are scholars outside the faith. Nobody speaks Avestan, or writes commentaries or poetry in it; and there has been no attempt to revive it. One factor that helped Hebrew, by contrast, to gain and maintain its status was also the sheer number of people who revere the Bible. And added to this might be the peculiar tenacity in adversity of the Jews themselves, and the dedication of the Jewish community to scholarship. The mighty intellectual tradition of

25- See Russell 2017.

the imperial faith of the Iranians withered by the medieval period; Jewish learning, by contrast, endured and expanded.

One may consider as an additional factor in its endurance and vigor also the belief that Hebrew was not just the medium of the Holy Scriptures but the very blueprint of Creation in and of itself, a key to the structure and meaning of the cosmos: God created the world by speaking and writing. Part of the attraction of Hebrew for Christian Hebraists of the Renaissance was this belief in its primordial and primal antiquity: it was thought to be the language not only of the first revelation, and thus as *prisca theologia* the common, pristine ancestor of all the varied teachings to follow, but also of all humanity before the tower of Babel, its fall, and the ensuing confusion of tongues. It would have been the language in which Adam gave the animals their right names while God looked on approvingly, and that means Hebrew was closer than any other subsequent human tongue to bridging the gulf between signifier and signified. By this reckoning it would also have to be true that Hebrew was the conversational speech of the first human couple as they transgressed and were expelled from the Garden of Eden, and what Cain was speaking as he slew his brother Abel not soon after. And some Jewish traditions maintain anyway that the language of the Garden was not Hebrew at all, but its close relative, Aramaic.²⁶

But Jewish speculation about language had gone well beyond any sublunar sort of Hebrew before Christians began to think about the problem. In around the third century CE, most likely, an unknown Jewish philosopher wrote the very short text *Sefer Yetsirah*, the “Book of Creation.” It suggests that the world was constructed (and endures) through 32 paths consisting of the 22 letters of the Hebrew alphabet and the ten *Sefirot*, a term evidently invented by the author, probably on the basis of the root *spr*- “count”. These ten represent the ten directions: up and down; north, south, east, and west; the beginning and the end (i.e., time); and good and evil.²⁷ The primary roots of language are described as biliteral (and not triliteral, as is the general rule in Semitic grammatical study, though there seems to have been an old pattern of proto-Semitic biliteral roots), generated by two wheels, each containing the 22 letters, that throw them off to join in their 231 possible connections. This theory suggests that the author saw the universe as a binary system— up

26- There is a curious Jewish belief, perhaps associated with this, that certain prayers are in Aramaic rather than Hebrew because the angels do not understand Aramaic and cannot impede the progress of a petition directly to God’s ear. Most Jewish prayers, including the credal *Shema* (“Hear O Israel, the Lord is our God, the Lord is One only!”), can be recited in any language. Compare the belief of the Russian Orthodox proponents of *Imiaslavie*, “Glorification of the Name”, that *any* name can be God’s true Name.

27- The reduction of good and evil to mere directions is chilling, as though there were no certain moral absolute. But if one regards the question through the prism of Jewish, and especially Hasidic, theology it is easier to resolve. The permutation of the Hebrew word *nega*’, “harm” famously results in a transformation— *oneg*, “delight”. *Sheqer*, the “lie” that undermines all, can be made into *qeresh*, the sustaining plank of the Tabernacle. And letter mystics assert that the characters of שֶׁקֶר *sheqer* come to a point at the bottom (*shin* does this in certain calligraphic styles) or have but one leg, so the lie totters and cannot endure. But the letters of אֱמֶת *emet*, truth, stand on two legs or on a firm base. The task of life is to transform darkness to light, to find the spark of good in the worst evil and fan and nurture it so that the light of love triumphs and the shadow of hatred simply dissolves, to take this created physical world and by dint of the great work lift it up to Heaven.

and down, left and right, present and future, good and evil, male and female, Israel and the gentiles, this world and Heaven, and, to bring the picture up to date, the electronic binary pattern that governs the operation of the computer— zero and one, no signal and signal on.²⁸ Another book, the *Alef-Bet of R. Akiva*, indeed considers the second letter of the alphabet, *Bet*, to have been the letter of Creation because it expresses duality.²⁹ As Joseph Dan has observed, *Sefer Yetsirah* is the first Jewish text to suggest that the Divine language is one governed by rules. That language is independent of human use, need, or purpose, and is arbitrary, *a priori*, releasing one from the problem of the relationship of signifier and signified.³⁰ The letters are significant by reason of their sounds, so the *shin* of *ēsh*, “fire”, hisses and crackles the *shhhhh* of fire; *mmmmm* is the watery sound of the *mem* in *mayim*; and “air”, *awīr*, is *alef*’s light *aaaaa*. Although the origins of *Sefer Yetsirah* are nearly as mysterious and uncanny as that other literary enigma, the still-undeciphered Voynich Manuscript with its unique cipher, its impact was anything but isolated or obscure. There are many medieval Jewish commentaries on it; and the effect of the text on the developing system of Kabbalah is of incalculable significance. Thus, Jews by the time of Zamenhof had known for centuries of a celestial language that was universal and was potent by virtue of itself, one that was generated by rules that do not have exceptions. These are the features with which Zamenhof sought to endow his terrestrial Esperanto.

Zamenhof was not alone in the Eastern European Jewish world, either, in his meditations upon language: he existed in a culture that was rich in such lively reflections, and aware of their antiquity in the tradition. One might note, for instance, the work of a younger Russian Jew, Prof. Roman Jakobson (1896-1982), who conceived structuralism in linguistics.³¹ But

28- Nöldeke 1910 seems to have been the first scholar systematically to investigate a proto-Semitic pattern of biconsonantal roots.

29- Medieval Hebrew alphabetically-arranged books seem to have been a vehicle for the expression of unconventional or parodic ideas. On the *Alphabet of Ben Sira*, for instance, see Russell 2019. The first word of the Bible, בְּרֵאשִׁית *Bereshit*, “In the beginning”, begins with *bet*, too. According to the *Zohar*, *alef* in its turn, as the first letter in the alphabet, became that of unity, as the beginning of the designation of the One God at the beginning of the Ten Commandments: the pronoun אנכי *Anokhi*, “I”. Prof. Jack Zeldis of California State University, Fresno, has pointed out a tradition according to which one may divide the first verse of Genesis in two to discover an esoteric meaning: בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים *Bereshit bara Elohim et*: “In the beginning God created *alef-tav*,” reading the accusative marker *et* as an abbreviation for the alphabet.

30- See Dan 1998, esp. p. 144.

31- Gentle reader, *en fait de souvenirs d'enfance* this writer attended at Oxford in 1975 or thereabouts an eagerly awaited lecture on Mallarmé by Prof. Jakobson that proved to be a paralyzingly dull statistical analysis of the use of conjunctions. My poor, much shaggier and younger head nodded, and soon I was blissfully asleep in the warm lap of the elderly gentleman seated to my left. It was that utter repose, free of all care, that is particular to the lecture hall and classroom. Startled awake by the applause at the end of the lecture an hour later, I sat upright and alert, pretending of course that I had given the learned disquisition my keenest attention. The audience, evidently annoyed and disappointed by the tediously technical presentation, demonstrated its displeasure by refusing to ask any questions; the moderator turned to the kindly old man I had been using as a pillow... and begged the Master of the college, Sir Isaiah Berlin, to say something. I was prepared to drop through the floor into Hades or disappear into antimatter. But the great author of “Two Concepts of Liberty” half-turned to me with a wink and a smile, and then declared, “No, I’m afraid I slept through the whole thing.”

one may discuss here a poem that illustrates this linguistic engagement and is of interest also in the context of Esperanto. A(ron) Leyeles (Glanz, 1889-1966) was born in Wloclawek, Russian Poland, and wrote poetry first in Russian—as did Zamenhof. He belonged to the Socialist-Territorialist party, which worked towards the establishment of a Jewish state outside the Land of Israel: their program places them on the left, near Zamenhof, and in partial sympathy with Zionist aims, again like Zamenhof. Leyeles moved to New York in 1909, and chose his native Yiddish as the language of his mature poetry. In one poem, “Symmetry”, we read: *Simetriye—/ Gimatria fun misteriyeh/ Misteriyeh fun ritm/ Oyfyener zayt zoym/ Fun tsayt un roym*. “Symmetry:/ Gematria of mystery/ Mystery of rhythm/ On the other side of the seam/ Of time and space.” One notes the alliterative figures that link the parallel phrases: *zayt/tsayt, zoym/roym*—this play of sound underscores the preponderance of monosyllabic words that enforce the sense of primordial units, atoms, even *Sefirot*-quanta. The poem goes on to speak of the cleaving into a binary pair of the primordial unity of male and female, and concludes, *Sod fun sod un yesod./ Freyd fun shed un fun Got./ Blits fun shpiz. Meshugos./ Zelikeyt. Has./ Ekstaz./ Ekhod!* “Secret of secret and foundation./ Joy of demon and of God./ Lightning bolt of dart. Madness./ Holiness. Hate./ Ecstasy./ One!”³² In the first stanza, Leyeles introduces the theme of unity and balanced duality with four Greek loan-words, three of which are universal to the European languages but were acquired in Yiddish *via* Russian: symmetry, Gematria, mystery, and rhythm. Gematria is one of the thousand or so Greek lexical items attested in Mishnaic Hebrew: it defines the practice of associating otherwise unrelated letters by establishing that the numerical values of the letters that spell them add up to the same sum. Here the “gematria” of *simetriye* and *misteriyeh* is anagrammatic also—transpose the letters of one and you have the other. The fourth loan word, “rhythm”, may allude to the *mysterium coniunctionis* of male and female in coitus, but the locus outside space and time suggests also a cosmological event, perhaps that of the generation of language in *Sefer Yetsirah*—another poem by Leyeles to be mentioned presently seems to allude directly to it.

The final stanza replaces the “mystery” of the opening lines with the equivalent Hebrew word *sōd*, “secret”, and rhymes it with *yesōd*, the ninth of the ten *Sefirot*. *Sod* refers also to the mystical, Kabbalistic level of interpretation of the Torah in the famous acronym *PaRDeS* (lit., “Paradise”): *peshat* (“plain, literal interpretation”), *remez* (“allusion”), *derash* (“homiletic”), and *sod*. The phrase “Mystery of mystery” can allude to the *sod she-be sod*, “the secret that is in the secret” in Hasidic philosophy, which in fact has to do with the *unio mystica* of the soul with Divinity, the very oneness with which this poem ends;³³ but it also invites one to consider the parallel construction, *Song of Songs* (Hebrew *Shir ha-shirim*), the Biblical erotic poem of the love of a boy and girl that is also interpreted in a mystical manner by both Christians and Jews as an allegory of Divine love. Leyeles then links by rhyme *freyd* “joy” with Hebrew *shēd* “demon”; God shares this joy and finds

32- Text in Harshav 1986, pp. 130-133; for a discussion of the poem see also Harshav 1990, p. 68.

33- See Wolfson 2009, p. 38 f.

His rhyming partner in His lower emanation, *Yesód*. The poem ends with a staccato hail of images: the lightning-flash of the infusion of Divine energy into the space of Creation in the Kabbalistic *tsimsum*, “contraction”, and the transcendent balance in *ekstáz* (“ecstasy”, from Greek *via* Russian again) of holiness with the rhyming pair of insanity (Hebrew-in-Yiddish, *meshugás*) and hate (Germanic, *has*). This succession of terms accented on the ultima, which are anomalous in the general stress-pattern of Yiddish, foregrounds the final word of the poem, *Echód!* (“One!”) which is so situated both to bring the opposites together and to remind the reader of its position also as the final, strongly pronounced word of the Jewish declaration of faith, the *Shema*.³⁴

Creation, erotic energy, duality and unity, are not merely described through language in the poem: the tradition from which the poem emerged presupposes that language itself is those things, it is how they come to be. And language in the poem functions on several different levels or registers that its own forms define, and that the reader by reason of his cultural background will intuit. The cosmopolitan lexicon of the early lines was born Greek, and that pedigree confers upon it its antiquity and nobility. It has another kind of value through its present status: it belongs both to the language of the imperium, Russian, and to the languages of European culture. But Leyeles adds the word *gematria*— it may seem at first like a throwaway joke or clever figure, yet the use of *gematria* adds a mystical dimension to the way the other Greek terms are associated, and that function derives specifically from Judaism. “Time and space,” for which the poet uses Germanic

34- Zamenhof seems to have followed the rhythms of the Hebrew and Yiddish of his time: all Esperanto words are stressed on the penultima, as is the general pattern also in Ashkenazic Hebrew. (Sephardic Hebrew stresses, by contrast, the ultima, so Israeli schoolchildren reciting the verses of the Russian Jewish poets Bialik or Chernikhovsky seldom use the meters their authors intended.) The stress on the ultima in the final strophe of Leyeles’ poem may therefore underscore the dramatic conclusion. Interestingly, though not surprisingly, Leyeles’ formulation, with its initial duality, or, better, binary quality, resolving into a final unity echoes one manuscript of the *Sefer yetsirah*. A Franco-German MS of the text in the British Library dated provisionally to the 14th century, with “old, interesting, and quite important readings”, begins, ‘*Eser Sefirot belimah mispar ‘eser etsba ‘ot, hamesh ke-neged hamesh, u-brit yihud mekavvenet be-emptsa*’, “Ten Sefirot of voidness, in number [like] ten fingers, five opposite five; and the covenant of unity tends in between” (Gruenwald 1971, pp. 135, 141). But one need not travel as far as London to find an illustration of the binary pattern and unitary resolution of Leyeles’ poem. The Hebrew-Aramaic invocation in the prayer book that precedes the blessings for the wearing of the hand and head *tefillin*, and the drawing together of the four *tsitsit* (fringes), two on each side of the body, evokes the same image of the reunification of the sundered male and female principles and would have been known to the Yiddish poet from early childhood: *Le-Shem yihud Qudsha Berikh Hu, u-Shekhinteh, bi-dhilu u-rhimu le-yahed Y”H be-W”H bi-yhuda shelim, be-shem kol Yisrael*, “In the Name of the unity of the Holy One, Blessed be He, and His Presence, in fear and love to unify the YH with the WH in perfect unity, in the name of all Israel.” In a general sense, the statement in the *Sefer yetsirah*, this prayer, and Leyeles’ poem exemplify the sundering of primary unity in the primordial catastrophe of *Shevirat ha-kelim*, the “shattering of the vessels” in the Kabbalistic cosmogony, and the act(s) of *tiqqun*, the final repairing and reunification. It is a powerfully dramatic image that has travelled far beyond the boundaries of Judaism. Tragic breakage and eschatological restoration are encoded into the 20th-century American writer Philip K. Dick’s novel, *The Galactic Pot-Healer*: the author had a profound interest in Jewish history and mysticism. One might note also that the encoded phrase inscribed on the mezuzah parchment, *Kozo bemukhsaz kozo* (=Hebrew *Hashem Eloheinu Hashem*, with the Tetragrammaton, “The Lord our God is the Lord!”), employs a cipher in which each letter is replaced by the one following it: *alef*, by *bet*, etc.— again a binary combinatory system!

terms, seems to allude to the ideas of the fourth dimension he found in his reading of the occultist Ouspensky; but the Hebraisms of the concluding lines suggest an additional Kabbalistic nuance. Moreover, if the Hellenic terms represent the high register of secular and international language, then the Hebrew ones belong to the sacral level— the Torah and Zohar, the Hebrew and Aramaic of the *beys midrash* and of Hasidism. What we have before us in this poem, then, is not only active engagement with language as the ground of existence, but the very same socio-linguistic array of lexicons and registers that Zamenhof controlled as he conceived his international language. I shall consider the question of polyglossia in more detail presently.

Leyeles published in 1947, thirty years after Zamenhof's passing, *Der Got fun Yisroel*, "The God of Israel", in which he declares that *Der Yidisher muzéy*, the Jewish museum, has very little by way of art to see. There are ritual objects— a Menorah, a spice-box for *Havdalah*, a *tefillin* bag, a *yad* ("hand") pointer for reading the Torah, a curtain for the Ark— but mostly lots of manuscripts (the poet begins with using Hebrew *ksav-yad*, then changes to *manuskript* and stays there). "Once upon a time" He threw (*gevórfn*) two handfuls, the 22 letters (Heb. *'otiyot*): they sparkled with speech and sayings, and now we seek to explain them all. There is no solution, but they remain, *óysiyes in óysiyes farlibt*, "letters in love with letters".³⁵ The two hands of God don't merely toss the letters down. The letters cleave to each other with the energy of a mutual attraction, and for the next three millennia an entire people is entranced by their living words. There is the *Sefer Yetsirah*, there are the two wheels spinning off biliteral roots, there is language as the relic greater and more powerful than any work of plastic, representational art, there is focus, source, tradition— Zamenhof's values, the *longue durée* of his people's culture, his framework of concepts, and not in a treatise he might have read in some imperial language, but in the mother tongue, the speech of the streets of Bialystok, the speech of the shoemakers and peddlers whose eyes he examined in his modest Warsaw surgery— Yiddish. It is not at all difficult to imagine Zamenhof as a habitué of Leyeles' imaginal museum, with its displays of the riches of language in all its versatility and power, its sacrality and homeliness.

It is thus scarcely surprising that Hebrew retained its prestige as the first truly international language, with its aura of divinity and perfection: Jews never ceased to ponder it. In the gentile arena, Thomas More invented the first European literary *Plansprache*, for his *Utopia* (1516: but he wrote the book in the international language of the day, Latin). René Descartes (1596-1650), Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) and Comenius (1592-1670) all tried their hand at it, and by the nineteenth century there were hundreds of invented international languages, both *a priori* creations and others based upon existing linguistic lexicons and morphologies. The overwhelming majority originated in Europe, as did the age of exploration and the mercantile and industrial revolutions. Language was yet

35- Again, Leyeles' imaginative vision reflects ideas that go back to the foundations of Rabbinic Judaism. In the *Midrash Tehillim*, for instance, the Rabbis when pondering Ps. 9:3, *Esmehah ve-e'eltsah vakh*, "I will rejoice and exult in You," thought it most significant that the gematria of "in You", Heb. *bet + kaph*, equals 22, the number of the letters of the alphabet— that is, the Torah. God is understood as His Book, in fact as the very letters that are combined to form the Book. See Braude 1959, vol. 1, p. xix.

another engine of progress. Very few invented languages gained purchase, though. At the time when Esperanto came into being, Volapük, the very complex and rather cacophonous creation of a German pastor, enjoyed wide popularity. It is nearly forgotten today save in Esperanto slang, where the word *volapukaĵo* means, scornfully, “gobbledygook” (which sounds a bit like poor Volapük anyhow). *Vae victis*— but Esperanto does not have an equivalent term for *Schadenfreude*, and the early rival of Esperanto might be wholly unknown, were it not for the fact that some Esperanto on-line booksellers still stock texts in Volapük.³⁶

People invent languages for reasons other than cosmopolitan idealism: J.R.R. Tolkien, a Germanist who enjoyed making up languages in his youth (interestingly, he coyly likens it by the title of his essay on the subject, “A Secret Vice,” to autoeroticism, see Tolkien 1984), loved both Norse mythology (he was a Germanist) and the sound of the unrelated Finnish language. *The Lord of the Rings*, a heroic fantasy epic, grew up around the crypto-Finnish euphony of Elvish and Tolkien’s other invented tongues, not vice-versa.³⁷ Even the present-day media culture of America has produced some invented languages, e.g., the Klingon of *Star Trek* and Dothraki in *A Game of Thrones*. These languages afford people of the digital age an opportunity to find community: Trekkies expend considerable effort learning Klingon and meeting at conventions to practice it; and here in California the toasts at a wedding a few years ago were in Dothraki.³⁸ Tolkienian role playing in congenial

36- For a general survey of invented languages see Yaguello 1991 and Adams 2011.

37- There is a sinister side to Tolkien’s fantasy: the Hobbits are more or less English and the Elves are pleasantly Scandinavian; but their enemies, the monstrous, sub-human Orcs and their ilk, serve the dark lord of Mordor, whose language is made to sound decidedly pseudo-Turco-Persian (*nazg durbatulûk, ash nazg gimbatul, ash nazg thrakatulûk agh burzum-ishi krimpatul*, for instance, inscribed on the Ring of Power). Tolkien’s friend, C.S. Lewis, similarly created a race of quasi-Muslim enemies in the Narnia books: the people of Calormen (=hot-blooded, lustful, cf. *calor*) worship an idol called Tash (Turkish for “stone”: medieval Christians believed the Muslims worshipped little golden idols called mawmets!) and do business with coins called crescents (the symbol of Islam; cf. the history of the tasty croissant, which commemorates Christian Hungary’s victory over the Turks). Jew and Turk are intimately associated in English lore as two types of the same infidel foe; and in Lewis’ fantasy the Christ-like lion Aslan (with his Turkish name, yet) is brutally murdered on the stone tablet of the Law— one could scarcely find a more insidious anti-Semitic trope to poison the young mind of a reader.

38- Reported in *The New York Times*, 11 December 2011. The article also states, “There have been many attempts to create languages, often for specific political effect. In the 1870s, a Polish doctor invented Esperanto, meant to be a simplified international language that would bring world peace.” The date is wrong of course, and Zamenhof was not exactly “Polish” either. There was an Esperantist congress held at Kraków in 1912: a Jewish delegation was denied official accreditation on the grounds that there is no “Jewish” language, and Zamenhof, whom the Polish delegates were delightedly acclaiming as a Pole, refused to intervene. This incident drew a scathing attack by the Zionist activist Dov Ber Borochov on the hypocrisy of the procedure. It concluded (in Esperanto translation), *Jen, tia estas la sorto de judo. Dudek kvin seninterrompajn jarojn penadis la homo kaj enmetis la animon en la ideon, kaj kiam fortiĝis la amata filo kaj estiĝis sendependa, devigata estas la juda patro forlasi, ĉar eĉ se la patro kiom ajn granda homo li eble estas— malgraŭ tio, eterna estas nenio pli ol judo*. “Behold, such is a Jew’s lot. The man labored for twenty-five years without cease and poured his soul into the idea, and when his beloved son grew strong and became independent, the Jewish father is compelled to let him go, because no matter how great a person he might be, despite that he is always nothing more than a Jew.” Zamenhof was stung by this poignant criticism, responded with wounded dignity, and the two subsequently engaged in a duel of letters in the Jewish press. See Kolker 2004.

groups and the serious study of Elvish languages such as Sindarin flourish in present-day Russia, too: one has enjoyed watching grown people in chain-mail and helmets disporting themselves in Udel'nyi park, St. Petersburg of a pleasant afternoon as though they were in Middle Earth fighting for possession of the Ring of Power. "The more languages a man speaks, the more people he is," exclaims an Armenian proverb. Language is fun and can augment one's sense of self-worth, as well as of belonging. But then, is that not in a way part of the ideal of Esperanto, with its clubs and gatherings and websites, as well?

The manipulation of language and language reform by totalitarian and fascist regimes in the 20th century for the purpose of propaganda and indoctrination has affected adversely the idea of an invented or reformed human tongue.³⁹ The young Eric Blair—later to become George Orwell—stayed in Paris in the 1930s with an aunt who was living with another man who had a *nom de plume*, Lanti (French *l'anti*, "the man against [everything]"), Eugène Adam (1879-1947), founder of the Esperantist *Sennacieca Asocio Tutmonda*, "Worldwide Non-nationalist Association". The USSR, which at first championed the "Latin of the working class", issued a stamp in honor of it in 1926 (and another the next year honoring the 40th birthday of Esperanto, with a portrait of Zamenhof). But Stalin, as noted earlier, suppressed the *Esperanta Movado*—thousands of advocates of an international language such as the great Esperantist and Bolshevik revolutionary Ernest Drezen (1892-1937) fell victim to the purges—and Lanti turned bitterly on the Workers' Paradise. George Orwell, who was appalled by the Moscow Trials, still fought in the Spanish Civil War, during which the Republican side used Esperanto as a propaganda tool to garner international support.⁴⁰ Orwell came to associate Esperanto, perhaps rather unfairly, with totalitarian cant and it clearly served as the morphological model for Newspeak in his dystopian novel *1984* (for similarity of word formation, compare for instance the words meaning "very bad"—Newspeak *doubleplusungood* to Esperanto *malbonega*), the other, lexical, model being Basic English with its radically reduced vocabulary of some 850 words. A limited vocabulary can be used to reduce the range of thought as well, as Newspeak in the novel is intended to do: Bernard Avishai has warned that "political freedom, freedom as a way of life, is of use only to people who... have complex thoughts which they can articulate."⁴¹ Zamenhof himself could not have been less totalitarian in his outlook: in a speech at Geneva in August 1906 he made clear that although his invention was motivated by a high ideal, the language now exists and belongs, not to any central ideology or authority, but to every Esperantist, who is free to use the language for any purpose he wants.⁴²

39- See Berdichevsky 1988.

40- See Horvitz 2012. A coin was counter-stamped "Esperanto Si" (which is all very well, but shouldn't it have been "Jes"?) by the republicans, who printed Esperanto-language posters calling for the international movement to join the struggle. The fascist régime executed the republican Cayetano Redondo Acena on 21 May 1940: among his capital offenses was the advocacy of Esperanto. But attitudes changed; and in 1968 Generalissimo Franco himself became a patron of the language.

41- Berdichevsky 1988, p. 37.

42- Forster 1982, p. 95 f. One perceives in Zamenhof's intellectual open-mindedness an echo of the ethos of Jewish learning: for Talmudists, the Biblical *text* is canonized, but not its *meanings*.

Hebrew is risen: Eliezer ben Yehuda.

Another Eliezer, Eliezer ben Yehuda (born Eliezer Yitshak Perlman in Luzhki, present-day Belarus, 1858-1922), did not share the optimism of his contemporary and coreligionist Eliezer (Leyzer) Zamenhof about the long-term viability of Jewish life in Europe. Rejecting both Yiddish and the idea of an auxiliary language with a cosmopolitan base, he focused on shaping a spoken Hebrew for everyday secular use in the historical homeland of the Jewish people. Ben Yehuda moved his family in 1881 to Jerusalem, then in Ottoman-ruled Palestine, where he raised his children in a Modern Hebrew that he himself revived, and in some ways created. His son Itamar Ben-Avi (the surname means “Son of my Father”, which sounds decidedly Christ-like, given the language and the quasi-religious ideological impetus), whose ideas, as we shall see presently, were to converge somewhat with Esperanto, was thus the first native speaker of Hebrew as a living, fully everyday language in nearly two millennia.

Like Zamenhof, Ben Yehuda, too, was concerned about the official and pervasive folk anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe, which for the 19th century peaked with the terrible pogroms that swept the Russian Empire in 1881.⁴³ He came around to his project in an interesting way. The British writer George Eliot (1819-1880) was actually a woman, but she used a man’s name because of the social barriers that impeded a woman from embarking on a male-dominated career. Eliot apparently felt the injustice against women so deeply that she could not directly address it in her writing, so chose instead to write about the archetypally persecuted nation instead—the Jews. Although the late 19th century was a time of relative emancipation for Jews in Western Europe, prejudices still ran (and run) deep. In the Middle Ages, Jews and women had even been associated in popular superstition—Jewish men were believed to menstruate. The hero of Eliot’s last novel, *Daniel Deronda* (1876), is a Jewish boy unaware of his origins who is raised by a gentile, aristocratic English family. But he learns of his true nature, and boldly determines not only not to conceal it and assimilate, but to embrace it and to go one step further—Daniel declares that he intends to revive the Hebrew language as an everyday tongue and to emigrate to the Land of Israel. Ben Yehuda, who was fully at home in Russian language and culture, as indeed was Zamenhof, read the novel in a serialized Russian translation. Ironically, it was not any act by one of his own such as the famous return to Israel of the medieval Spanish Hebrew poet Yehuda ha-Levi, that inspired him, but a novel by an English gentile woman, in Russian translation, that gave him his great idea.⁴⁴ In 1879 he

43- Worse was yet to come, with the Kishinev pogrom of 1903, the massacres of Jews in the Ukraine and Poland during the civil war that followed the Great October Socialist Revolution, and of course the Holocaust itself. But the 1881 pogroms were still a watershed, provoking both the mass migration of Ashkenazi Jews to America and the beginning of serious, large-scale repatriation (*‘aliyah*) to the Land of Israel.

44- Part of the great idea—the turning point—was a change of consciousness. Hitherto Jews had been largely passive, responding of necessity to the Gentile world, but had not sought to exercise their own initiative, to conceive of independent agency rather than reaction to, or reliance upon, stimuli from a gentile power. A transformation of attitude from an internalized sense of inferiority to self-affirmation and valorization was required for this to happen; and George Eliot’s boldly creative insight was part of the impetus to it. (On her intensive study of Jewish history see Himmelfarb 2009.) A decade ago the →

published an article in the journal *Ha-Shahar* (“The Dawn”, an expectable title but one still perhaps modeled on Russian *pacceem*) on reviving Hebrew as a spoken language—two years later, as the pogroms raged across the Russian Empire, he settled in Jerusalem.

Ben Yehuda assembled a lexicon culled mainly from the various stages of Hebrew literature from periods both before and after the exile—Biblical, Mishnaic, medieval, and so on—and imposed upon these a regular grammar and syntax. The latter systems sometimes depart from the earlier forms of the language, whilst the idiomatic character of Modern Hebrew is in some instances radically different, and scholars have proposed a Russian or Yiddish basis for this divergence. The linguist Suzanne Romaine describes the process with fairness: “Modern Hebrew did not evolve naturally over generations in a continuous chain of native speakers, but is the product of deliberate efforts undertaken by individuals and groups. Its revival can be considered a kind of language planning.”⁴⁵ Hagège estimates that Ben Yehuda created about 300 new words for Modern Hebrew, of which 90 or so have endured in living speech. An example is *zehut*, “identity”, from *zeh* “this”, modeled on Arabic *huwiyya*, “*idem*”, from *huwa*, “he”. Some of the terms created or promoted by Ben Yehuda replaced stilted expressions employed by the Maskilim, so *mis'adah* “restaurant” for *bet okhel*, *milon* “dictionary” for *sefer milim*, and *hayyal* “soldier” for *ish tsava*.⁴⁶ Modern Hebrew has also calqued expressions from other languages: Yiddish of course, but also Russian. An Israeli ladybug is *parat Moshe rabbenu*, “the cow of our teacher Moses”, probably an adaptation, as a direct rendering of the Russian for the tiny, pretty insect, *Божья коровка*, “God’s little cow”, might sound blasphemous to a devout Jew.⁴⁷ In the case of Esperanto, even more frequently, scholars detect a very strong Russian influence; that of Yiddish is less clearly definable.⁴⁸ Bankrolled by a generous father-in-

→ noted American writer Edmund White came to give a talk on his new novel *Hotel De Dream* (White 2007) at the Brattle Theater, Harvard Square, Cambridge, MA. The novel deals with the dying days of the American writer Stephen Crane, who has determined to write a last book, about a young male prostitute. What fascinates Crane about the boy, whom he has encountered by chance in the street, is not an interest in sexual deviance *per se* but the fact that the youth is unashamed of his homosexuality, which was a revolutionary attitude towards a serious social stigma. Joseph Conrad remonstrates with Crane, convincing him that publishing such a book will destroy his reputation. The Cantabrigian audience were sympathetic to this imagined, literary precursor to gay liberation. When I rose during the discussion after the lecture to suggest to White that he had written a parallel work to *Daniel Deronda*, the audience were visibly disturbed. But when he replied affirmatively that this indeed had been his aim, that he had in fact written the Introduction to the latest edition of Eliot’s novel, and that he viewed gay liberation and Zionism as much the same thing, a ripple of revulsion swept the hall. It has evidently become *de rigueur* in the orthodoxy of American political correctness to support every kind of human liberation except that of the Jews.

45- Suzanne Romaine, “Revitalized Languages as Invented Languages,” pp. 185-225, esp. p. 186, in Adams 2011.

46- Hagège 2009, p. 283.

47- Hagège 2009, p. 304. But as Zachary Baker points out, the term more likely came to Hebrew *via* Yiddish *משה רבנוס קיעלע Moshe rabbenus kiyele*, “the little cow of our teacher Moses”; another Yiddish term for “ladybug” is *משיחל meshikhl*, “little Messiah”!

48- On the definite and important input and influence of Russian in Esperanto see Колкер 1985; on the more tenuous linguistic connection of Hebrew and Yiddish to Esperanto see Gold 1980. It is true that Esperanto morphology is to some extent agglutinative and non-Indo-European; but aspects of it, in particular verbal prefixes, are likely to have been inspired by Russian—Zamenhof’s mother tongue.

law, Ben Yehuda moved his family to Ottoman-ruled “Palestine”, settled in Jerusalem, and he and his long-suffering spouse, like Mrs. Zamenhof a true *eshet hayyil* (“woman of valor”) if not an armed *hayyal*, raised their children as native Hebrew speakers.

Ottoman Turkish had been written in a complex Arabic orthography that impeded literacy: one of the notable acts of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was to decree that Turkish be written in a modified form of the Latin alphabet. The Soviets instituted similar reforms for the same reason, changing the script of various minority languages from Arabic or Mongolian characters (but not Armenian or Georgian, for whose speakers their scripts were too much an element of national identity to part with⁴⁹) to Latin, then Cyrillic—and creating also Latin and Cyrillic writing systems for pre-literate languages. The orthography of Russian, Armenian, and Yiddish was changed and simplified also in the USSR, both to aid literacy and to sever the ties of the speakers of these languages to their older religious traditions. Modern Hebrew, of course, retains the Hebrew alphabet. Though many words are written with *scripta plena*, the semi-vocalic consonantal characters facilitating the reading of vowels (as indeed was common in the Second Temple period, as we know from the Qumran documents), most Modern Hebrew texts are unvocalized, except for poetry and books for children and learners of the language. Ben-Yehuda’s son Itamar Ben-Avi (1882-1943), not so much a harmless eccentric as a creature of his time,⁵⁰ thought that Modern Hebrew should be written in Latin characters, so as to spare people the labor of reading a script without vowels, and published in Jerusalem a short-lived newspaper, *ha Šavuja ha Palestini*, “The Palestinian Week” (with *j* representing the Hebrew ‘*ayin*). The headline for 29 Tevet 5689 (11 January 1929, or XII I. *Balfur* according to Ben-Avi’s reckoning that the Balfour Declaration of 1917, which somewhat vaguely affirmed British support for a Jewish “national home” in the land, marked Year One) ironically reads: *Sefatenu— Esperanto ha Yahadut ha Yolamit, Raq ha Otiyot ha Latiniyot te’afsherna*

49- Armenians traditionally believe that the inventor of their alphabet, St. Mesrop Mashtots’, created it partly through divine inspiration. The laudatory imagery in the hagiography of Mashtots’ by the fifth-century writer Koriun presents the saint, bearing his “tablets”, as it were, of the Armenian alphabet to king and people, as superior to Biblical prototypes such as Moses, who smashed his, and Daniel, who read writing on the wall that portended evil tidings, not good ones. On the steps one ascends to the Matenadaran, the palace-like institute of ancient manuscripts in Erevan, there is a huge statue of Mashtots’ with his alphabet engraved on a tablet, very like the Ten Commandments and intentionally so. See Russell 1994.

50- As Harshav 1990, p. 52 points out, the son of Ben Yehuda was not the only early Zionist to propose the Latinization of Hebrew. Vladimir Jabotinsky (1880-1940), the founder of Revisionist Zionism, advocated the same reform. It is of interest, when one recalls that the young Zamenhof had hoped someday to become a Russian poet, to note that Jabotinsky was a well-known Russian writer before he threw all of his energies into the Jewish national cause. The prominent writers Alexander Kuprin and Leonid Andreyev bemoaned the loss to Russian literature, as though it were a jilted bride. Zamenhof describes his early ambition from the receiving end, as though he were a spurned lover: “I greatly loved that language in which I was educated, that is, Russian. I studied it with the utmost pleasure. I dreamed of becoming someday a great Russian poet... In my childhood I loved the Russian language and all the Russian Empire with a passion; but I soon became convinced that my love was repaid with hatred, that people who saw in me only a disenfranchised alien— despite the fact that I, my grandparents, and my great-grandparents had been born and had worked in this land— styled themselves the sole masters of that language and country. They all hated, despised, and persecuted my brothers.” (Cited by Kiselman 2010, pp. 41-42; the translation from the original Esperanto is mine.)

Hhalom yafeh zeh, “Our language is the Esperanto of World Jewry, Only the Latin Letters will make possible this beautiful Dream.” This rather explicit association of Hebrew with Esperanto is interesting: Hebrew had a past as a natural language; Esperanto, as a recent invention, had never possessed any such natural status. Yet this seems to have been for Ben-Avi less important than the political ideals and corresponding socio-linguistic factors that made the two languages alike.

Modern Hebrew was mentioned in the context of Esperanto pejoratively, too. It was not only devout Jews who objected to the vulgarization and coarsening of the sacred tongue of Israel in its employment towards secular purposes: three years before Ben-Avi’s headline, in December 1926, the scholar of Kabbalah Prof. Gershom Scholem, a secular Jew from Germany who was to become one of the intellectual pillars of the new Hebrew University of Jerusalem, wrote to Franz Rosenzweig decrying the Modern Hebrew of the Zionists as a “faceless lingo” and “ghastly gibberish”. He continued, “Nobody with clear foresight would have mustered the demonic courage to try to utilize the language in a situation in which only an Esperanto could have been created.”⁵¹ The rather idiosyncratic work of Paul Wexler represents the extreme of the view that Modern Hebrew is entirely a *Plansprache*— a Slavic language with a Semitic lexicon. Interestingly, he mentions Esperanto several times in his argument: he proposes that it performs a partial shift from a Yiddish lexicon (!) to a “deformed Latin” while preserving Yiddish syntax and phonology, and is therefore to be considered Slavic. He cites approvingly Hillel Halkin’s remark that Modern Hebrew is “a kind of Semiticized Esperanto” and notes that Kutscher asked whether Modern Hebrew was still Hebrew indeed, or whether it might be best to consider it “entirely unnatural and artificial like Esperanto”.⁵²

Modern Hebrew is, to be sure, a revived language as well as a planned or artificial one. In either case its success is completely unparalleled: it is now the official language of the reborn Jewish state in the Land of Israel, with nearly nine million native speakers. Unlike Esperanto, it is the everyday language of every aspect of life. It is also the language of a people who can now defend themselves against an age-old hatred with armed force, rather than only arguments and appeals to man’s better nature. Because of where they were, thanks to the choice their father had made, the Ben Yehuda children were not murdered by the Nazis. Zamenhof’s were. In that sense, one must agree with Wexler: “The failure of Esperanto highlights the importance of territoriality and nationalism— two factors present in the Modern Hebrew experience.”⁵³ Hebrew is a living language, used for every purpose and field of human endeavor, both private and public: Esperanto is not. The enterprise of Zionism gave Hebrew-speaking Jews the refuge of a state and the protection of an army, which Esperanto could never even aspire to do.

51- Mendes-Flohr 1993, p. 232.

52- Wexler 1990, pp. 11-12, 121 n. 52; Kutscher 1982, p. 296.

53- Wexler 1990, p. 123. It is an insightful, if not original, observation: after the fall of the last Moorish emirate in Spain, Granada, A. de Nebrija wrote in his *Castilian Grammar*, “always, language accompanies power”.

In the jargon of present-day anti-Semitism “Israel” and “Zionism” have largely replaced “Jew”; and some anti-Zionist Jews have accordingly rejected Hebrew, embracing in opposition to it an ostensibly progressive and cosmopolitan Yiddish that, so they claim, is unsullied by nationalism. The animus against Hebrew is not new; it just took other forms in the past. The European fascination with the language of Scripture was more than balanced by gentile enmity towards the nation of Israel; so for anti-Semites Hebrew was a language of witches, and the sigils of grimoires are replete with crudely drawn Hebrew *nomina sacra*. Medieval Christians also maintained the superstitious fear that among the hordes of Gog and Magog that were to fall upon Christendom during the Apocalypse there would be ruddy-featured Jews, *Rotjuden*,⁵⁴ descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes, led by the Queen of the Amazons⁵⁵ and lusting for vengeance against the nations that had been mistreating their coreligionists over the long centuries. According to this eschatological fantasy, present-day Jews learned Hebrew, not only to read their books and chant their prayers, but also so that when the time came the invading *Rotjuden*, who had never given up their native tongue, would recognize it among the people of conquered realms and would spare their own. Hebrew was to be the smeared blood on the doorpost, warding off the Angel of Death, as it were, in this recapitulation of the Tenth Plague— with the Ten Tribes the strong hand and the mighty arm of the Almighty. There are various interesting facets of this story: for instance, the fearful expectation of vengeance betrays a guilty conscience. People knew it was wrong for them to persecute the Jews. Another is the seemingly incurable male fear of powerful women. And yet another is redness: the Book of Samuel describes King David as ruddy, but we do not know whether the *Rotjuden* were supposed to have his beautiful eyes, too. One rather thinks that they did not. Red hair has often been regarded as the sign of an oversexed and duplicitous character.⁵⁶ But the most interesting aspect of the complex legend for our present purpose is the suggestion that Hebrew somewhere remained a living language, by which one means the common everyday parlance of a population in all functions of existence— home, street, field, market, workshop, and, in varying degrees, government as well. In the real-life Diaspora, Hebrew was used frequently in writing and sometimes in speech, and it did develop, but it was not living in the fullest sense. The belief that the Ten Lost Tribes still lived somewhere and spoke Hebrew apparently existed among Jews as well: it would explain the great excitement that attended the appearance of the mysterious Eldad the Danite, emissary of a Jewish king of the south, who used an unfamiliar kind of Hebrew (it now appears it was laced with words from Yemenite Arabic;⁵⁷ and there had indeed been a Jewish kingdom in South Arabia, that of Ḥimyar— pilgrims from there to the Land of Israel had their own

54- On the *Rotjuden* see Gow 1995, esp. p. 61; on the Ten Tribes see Benite 2009.

55- Gow 1995, p. 73.

56- Gow 1995, p. 67; on cultural beliefs about redheads generally, see Harvey 2015.

57- For instance, he called Heb. *yōnāh*, “dove”, *tīntarā*: see Schloessinger 1908, p. 44. The romance of this lone traveler from the remote clime of free Jews inspired the *nom de guerre* of Israel Eldad, after whom the town of Kfar Eldad is named in modern Israel.

crypt in the necropolis of Bet She‘arim, where they left South Arabian inscriptions), and the mission of David Reubeni some centuries later.⁵⁸ Some Christians believed Hebrew was still a spoken language, and they feared the idea; some Jews believed it was, and the idea filled them with hope and joy.

The roots of Esperanto: di-, tri-, and polyglossia.

Although *la aŭtoro de Esperanto* and some of his disciples nurtured deep down the eschatological hope that Esperanto might one day be the sole language of a united and harmonious human race—the menacing tower of Babel transformed into a luminous Pharos (an artistic vision of precisely this image was to be employed on a medal of the State of Israel honoring Zamenhof, to be considered presently)—it was not created so much to supplant existing languages as to be an auxiliary language, one that might serve well purposes for which a given local language was not equipped. To Americans, Australians, even Canadians (despite the official status of French, it is used mainly in Quebec, outside of which it is often useless) accustomed to using English for all purposes, and expecting foreigners to accommodate them, the idea of an auxiliary language is perhaps hard to grasp. It is easier for a Finn or a Hungarian, who does not expect that anyone elsewhere, except for expatriates, will understand his language: he will automatically have recourse to an auxiliary language such as English, and is often likely to have a vocabulary suited only to the limited purposes of the business he must conduct in it. And for a Russian Jew of the Pale the idea of an auxiliary language to be used for some purposes but not others was natural, since he spoke multiple languages, each with a particular sphere of use, and a defined social status as well.

For everyday purposes in the home, most Russian Jews spoke Yiddish. This is a Middle High German dialect with an additional Romance substratum of late Latin and Old French that its earliest speakers inherited from their forebears in northern Italy and Gaul. It is suffused with the Hebrew and Aramaic of Jewish ritual, learning, and lore. As Yiddish came to be spoken to the east of its cradle in the Rhineland, it acquired loans from various Slavic languages as well as Hungarian and other tongues. Its very status invited one to question the bounds of the definition of a language: in Zamenhof’s time and for long thereafter it was called, deprecatingly, a kind of low slang (the Russian loan *жаргон* is

58- See the exhaustive surveys of the state of research in Robin 2015. Bowersock 2013 provides a lucid and learned overview of the larger subject, placing the Jewish Himyaritic kingdom, which lasted from about 380 to 525, and the other states and peoples of Ethiopia, Yemen, and contiguous regions, in the context of Byzantine-Sasanian politics and the globally important rise of Islam. He perhaps tends slightly to exaggerate negatively the massacre of Christians in Najran; but even so his work is immeasurably superior to Phillips 1955, whose book on South Arabian archaeology does not say a single word about the Jewish kingdom of Himyar—presumably out of deference to the Saudi hosts of the excavations, and perhaps with some authorial bias as well. The story of David Reubeni and his devoted follower Solomon Molkho still excites the Jewish imagination: see the novel by Simonhoff 1964. Indeed the legendary name of king Joseph of Chaibar might be the historical Joseph of Himyar, by scribal error (in Arabic transmission, where medial letters can easily be distorted) or by the common phonological confusion of b and m, and by additional contamination with the name of the Jewish tribe of Khaybar that figures in Qur’anic and later accounts of the struggles of the prophet Muhammad.

used for this); more affectionately, *mameloshn*, “mother tongue”. It is an astonishingly rich, versatile, expressive language, and although in the Pale of Settlement it had a defined place, it also was a language resisting imprisonment in a particular socio-linguistic niche, having shifting boundaries and functions. It could serve as an international tongue, a common speech for Jews from different countries meeting each other, corresponding, or reading a newspaper.⁵⁹ It was (and for many Orthodox Jews still is) an auxiliary language of religious scholarship, used for both discussion of and writing about sacred texts in the Scriptural languages, Hebrew and Aramaic. Many of the discourses Lubavitcher Hasidim print and study now were composed in an “elevated” Yiddish rich in Hebrew and Aramaic. The plethora of loans from both ancient languages in Yiddish helped as a kind of an interlocking mechanism, indeed, for such auxiliary use, additionally and crucially endowing Yiddish with a nobility and dignity.⁶⁰ Despite this dignity, Yiddish was intrinsically an open language of flux and development, resisting a fixed morpho-grammatical system. Zamenhof famously wracked his brains working on such a canonical grammar for Yiddish, but finally abandoned the project.⁶¹ But Yiddish probably inspired him to create a language that would not supplant a natural language, but exercise rather

59- When I was a boy I heard the joke about the congress of Esperantists at which delegate after delegate, from every country on earth, gets up and delivers a polished, eloquent speech in *la internacia lingvo*. During the coffee break they all gather in the vestibule and talk in Yiddish. The joke is about both the pretensions of Esperanto and the idealism of the Jews, who when we discuss world peace, love, and understanding usually end up just arguing with one another. *Imru la-Shem*, “Profess ye unto the Lord,” as the Yiddish expression goes... and talk to the wall! From an inner-Esperanto perspective, the joke describes also the tendency of some Esperantists *krokodili*, i.e., to speak one’s native tongue in a setting where it would be appropriate to speak Esperanto.

60- R. Mendel Zirkind of Chabad of the Central Valley, Fresno, California, a native speaker of Yiddish, in a conversation in January 2019 maintained that Yiddish when properly spoken is polite, and therefore although not precisely a holy tongue is still less profane than English— his second language and of course the dominant one in the outer world. For a language to be fully natural and normal it has to be able to express everything that everyday life involves, and this includes swear words and profanity. Yiddish has these of course but the pious communities who are now the last speakers tend to avoid them. In the case of Esperanto, which its creator saw fit not to endow with obscenities, a brilliant Hungarian poet, Kálmán Kalocsay (1891-1976), writing under the *nom de plume* Peter Peneter, composed in his erotic cycle *Sekretaj sonetoj* (1932) a poem describing the sexual act and consisting entirely of words and expressions meaning “to fuck”. One is reminded of the Zionist definition of normality: a Jewish cop arresting a Jewish hooker.

61- In his *Hilelismo*, 1901, Zamenhof wrote, “The reader should not think we belong to the enemies of jargon [i.e., Yiddish— JRR]. On the contrary: while our intelligentsia almost without exception— not excepting even the writers in jargon— relate to jargon with the greatest disrespect and consider it something barbarous, we always related and relate even now to it with love and we see in this so-called jargon a language like all others. 20-25 years ago we worked arduously and passionately for a long time on this language, and were then convinced that it had not only a richness of forms but also the most systematic and rigorous grammar, in many respects original and remarkable. We systematically worked on this grammar and were already prepared to publish it, dreaming of founding a pure and civilized neo-Jewish literature in place of the present error-ridden and feeble one. But subsequently we came to the conclusion that this would be a matter without any aim and future, that, being itself purely a local and provisional dialect, jargon has no relation of any kind to Jewishness and that by its cultivation we would not be contributing to Jewishness any kind of favor.” This was written originally in Russian; I have translated from the Esperanto rendering of Kiselman 2010, p. 42.

an auxiliary function: as Harshav observed, "... Yiddish was merely part— albeit an indispensable part— of an interconnected cultural polysystem, and fulfilled only some of the functions of a 'normal' language."⁶² In the same context, significantly, Harshav further noted that "internationalisms"— that is, words from French, Latin, and Greek accepted into the standard lexicon of most modern languages, such as Russian, Polish, German, and English— made their way into Yiddish from these languages. Thus both the idea of a language with a limited, auxiliary social function, and the idea of forming a lexicon based upon already-known "internationalisms", could easily have come to Zamenhof (and, indeed, to Ben Yehuda as well) precisely from the language that was already in its way an auxiliary speech for Jews from different European states with different official languages— Yiddish.

Natural diglossia is a phenomenon remote from the consciousness of the native speakers of imperial languages such as American English or the Russian of the empire and subsequent Soviet Union: they were confident that one language alone sufficed for all purposes and there was no need to learn another. An old joke from the days of the British Raj sums up the attitude: if an Indian native pretends not to understand English, rephrase your comment in the form of an order. If he persists in his obstinacy, repeat the command loudly! But diglossia exists in societies that from the formal designation of their official and spoken language one might think to be monolingual. Arabic speakers are diglossic: there is a standard form of the language that is written and used for official purposes, and it is employed alongside regional dialects of Arabic that are only spoken and are often mutually unintelligible. To take a simple example, in "higher" Arabic the verb "to see" is *ra'ā*, the same as the standard Hebrew word; in "lower", the unrelated *shāf*. "Bread" in Egyptian Arabic is *'aish*; in Palestinian, *khubz*. (But in Hebrew the word for a large, flat bread into which falafels are rolled, as opposed to the smaller, cheaper pocket pita, comes from Jerusalemite Arabic: *ashtanura*, literally, "bread from the earth oven". So even this simple example has its complications.)

Hebrew and Aramaic were the sacred tongues, grammatically defined, until recently with a closed sacred canon. Actually by Zamenhof's time this canon was not entirely closed, since before Ben Yehuda's work there existed the thriving and abundant Hebrew literature of the *Haskalah*, the Jewish Enlightenment. But here there is a problem: since Hebrew had not been repurposed to meet the demands of a spoken, secular language, its style and content were still reliant upon the fixed written canon. Thus the literature of the *Haskalah* was embellished by a preponderance of quotations, or, depending on one's point of view weighted down with them.⁶³ This style was called *melitzah*, "embellishment"— a kind of mosaic (I mean the little stones of different colors put together to make a picture, not the polite way of referring to Jews *via* the name of our Teacher Moses) of phrases lifted whole out of context and juxtaposed with yet others to say something new, maybe

62- Harshav 1986, pp. 10-11.

63- See Reshef 2011, p. 547.

wholly unintended by the original author, human or Divine, of the Hebrew quotation.⁶⁴ This preponderance of the quotational style raises the question of whether Hebrew and its literature before Ben Yehuda had a *langue* in the sense of the term as Saussure used it, other than that of the Bible. Glinert has suggested an analogy with the formal standard Arabic of the media, official functions and correspondence and even most literature, *fushḥā*, which is not Qur'anic but is distinct from the often mutually unintelligible varieties of spoken Arabic.⁶⁵ Yet just as the practitioners of the *melitzah* style larded their writings with Biblical and Mishnaic Hebrew (and Aramaic) phrases and sentences, it has been estimated that up to one fifth of the proverbs employed in the active vocabulary of Arab villagers is in the “higher” *fushḥā*.⁶⁶ As to whether there was a pre-Ben Yehuda Hebrew *parole*, Morag and others have cited the use of Hebrew by Yemenite Jews as a spoken idiom, albeit in connection with sacred subjects and in the synagogue, a kind of ethical *melitzah* in living practice: this example of the use of the language had a great impact upon Ashkenazic Jews of the *Yishuv* considering the viability of a revived Hebrew as a national language.⁶⁷ The Yemenite case of a limited spoken Hebrew offered another powerful attraction: it came from the romanticized, sunlit Middle Eastern ancestral home region, not the hard, dark Eastern European Diaspora. Modern Hebrew was to adopt, accordingly, “Sephardic” rather than Ashkenazic pronunciation, even though the latter has some archaisms that the former has lost.

Diglossia is not necessarily a marker of language in flux: it can be a stable situation for a millennium.⁶⁸ One anchor of that stability could be the fixed character of the “higher” language: in the case of Arabic, the *Qur'an* and its language are regarded by Muslims—the majority of Arabic-speakers, though there are Christian Arabs and there is a Judeo-Arabic—as outside space and time. The Hebrew and Aramaic canon imposes a like stability on Hebrew: for Ben Yehuda, then, the challenge was not to ennoble the language he was resurrecting for daily use—it was already sacred—but to render it more adaptive, flexible, and versatile. Zamenhof faced the opposite challenge: although Esperanto assumed from the beginning, through its lexicon and much of its morphology, the mantle of a high language, Latin,⁶⁹ it had no sacred scripture behind it, no historical anchor. This had to be invented, and Zamenhof thus assembled a book of Esperanto proverbs (cf. the stable

64- See Pelli 1993. Skibell parodies this style, hilariously, in *A Curable Romantic*: see *infra*.

65- See Glinert 1988.

66- Ferguson 1959, p. 329.

67- Morag 1193, p. 212.

68- Ferguson 1959, p. 332.

69- The importance of Latin cannot be overemphasized. To the Poles, whose West Slavic language has a great many Latin loan-words, Latin was a marker, not only of their Catholic faith, but of their tenuous claim to membership in the mainstream civilization of Western Europe despite their subjugation to the Russian Empire. Till recent days, at least one Polish scholarly journal of classical studies was published in Latin so as to be accessible to an international audience. Zamenhof would also have appreciated from the terminology of his profession, medicine, the importance of Latin as a world language— a recent book on Latin (Leonhardt 2013) calls it exactly that.

presence in spoken Arabic of proverbs in the literary, Qur'anic language, noted above) and, most importantly, compiled his *Fundamenta Krestomatio*, a collection of translations from classics of European literature, to serve as a model of literary style and usage. The book was first published at Warsaw in 1903; my copy is a 1969 *foto-represo* from Britain of the *17a eldono* of 1954. Most of the *fabeloj kaj legendoj*, *anekdotoj*, *rakontoj*, and *poezio* that comprise the volume have, with the exception of Lermontov, Puŝkin, Heine, and a few others, aged badly and are the work of contemporary forgotten and forgettable Russian and Eastern European writers and poets. It is unlikely the chrestomathy, for all its limpid style (though there are already archaisms in it), would excite an aspiring young Esperantist writer now.

Zamenhof translated also parts of the Hebrew Bible into Esperanto; and later writers have translated the Christian Gospels, so there is now a full Esperanto Bible, for anyone wishing to adorn their *verkoj* with *melica*. Yet despite the inadequacy of Zamenhof's book, the language itself was so well-made and pleasant that, with the exception of Ido, no fragmentation of the language occurred. Thus the inventor of Esperanto equipped it with both a solid, logical armature and a lucid, familiar lexicon that fit well into the polyglossic mind of a late-19th-century European and particularly an Eastern European Jew. The Hebrew of the Haskalah served another kind of polyglossic function, one without a spoken and idiomatic component: this is what Ben Yehuda sought to change. His project required a territory, on which Modern Hebrew was to occupy the sociolinguistic niche of a state language, the Jews moving from di-, tri-, and polyglossia to the monoglossia of a Frenchman, Englishman, or Russian. Zamenhof had no such need or ambition, but his invention lacked a crucial component: an antiquity, and with that a mythology, a spiritual aspect.

The spirituality of an invented language.

Hebrew possesses the advantage that it has been a language steeped in spirituality since the memory of man runneth not to the contrary: the task of the Haskalah and later of Ben Yehuda was, if anything, to secularize it. But it may equally be argued that the very sanctity of Hebrew endowed it with the charisma and the special place in the heart that made it the best candidate for the Zionist project. Esperanto was conceived from the first as an auxiliary language in the secular realm, but if that were all there was to it, it is hard to see how it could have ignited a warm enthusiasm in the human heart, that impetus to offer oneself to an ideal without which such a project might easily founder—it might well have become no more than a sort of glorified Morse code.⁷⁰ has two sacralizing features

70- Not to belittle Morse code: Prof. David Wunsch, a professor of mathematics at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and a versatile historian of radio and other technologies who offered many lively guest lectures over the years to my Harvard classes (he is also an enthusiast of diasporist Yiddish, which made for lively political discussions), made me appreciate how the telegraph transformed the society and economy of the world in the nineteenth century, how it was truly the Internet of that era. Zamenhof might well have seen Esperanto as a technological phenomenon and contribution to progress precisely in the context of the steam engine, the railroad, and, indeed, Morse code.

we have already observed that helped it to gain adherents. First, its core vocabulary was based on the lexicon of the sacred language of European civilization, Latin. And it was the genius of Zamenhof that he selected mainly those Latin roots that are common also to non-Romance languages, principally of the Germanic and Slavic families. Second, Zamenhof endowed Esperanto with *la interna ideo*, and this activating principle became inseparable from the study and use of the language itself: the language has a soul. But we may note a third, striking aspect that it is safe to say Zamenhof could not possibly have foreseen: its adoption and sacralization by people associated with the Spiritualist movement in Brazil— a vast country where Esperanto has flourished. Most Europeans and North Americans do not think of Brazil in the course of a day, or pay much attention to the few news reports that emanate from it. Few learn its pleasantly euphonious language, Portuguese, the sound of which I once heard likened to a large number of brightly-plumed parrots speaking Russian. But it has given us the happy, vivid, strange gift of a prophetic vision of Esperanto in the astral world: the narrative of Atanagildo and Ramatis.

Spiritualism: the belief in a variety of occult ideas such as reincarnation, the existence of invisible levels of existence including an astral plane, and the possibility of communicating with supernatural beings and spirits of the dead— is very popular in Latin America, particularly in the Cuban Santería and Brazilian Candomblé. These are closely related Afro-Hispanic syncretic religions in which divinities (*orishas*) of West Africa, particularly of the Congo and the Yoruba region of Nigeria, are fused with saints (*santos*) of the Catholic church. Possession by the particular god of the pantheon to whom the worshipper is chiefly devoted, and into whose rites he has been initiated, is probably the most important experience of a *santero*; and this shamanistic practice serves as the crucial point of contact with spiritualism, in which mediumistic practice and experience, which are akin to the experience of possession, are likewise central. A Brazilian writer and medium, Hercílio Maes, channels the revelations of a spirit named Ramatis, a name explained as those of the loving, tragically parted divine couple of ancient Indian epic, Rama and Sita, spelled forward and backward so as to achieve union at the middle (a resolution of the binary pair into *Echad*, One, again, that Aron Leyeles might have enjoyed). Ramatis, who lived through many reincarnations, one of them in tenth-century Indochina, works to unite the philosophical schools of East and West. (Perhaps the 17th-century Mughal prince Dara Shikoh, who penned *Majmu‘ al-bahrain*, “The meeting of the two seas”, i.e., of East and West, and Goethe, with his *West-östliche Divan*, were his disciples at one time.) In *La Misio de Esperanto*, a section of *La Pretervivado de la Spirito*, Ramatis teaches (I translate from the Esperanto), “To believe or not to believe? This is the dilemma of the modern, pragmatic human being. But every true Esperantist feels intuitively that Esperanto has roots not only in the material world, that its spread does not follow rational logic, that the persecutions and schisms did not succeed in killing it. Could it be perhaps because of some sort of supernatural intervention?”⁷¹ It could be a believing Jew talking

71- Ramatis 2000, p. 9.

about the holy language and the survival of Israel.

The medium goes on to relate that there are institutions in the otherworld dedicated to the study of Esperanto and to the mission of its diffusion in the physical plane. The Esperanto Academy is in the part of the astral plane called the Great Heart. The Academy operates *antaŭvidante ĉiujn estontajn rezultojnde la natura progreso de la lingvo*, “foreseeing all future results of the natural progress of the language”. Zamenhof studied there before his incarnation in Poland, having assembled material for his language from Hebrews and Greek savants in previous lives.⁷² Esperanto is thus not merely a sacred language protected by Providence but one with a venerable, fabulous past in which the sages of East and West met in unity. The Academy itself is described in detail, as an edifice in the style of Periclean Athens appearing from above as a star with seven radiating, gently rounded fingers—wings of the building with alabastrine walls and high windows. The central tower rises some 200 feet and is tiled with a luminous astral material that emits sometimes an azure-lily light. The building stands in a setting of green grass, exotic blooms, and forest glades that glow like the rosy dawn. Much space is given to the description of the luxuriant flowers; but the medium returns to the business of the Academy: there are departments of history, phonetics, word formation, psychophysics, classics, interchange and diffusion, observation and protection. Instruction is offered in various languages including Sanskrit and Greek but also the tongues of Lemuria and Atlantis; and here Zamenhof was inspired to base his language upon Latin roots. I do not know the precise nature of some of the interesting disciplines of this curriculum; and wish Zamenhof had included some lexical items from Atlantean in Esperanto. Prof. Esther Schor heard of Ramatis when living in a Brazilian Esperanto-speaking village, and it is quite easy to find the complete revelation on line in either Esperanto translation or Maes’ original Portuguese. Although there is no indication that this richly imaginative mythography has caught on amongst the sober Esperantists of the “first world”, it is somehow poignant that thousands of miles from Poland, on a fabulous continent so removed from the mainstream of the history of the Jews, Zamenhof has become an avatar, the bringer of a sacred tongue under the protection of the hosts of heaven. And the Academy hovering in the ether over Brazil, its domes glinting, its gardens diffusing their heady perfume, seems a tropical Esperantist’s dream of the Temple of Jerusalem, or its heavenly counterpart, complete with its own *yeshivah shel Ma’alah*, its Heavenly Academy.

The striking case of Ramatis demonstrates that the association of an international or planned language with the matters of the spirit can act as the fulfillment of an emotional need to secure that tongue a dignified place in the structure of the cosmos. It need not be arbitrary or a mere self-conscious strategy to capture interest and commitment. A linguistic project must have a social component, and religious feeling can be and often is paramount. Language and spirituality are indissolubly connected in the speculation over centuries on the *Sefer Yetzirah* that we have shown to possess continued vitality in, for instance,

72- Ramatis 2000, p. 10.

the modern Yiddish poem “Symmetry”. One can go farther, thematically and spatially: since the launch of the Soviet satellite Sputnik in 1957 and the first manned mission into space four years later of the cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin, the perennial human questions about meaning, identity, and communication have made the crossing from the hitherto exclusive domain of religion to science and science-fiction, have come to embrace the altered, modern experience of the cosmos. Invented languages pervade science fiction, in literature and film. The ostensibly non-human Klingon language, already mentioned, emerged from the American television and movie science-fiction series *Star Trek*, but its concerns are narrowly military and aggressive. Of much greater profundity is the science-fiction novel *Solaris* by Stanislaw Lem, a writer in Socialist Poland, made into a film in 1971 by the Soviet director Andrei Tarkovsky. There, a planet consisting of a mind-ocean communicates with human beings by addressing our conscience and emotions through plasmatic embodiments of people we have loved and lost, in a pan-chronic or a-chronic manner that revives memory, enhances present experience, and enables precognition. Much of the film takes place in long reveries: remembered childhood scenes, water burbling over the nodding and dancing of underwater plants, the animation of wintry landscapes in Netherlandish paintings, the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.⁷³ The language of *Solaris* is a closing of the circle of time, of deep loss restored, of love renewed between man and wife, parent and child. It is a very *interna ideo* indeed, and very religious.

Several years ago an American science-fiction writer, Ted Chiang, published a novella, “The Story of Your Life”, which was soon after made into a movie, *Arrival*.⁷⁴ In the film, aliens arrive on earth in vast disc-shaped ships with dark, rough surfaces that remind one more of the naturally-shaped river stones East Asian scholars use for meditation, or of Indian *svayambhuti lingams*, than of the shiny, metallic flying saucers of popular culture and UFO sightings. They are depicted as large but graceful creatures, moving through the mist of their inner atmosphere a bit like both elephants and octopi, and their audible speech resembles the song of humpbacked whales. The authorities draft a university linguist who has recently lost her daughter to a rare disease (and has lost her husband, too, in the wake of the bereavement) to attempt communication with them. This is accomplished by means of writing: the aliens project, rather like squid expelling ink, blot-like, roughly contoured circles of different kinds. These characters, which are not the same as the spoken language, have a roughly circular shape because they express an understanding of non-linear time, of a vision of life that is not determined not by its quantitative temporal beginning or end but is defined qualitatively by its meaning and has no beginning or end. The circle or

73- When I was a student in London in the late 1970s, my classmate Alan Williams (now Professor of Persian at the University of Manchester) and I used to go to midnight showings of *Solaris* at Notting Hill Gate cinema and then talk about it over tea till dawn—like the Rabbis in the Passover Haggadah who forgot the time in their discussion of the Exodus and had to be reminded by their pupils that it was time for the morning *Shema*! These were among the points of spiritual intensity of one’s life on earth; and they were a facet also of one’s appreciation of the immense sanctity and truth-telling power of another language, the великий и могучий Russian language.

74- Chiang 2002 [2016], pp. 91-145. The film is to Esperanto what “The Matrix” was to Gnosticism.

sphere best expresses geometrically and symbolically that view: one recalls the Indian *mandala* or Kabbalistic *sefirah*. But what comes closest perhaps is the Japanese Zen Buddhist painting of *ensō*, a circle swiftly and unevenly drawn with a brush. Such a circle painting is meant to express the inexpressible, to illustrate Buddhist insight into *śūnyatā* (“voidness”), and is sometimes accompanied by the brief saying, “No birth, no death.”⁷⁵

The aliens’ gift to mankind is not their technology, but their language: the linguist who worked with the aliens publishes at the end of the film a book, *The Universal Language*, which army generals and heads of state read. It brings about mutual human understanding and world peace, and the linguist reflects that this is but the beginning of the story. *La Unua Libro* indeed, writ very large. The novella by Ted Chiang offers no such celebratory, quasi-religious happy ending of a successful intergalactic Esperanto, but it is interesting in other ways. The alien heptapods have eyes on all sides of their bodies, so anywhere is “forward”. Accordingly their semasiographic written language is shaped, not in unidirectional sentences but in giant conglomerative “nests” of symbols connected by a single stroke that express a thought as a whole without beginning or end. Interestingly, another of Chiang’s stories, “Seventy-two Letters”,⁷⁶ mentions *Sefer Yetzirah*, *golems*, and *ba’alei Shem* (“Masters of the Name [of God]”), the wonder workers and exorcists of Ashkenazi Jewry from whose ranks emerged R. Israel b. Eliezer, the Ba’al Shem Tov or Besht—the founder of modern Hasidism): in the fictional world of the author tables of letters of the Hebrew alphabet are used to animate robots and homunculi, and this becomes the basis for a technological revolution—a retrospective meditation, perhaps, on an early adumbration of genetic codes and computer language. The Harshav’s lavish edition of the poems by A. Leyeles discussed earlier features prints of the Hebrew alphabet by Ben Shahn (from his “Alphabet of Creation”, the illustrated retelling of a legend from the *Zohar*) and Louis Lozowick in which the letters are grouped into a cluster or conglomerative array, an arrangement Chiang’s extraterrestrial heptapods might appreciate. The threads that connect different aspects of thought here, as one considers speculation on language and form from early Rabbinic Judaism to modern science fiction, form a pattern themselves. They seem to shape, to exist in, a single noosphere—or better, perhaps, a web, as the word for a tractate, *massekhet*, of the Oral Torah, actually means, and what is Gemara, the intellectual foundation of Judaism, if not a primordial world-wide *web*, a hypertext?

The astral plane, mediums, visits by aliens who understand the coming together of past and future through a kind of non-linear script—the cluster of ideas here points towards art. And there was a prolific, visionary artist, a medium who practiced spiritualism. She was a near contemporary of Zamenhof and lived not that far away from him, in Sweden. They never met, but the work of Hilma af Klint (1862-1944) illustrates, literally, some of the themes we have discussed. She claimed to have received transmissions from a number of spirits, the five High Masters, who are named—one has the angelic-sounding name

75- Shimano and Tani 1992, pp. 16-17.

76- Chiang 2002 [2016], pp. 147-203.

Amaliel, with its good Hebrew theophoric suffix. In 1906 she began her Temple series, painting 193 canvases over nine years. The Temple was to be round, a spiraling tower: one recalls the form of the tower of Babel, and her vision indeed has an uncanny resonance with that Tower as it was to be depicted on the medal struck by the State of Israel in 2007 to honor Zamenhof, to be discussed at the end of this essay.⁷⁷ The Star of David was an important symbol for her: she interpreted it as the ascent and descent of the spirit. Af Klint believed she was painting for the future, much as Zamenhof and Ben Yehuda looked into a hoped-for, almost mythical time. She banned any showing of her paintings therefore for twenty years. Like Zamenhof, she loved the color green: it represented to her the union of yellow, which in her synaesthetic consciousness she believed to be male, and blue, which was female. Hilma af Klint after the completion of the Temple series ceased to operate as a medium, preferring to heed an “inner voice”.⁷⁸ Had af Klint and Zamenhof met, perhaps Esperanto might have acquired an iconography, an art form.

A language for the future, an art for the future. Long before, in the ruins of the Paris Commune, in 1871, the gay teenager Arthur Rimbaud declared he was writing for the future. In the 1890s, the French Nabi school (the name was taken from Hebrew נביא *navi*, “prophet”) began to employ crosses, triangles, squares, circles, and esoteric elements of sign language in their art, finally deciding upon pure geometric constructions. They seemed to be groping towards an international, maybe even cosmically universal written language, a *Plansprache* both invented and primordial. They pored over spiritualist writings, and believed in a primal universal religion.⁷⁹ Their group’s name suggests they believed themselves to foresee things to come. These artists and artistic movements have a connection to certain Jewish symbols, to be sure; but it is perhaps potentially more interesting to observe rather the context of prophetic idealism, concepts of unity and of universal communication, and of the very nature of language in creative thought outside the ghetto, and to regard Zamenhof both as a Jew with specific concerns and as a not-so-atypical visionary of one time and place: Europe, at the very end of the age of progress and enlightenment, before the descent into the darkness of fascism and genocide.

***Hatikvish*— a language for Shprintzeleh.**

*Sub la sankta signo de espero
Kolektiĝas pacaj batalantoj,
Kaj rapide kreskos la afero*

77- Such a tower seems to be demonstrable part of the *Zeitgeist* of artists and visionaries gripped by a yearning for the future. For the Russian reader, hearing in his mind *Время, вперед!* The vision, too, is conjured up of Vladimir Tatlin’s monument of 1920 to the Third International. It is a spiraling construction with a shaft at the center: time resolved from both circle and arrow into a steel scaffold, a machine of progress towards peace, love, and understanding: Communism, Esperanto, the Messiah. See Lynton 2009.

78- See Bashkoff 2018.

79- Tuchman 1986, pp. 63-64.

Per laboro de la esperantoj.

“Under the sacred sign of hope
Gather the peaceful warriors,
And rapidly the cause will grow
By the labor of the hopeful.”

(L.L. Zamenhof, “La Espero”, the hymn of the Esperanto movement; third stanza)

“And He said to me, Son of man, these bones are all the house of Israel, and they say, our bones have dried up, and our hope is lost (*ve-avdah tiqvatenu*), we are clean cut off.” (Ezekiel 37:14)

“Hope (*qavveh*) in the Lord; let your heart be strong and courageous— and hope in the Lord.” (Psalm 27:14)

‘Od lo avdah tiqvatenu. “Our hope is not yet lost.” (Naftali Herz Imber, “Hatikvah”,⁸⁰ 1878; adopted by the First Zionist Congress, 1897; national anthem of the State of Israel)

The Apostle Paul praised the Divine virtues of faith, hope, and charity, noting that faith ends with knowledge; and hope, with fulfillment— but charity, the ultimate Christian virtue, is eternal.⁸¹ Hope is more a Jewish value, perhaps, than a Christian one, for even though it is not lost, neither has it yet been fulfilled. In Spain after the expulsion of the Sephardim and during the relentless persecution of the “New” Christians, “Old” Christians who could boast of *limpieza de sangre*, “purity of blood”, mocked the *esperanza* of the Marranos. Hope indeed became a kind of derisory code word for them, and in Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*, a novel replete with overt and veiled references to the authentically multicultural life that thrived before 1492, the Marrano-like *esperanza* of Sancho Panza for *la prometida insula*, the Promised Island (cf. the Promised Land, i.e., Israel), is at last fulfilled.⁸² It is no coincidence, one thinks, that the Zionist and Esperantist movements,

80- In spoken Hebrew, the name of the song is pronounced with the original Ashkenazic stress on the penultima, so *Hatqvah*; while *ha-tiqvâh* means “the hope” as a common noun. See Hagège 2009, p. 303. But the common noun, too, with its stress on the ultima, can have the charged meaning of the title of the anthem. This is clearly the case in Naomi Shemer’s song of 1980 על כל אלה *‘Al kol eileh* (“(Watch) over all these”), with its multiple citations of Jewish prayer: *אֵל נָא תַעֲקֹר נְטוּעַ אֵל תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת הַתְּקוּוּהָ הַשִּׁיבֵנִי וְאַשׁוּבָה* *Al na ta’aqôr natû’a, al tishkâh et ha-tiqvâh*: *Hashivêni ve-ashivah el ha-ârets ha-tovâh* “Please do not uproot that which has been planted; forget not the hope: Return me and I shall return to the good land.” (I have supplied the Modern Hebrew stresses.)

81- As to Christian charity, the Jews of Europe might echo the sentiment of Mohandas Gandhi when he was asked what he thought of Western civilization. The Mahatma replied, “It would be a good idea.”

82- Yovel 2009, pp. 84, 233, 279, 282.

with their two “Jewish” *Plansprachen*, both uphold hope as their standard and watchword.

The hymn of the Esperanto movement became and remains a poem Zamenhof composed, *La Espero*, “The Hope”, echoing the sentiments of *la kreinto kaj aŭtoro*. It is often sung ceremonially at congresses and other gatherings. Zamenhof’s rallying cry to his *samideanoj* was *Ni laboru kaj esperu!* “Let us labor and hope!”⁸³ Some estimates optimistically place the number of people familiar to some degree with the language we now call Esperanto at nearly two million, and it is now among the languages taught on the popular website Duolingo. But there are only perhaps some ten thousand fully fluent speakers. There are also a small number of native speakers of Esperanto (*Esp. denaskoj*, “from-birth(er)s”)— people who learned it from parents who used both it and a native natural language, such as Finnish, at home. And there is at present to this writer’s knowledge one second-generation native speaker of Esperanto. To a degree, Esperanto has become a natural, rather than an auxiliary, language with the idioms of everyday life. Perhaps the best known of these is the verb *krokodili*, meaning to speak one’s native tongue in a setting where it would be appropriate to speak Esperanto— as in the Yiddish joke cited above.⁸⁴ But what is it Esperantists are now hoping for?

The Zionists employed *tiqvah*, at least at first, in the limited sense of regaining the national homeland and achieving sovereignty; *ge’ulah*, “redemption”, meant to the secularists who dominated the movement not only the negation of the exile and all its detrimental effects on life, but liberation also from the restrictions of Orthodox Jewish law and observance. This set the Zionists at odds with believers for whom the meaning of *tiqvah* was anchored in Scripture and developed in fuller conceptions of Rabbinic and Hasidic messianism. The idea of harnessing hope to the rejection of religion was blasphemous.⁸⁵ Now that the State of Israel exists and Hebrew lives again, what is it that the national anthem hopes for? The ingathering of the last exiles from the four corners of the earth, perhaps. But it is reasonable to suggest that with the renewed respectability of authentic Torah Judaism in Israeli society and government, the word has re-acquired some of its supernatural, eschatological connotation as well. The synagogue prayer for the State of Israel reflects this in calling the country *reshit tsmihat ge’ulatenu*, “the beginning of the flowering of our redemption”— the process is still unfolding and hope has not yet been entirely fulfilled.

In 2007 the American Jewish writer Michael Chabon published a counter-factual historical novel, *The Yiddish Policemen’s Union*. It is both a parody of a gritty, noir

83- Garvía 2015, p. 70.

84- Other idioms include *kabei*, “to leave the Esperanto movement”, from the initials of Kazimierz Bein (1872-1959), who suddenly abandoned the *movado* in 1911; *mojosa*, “cool, hip”, from *moderna juna stila*, i.e., *Jugendstil*; and *melki*, “to masturbate”, of uncertain etymology but probably connected with milking.

85- R. Maimon b. Joseph wrote in his *Iggeret ha-nehamah*, “Epistle of consolation” to his son that we are drowning, but the rope of Torah is suspended from Heaven and he who holds onto it has hope. If he lets go, he loses union with God and sinks. This was the attitude of many Hasidim during the Holocaust: see Greenberg 2013, pp. 363-364 and n. 39.

detective story and a meditation on Jewish history that is of interest to us because three languages— Esperanto, Yiddish, and Hebrew— serve as symbols of divergent possible realities, of hope and hopelessness, a national home, and homelessness. In the story, the plan put forward by Roosevelt's Secretary of the Interior, Harold Ickes, to offer Jews fleeing the Nazis a temporary refuge has been adopted (in reality, Congress turned it down), and a Yiddish-speaking polity has grown and flourished in Sitka, to revert to the control of the state of Alaska, though, within months of the narrative present— at which time the Jews will have to find somewhere else to go. The nascent State of Israel lost its War of Independence to the Arabs in 1948, and in Sitka the only Hebrew speakers are aged survivors who meet for reunions in drafty rooms— an ironic reversal of the actual situation of Yiddish. As for hope, this is how it manifests, at the funeral for Mendel Shpilman, who just might have been the *tsaddik ha-dor*— the messianic righteous man of his generation. He is the murdered gay junkie son of a Hasidic rebbe. The hero, Detective Meyer Landsman, has parked near the cemetery “in a cul-de-sac some developer laid out, paved, then saddled with the name of Tikvah Street, the Hebrew word denoting hope and connoting to the Yiddish ear on this grim afternoon at the end of time seventeen flavors of irony.”⁸⁶

There are other Hebrew-speakers in the novel: a paramilitary band of cold-blooded young “modern” Orthodox American Jews involved in a plot masterminded by Christian fundamentalists in the CIA to dynamite the Dome of the Rock and retake Jerusalem. It is they who have killed poor Mendel when he refused to co-operate with their eschatological scheme. The hero connects the dots, confronts them, and just before he passes out from the injection of a sedative after a sound beating, hears them: “They are talking, those Jews on the other side of the door, about roses and frankincense. They are standing in a desert wind under the date palms, and Landsman is there, in flowing robes that keep out the biblical sun, speaking Hebrew, and they are all friends and brothers together, and the mountains skip like rams, and the hills like little lambs.”⁸⁷ Despite the irony of the setting, it is impossible entirely to impute sarcasm to the intense nostalgia of this passage, which engages nearly all the senses at once. And there is not only an overt reference to Scripture but a direct citation of Psalm 114:6. That joyous song is part of the *Hallel* of festival liturgies, and its first verse deals, precisely, with language: *Be-tse'it Yisrael mi-Mitsrayim; bet Ya'aqov me-'am lo'ez*, “When Israel went out of Egypt; the house of Jacob, from a people of alien tongue...” It is exodus and return, both from slavery and oppression in exile to Israel, the promised homeland, and from foreign speech to one's own language, to the holy language of Israel, which is Hebrew, only Hebrew, nothing else but Hebrew. As a public figure living in left-liberal Berkeley, California, Michael Chabon is a strenuous critic of Israel; and in a recent commencement address to the graduates of Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles he went so far as to advocate the deliberate demolition of the

86- Chabon 2007, p. 198.

87- Chabon 2007, p. 263.

Jewish family through intermarriage. But if it was the author's intention to deride Zionism he has failed, brilliantly, much as the prophet Balaam did when he tried to curse the Children of Israel and blessed us instead. If anything, his grim novel underscores how beautiful and astonishing the warm reality of Israel is outside the freezing pages of an evanescent refuge in the far north, how fragile, how never to be taken for granted.

The hero's name, Landsman—Yiddish for “compatriot”, and in America and elsewhere the survivors of exterminated cities and *shtetlakh* formed *landsmanshaftn*— compounds the irony. Landsman was born in Sitka but is not a US citizen: upon Reversion the police department he works for will cease to exist and he may have to find a new place to live. The very first line of the book has this “compatriot” with no *patria* living alone in transient accommodations— temporary dwelling upon temporary dwelling, “flopping at the Hotel Zamenhof”! When it was built, half a century before, when the Yiddish-speakers of Sitka were more hopeful, all the nice, brass signs for the *elevatoro* and so on were in Esperanto. Most have since been stolen, and now the place is a flophouse.⁸⁸ It might as well be the Warsaw Ghetto, the reader thinks, and within a few pages Landsman is in fact investigating tunnels opening from the hotel's basement that were constructed by survivors of the wartime uprising just in case of the need for another Jewish guerrilla war of self-defense. Esperanto as a symbol in the novel, then, represents a meta-homelessness, a dilapidated ghetto within what is already exile, and is overshadowed by the specter of physical extermination— the farthest possible remove from hope.

Another contemporary American Jewish writer, Joseph Skibell, has also rehearsed themes in Jewish history through the symbolism of language. In the novel *A Curable Romantic* (2010) we meet the hapless, picaresque hero-narrator, Sammelsohn, a Jew from Galicia whose father, a kind of walking, talking parody of the Haskalah, has given up Yiddish and all other living tongues and speaks only in quotations from the Written and Oral Torah. In an utterly hilarious passage, the obligatory lecture on the birds and the bees is delivered to the boy in pure *melitzah*, the incongruously ribald topic rendered still more farcical through the didactic insertion in parentheses of the Scriptural reference after every hoary phrase.⁸⁹ Sometime after this the father appears in dreams to the narrator's mother, throwing cookies in the shapes of Hebrew letters in the air to form sentences. This detail recalls shades of *Sefer yetsirah* and Aron Leyeles, as well as the old custom of receiving a child into *cheder* with cakes and with Hebrew letters coated with honey. She remembers one sentence, which reads: *היי, קיין ווי פֿאַראַס, דעשיפֿראַנטע טשי תיאוין פֿראַזוין? רעבענו אַל לאַ*

88- Chabon 2007, pp. 1, 3.

89- Skibell 2010, p. 55f. This wonderful silliness reflects also yeshiva humor. A pious friend used to joke to me that the Divine attribute in Psalm 145, *somekh noflim*, “Who upholdest the falling”, is Biblical Hebrew for a bra! As we were passing a spectacularly ugly house on a Shabbat walk to the ultra-Orthodox neighborhood of Stamford Hill, London, my friend quipped that “they should put a sign *Ashrei yoshvey veytekha*” in the front window— that is, “Happy are they who dwell in Thy [the passerby's!] house” (Psalm 84:5, which is also the first verse of the florilegium prayer containing Psalm 145, the venerable and mighty *Ashrei*, which if said thrice daily, the Gemara assures us, guarantees the worshipper a part in the World to Come).

אָל לאַ ליבראַ! This is Esperanto written in Yiddish, and it addresses the reader who has taken the effort to figure it out: *Ho, kion vi faras, deĉifrance ĉi tiujn frazojn? Revenu al la rakonto, al la libro!* “Hey, what are you doing deciphering these phrases? Return to the story, to the book!”⁹⁰ Later on the hero moves to Vienna and meets Sigmund Freud, then L.L. Zamenhof—he marries a disciple of the latter. Later on, Theodor Herzl and Zionism appear also.

The young couple go to Paris for a conference on *la internacia lingvo* and he proposes they return to their hotel to make a little *ido*,⁹¹ “and we’ll raise the little prince speaking only Esperanto, keeping him away from the harsh world of multiple international languages, as though he were the Buddha himself.”⁹² This is a reference to the life of the Buddha Sakyamuni, whom his parents confined to a pleasure garden so that he might not come to know of disease, old age, and death. He escaped, confronted reality, and went on to enlightenment. There is thus something of the implication that Esperanto is inherently unreal. But Skibell and his character might have in mind also the project of Eliezer Ben Yehuda, who raised his children to speak only his partially-invented language, Modern Hebrew. Towards the end of the book (and, it is implied, of European Jewry itself), the hero finds himself immured in the Warsaw Ghetto, where he meets yet another important personage of modern Jewish thought, his cousin R. Kalonymus Kalmish Shapira, the Piaseczner Rebbe. The latter inquires as to the welfare of the surviving Zamenhofs and their departed father’s *nariškajtismo* (here, Skibell employs Yiddish in Esperanto orthography rather than vice-versa as above: the word is *narishkayt*, “foolishness”),⁹³ and hires Sammelsohn as his secretary.⁹⁴

90- Skibell 2010, p. 74.

91- An intentional irony, for this is in Esperanto “offspring”— the name also of the breakaway language, which is hatched at the conference they have come to attend.

92- Skibell 2010, p. 472.

93- Skibell 2010, p. 523. Amusingly, Gold 1980, p. 324, had proposed (unconvincingly, in my view) that the Esperanto idiom *paroli sensecaĵon*, “to talk nonsense”, was a calque on Yiddish נאַרישקייטן *redn narishkeytn*, “to speak childish things”.

94- The Piaseczner, who was a relative on my father’s side of the family, was a descendant of R. Kalonymus Kalman Epstein, author of the celebrated Hasidic commentary on the Pentateuch, the *Ma’or va-Shemesh*. A secretary did indeed help the Rebbe to write his last book, now entitled *Esh Qodesh* (“Holy Fire”; the other title is *Torah in the Years of Fury*) which was hidden from the Nazis, buried with Ringelblum’s Oyneg Shabbes archive, and discovered and published after the war. Skibell duly mentions the Rebbe’s *Se’udah shlishis* discourses at the end of the Sabbath and Ringelblum’s milk can. Skibell 2010, pp. 520, 523, 591. Although *Esh Qodesh* is the most famous of the writings of the Piaseczner; and the story of its survival, the most dramatic—he wrote several other important treatises that have come down to us. These deal mainly with the importance of education and with the imperative to treat one’s students with care and respect and to awaken in them a passion for Torah. The Piaseczner was the founder and principal of Warsaw’s largest interwar Yeshiva, Da’at Mosheh, and his pedagogical ideas were revolutionary for the Orthodox and Hasidic world. Hasidism has a strong messianic aspect, a hope and longing for redemption in many ways cognate to that of Zamenhof and Zionism. A small work by the Piaseczner, originally distributed in a handful of copies but now widely studied, is the *Bnei maḥshavah tovah*, “Sons of the Good Mind”, which is intended to do no less than revive that highest rung of human endeavor, the art of prophecy (*nevi’ut*), albeit in its aspect of *hadrahah*, moral and social guidance rather than foretelling.

In a hallucinatory concluding section, Sammelsohn meets three angels of destruction, including one Samangluf, who explain to him that the Evil One provoke the invention of Ido to derail the Esperanto movement, which, had it succeeded with its lofty ideals, would have forced the hand of the Messiah.⁹⁵ Thus Esperanto seems to have been the greatest hope for the human race as a whole, but one that either had to fail, or that demonic intervention obstructed. The angels then convey him on Jacob's Ladder from the midst of the living hell of the Warsaw Ghetto to a subdued Heaven, where the archangel Metatron explains that the Holy One, Blessed be He, has entered occultation (*nistarim*) to lament the Holocaust;⁹⁶ returned to this world, Sammelsohn is smuggled out of the ghetto and sets out for the Land of Israel, the only place where a Jew can live in freedom. Chabon and Skibell both regard Esperanto as a failed dream, but there the similarity between their writings end. Chabon, a Balaam, or perhaps the wicked son at the Passover seder table, imagines a Yiddish polity but it crumbles into grotesquery, into a cruel parody of the ghetto. He tries and fails to reject Zionism and the Hebrew language: it emerges unscathed from the welter of grotesque, classically anti-Semitic stereotypes of his black comedy.

For Skibell, by contrast, Esperanto is an object of genuine fascination; the Zamenhofs, friends and fellow Jews in whose life and fate the hero participates with humor, to be sure, but also with genuine anguish. The final message of his novel, then, is that the brilliant efforts of Jewish universalists and idealists—Marx, Freud, Zamenhof, Einstein, perhaps one might add Jesus to the list—were so many visionary, insubstantial towers of Prospero's magic. They have vanished into thin air in the wake of genocide; it is time for the Jews to stop trying to save the rest of humanity from itself. Whatever ideals of a tribe of inveterate dreamers remain, there is nothing we can do to fulfill them if we are dead; we must first save ourselves. The only way to do this is to start walking towards the east. Zionism, and, by implication, the adoption of Modern Hebrew despite its inherent parochialism, is the option, rather than cosmopolitanism and the International Language. At best, those can come later. But Esperanto is still part of our inheritance, of the treasures of the spirit to be borne out of captivity.

95- Skibell 2010, p. 548. Samangluf is the third of the triad whose two other members are Sinoi and Sansanoi, the angelic pursuers of the child-stealing witch Lilith in the *Sefer Raziel* and on Jewish childbed talismans (*kindbettsettlakh*).

96- Skibell focuses on the theme of the Holocaust in an earlier novel, *A Blessing on the Moon* (Skibell 1997), in which a Jew rises from the mass grave of his murdered village and begins wandering with other decaying, bullet-riddled ghosts through a world in which the Moon has fallen from the sky. With the help of the Rebbe, whose spirit takes the form of a tattered raven, they raise the luminary in a powerful ceremony of the *Birkhat ha-Levanah*, and the narrator's soul achieves release: the history of the broken world fades away, he forgets all, and the Moon is all he sees. This novel, at turns lyrical and bitter, seems in my view to have been inspired in part by the long Yiddish poem of H. Leyvik (Leyvik Halpern, 1888-1962), *Der Volf* ("The Wolf", 1920, in Harshav 1986, pp. 698-727): a Rabbi rises alone in a ruined city whose Jews have been massacred, and the stars, all except one, tear loose from their places and go out. He forgets how to recite lamentations and the daily prayers, and by the time he finds Jewish survivors and a shul, he has been transformed into a wolf. The terrified congregation beat him, and as he dies he becomes human again, *a Yid in a rabanishn shtreym*, "a Jew in a Rabbinical fur hat." With his last breath he tells the Jews that now he feels good, and they should not cry.

In 2007 the Coins and Medals Corporation of the State of Israel struck a handsome medal in gold, silver, and bronze issues to commemorate the publication of Zamenhof's book, the *Unua Libro*. It is a generous tribute by the victorious Zionist project, with its invented language, to an alternative vision, with its language, that through no fault of its own did not attain its high goals, even though as an international language Esperanto is alive and that is a success. I have the bronze medal, which is the largest in size of the series, before me as I write these lines describing it. It is a handsome object. The medal is a dignified tribute to a beloved son of the Jewish people, to his genius, his noble, self-sacrificing ideal and invention; the design breathes the artist's respect and affection for his subject. On the obverse is a frontal portrait of the gentle, bushy-bearded Zamenhof, his spectacles perched on his nose. He has on a bow tie, pleated dress shirt and three-piece suit (there is just the hint of a waistcoat below his right lapel), and above his heart the five-pointed green star is inset in enamel on his left lapel: he's all ready to address a *kongreso* somewhere in Europe, sometime in the halcyon years before the Great War. To the right of his head, though, the inscription is in Hebrew: יוצר השפה הבין-לאומית אספרנטו א"ל *Yotser ha-safah ha-beyn-le'umit Esperanto* ["Creator of the international language Esperanto"] *A"l Zamenhof* (L.L. Zamenhof is added in Latin characters), 1859-1917. Below this is a rendering of his signature, almost as though to say, I may have invented Esperanto, but I wrote the above statement in Hebrew myself (as indeed he was capable of doing).

The reverse shows a stylized, ziggurat-like tower of Babel with an ascending spiral path leading up to the new reversed-and-joined-E symbol of the Esperanto movement, and along the rim (and without citation, the tower should be clue enough) is the Biblical verse partially in Esperanto and fully in Hebrew, *Va-yehi kol ha-arets safah ahat u-devarim aħadim/ Unu lingvo kaj unu parolmaniero*—“(And all the earth was of) one language and one manner of speech” (Genesis 11:1). At the base of the tower is the word Esperanto in Latin script, flanked by little male and female silhouettes holding hands. Letters of many languages, including Chinese, Greek, Sanskrit (Devanagari), Latin, and Russian, are worked in delicate relief on the surface of the tower. The Hebrew words אחד *Echad* (“One”, with a modern bold Israeli typeface for the *alef* and the Ashkenazic style of the calligraphic Torah book hand for the next two letters, *het* and *dalet*) and שלום *shalom* (“peace”) stand out, the latter echoed by the equivalent Esperanto *paco* and Russian *mir*. It may be the tower of Babel, but its symbolism reverses that of the Biblical text of Genesis, expressing better, perhaps, the hopeful prophecy of Zephaniah: the jumble of letters seems to reflect the confusion of tongues that came in Scripture only after the destruction of Babel—and the emblem of Esperanto just above the tower's summit attests to the nobility of human striving and art to resolve the disunity. One thinks of the other visions of towers of Zamenhof's optimistic age, from the spiritualist, mediumistic Temple paintings of Hilma af Klint to Vladimir Tatlin's tower-monument to the Third Communist International; and from there one recalls the Esperanto stamps of the young Soviet Union and the Esperanto Academy of Ramatis in the ether above Brazil... “The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces, The solemn temples, the great globe itself, Yea, all which it

inherit, shall dissolve, And, like this insubstantial pageant faded, Leave not a rack behind: We are such stuff As dreams are made on, and our little life Is rounded with a sleep.” (Prospero to Ferdinand, in *The Tempest* of Shakespeare, Act IV, Scene i.)

I look more intently at the Israeli medal, at the artist’s encoded symmetry. The initial letter *shin* of *shalom* stands out most boldly, right at the center of the broad third of the seven courses of the tower as it diminishes upwards, like the *shin* on the *mezuzah*-case one kisses upon entering a home. right between the dates 1887 and 2007. And there it is. Just above it, delicate and faint, but unmistakable in its script and message, is the word התקווה *Hatikvah*— the name of the national anthem of the only true home the Zamenhofs, Ben Yehudas, and the rest of us will ever have, in *the* Jewish language, Hebrew. שפרינצעלע, ווי האַפּאַס לייגנבאַן.

Bibliography

- Michael Adams, *From Elvish to Klingon: Exploring Invented Languages*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011.
- Tracey Bashkoff, *Hilma af Klint: Paintings for the Future*, New York: Guggenheim Museum, 2018.
- Zvi Ben-Dor Benite, *The Ten Lost Tribes: A World History*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2009.
- Norman Berdichevsky, "A look into the world of 'utopian' languages and their political assumptions: Esperanto, Newspeak, and Basic English," *Geolinguistics* 14, 1988, pp. 28-41.
- G.W. Bowersock, *The Throne of Adulis: Red Sea Wars on the Eve of Islam*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- William G. Braude, tr., *The Midrash on Psalms* (2 vols.), New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959.
- Michael Chabon, *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, New York: Harper Collins, 2007.
- Michael Chabon, *Maps and Legends*, San Francisco: McSweeney's Books, 2008.
- Ted Chiang, *Stories of Your Life and Others*, New York: Tor, 2002, repr. New York: Vintage, 2016.
- Joseph Dan, "The language of Creation and its grammar," *Jewish Mysticism*, Vol. I, Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 1998, pp. 129-154.
- George Eliot, *Daniel Deronda*, with Introduction by Edmund White, New York: Modern Library, 2002.
- Mordecai Zeev Feierberg, *Whither?*, tr. Ira Eisenstein, London: Abelard-Schuman, 1959.
- Charles A. Ferguson, "Diglossia," *Word* 15.2, 1959, pp. 325-340.
- Peter G. Forster, *The Esperanto Movement*, Contributions to the Sociology of Language 32, The Hague: Mouton, 1982.
- Jonathan Frankel, *Prophecy and Politics: Socialism, Nationalism, and the Russian Jews*,

- 1862-1917, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.
- Roberto Garvía, *Esperanto and Its Rivals: The Struggle for an International Language*, Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015.
- Lewis H. Glinert, "Did pre-revival Hebrew literature have its own *langue*? Quotation and improvisation in Mendelev Mokher Sefarim," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, University of London, 51.3, 1988, pp. 413-427.
- David Gold, "Toward a study of possible Yiddish and Hebrew influence on Esperanto," in Istvan Szerdahelyi, ed., *Miscellanea Interlinguistica*, Budapest: Tankönyvkiadó, 1980, pp. 300-367.
- Andrew Colin Gow, *The Red Jews: Antisemitism in an Apocalyptic Age, 1200-1600*, Leiden: Brill, 1995.
- Gershon Greenberg, "Hasidic thought and the Holocaust (1933-1947): optimism and activism," *Jewish History* 27, 2013, pp. 353-375.
- Ithamar Gruenwald, "A Preliminary Critical Edition of *Sefer Yezira*," *Israel Oriental Studies* I, Tel Aviv University, 1971, pp. 132-177.
- Claude Hagège, *On the Life and Death of Languages*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Liora R. Halperin, "Modern Hebrew, Esperanto, and the Quest for a Universal Language," *Jewish Social Studies* 19.1 (Fall 2012), pp. 1-33.
- Paul Hanebrink, *A Specter Haunting Europe: The Myth of Judeo-Bolshevism*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018.
- Benjamin and Barbara Harshav, *American Yiddish Poetry: A Bilingual Anthology*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986.
- Benjamin Harshav, *The Meaning of Yiddish*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990.
- Jacky Colliss Harvey, *Red: A History of the Redhead*, New York: Black Dog & Leventhal, 2015.
- Wendy Heller, *Lidia: The Life of Lidia Zamenhof, Daughter of Esperanto*, Oxford: George Ronald, 1985.
- Gertrude Himmelfarb, *The Jewish Odyssey of George Eliot*, New York: Encounter, 2009.
- Peter S. Horvitz, "Esperanto: a new language challenges fascism in the Spanish Civil War," *The Shekel* XIV.6 (246), Nov.-Dec. 2012, pp. 31-35.
- Christer Kiselman, "La evoluo de la pensado de Zamenhof pri religioj kaj la rolo de lingvoj," *Homarane* 1.1, January 2010, pp. 41-73. ["The evolution of Zamenhof's thought about religions and the role of languages"]
- Колкер Борис Григорьевич, *Вклад Русского языка в формирование и развитие Эсперанто* (Диссертация на соискание ученой степени кандидата филологических наук), АН СССР, ин-т Языкознания, Москва, 1985, 183 стр. [Boris Grigor'evich Kolker, *The Contribution of the Russian language to the formation and development of Esperanto*, PhD dissertation in philology, Academy of Sciences of the USSR, Institute of Linguistics, Moscow, 1985, 183 pp.]

- Boris Kolker, "Lasta artikolo de L.L. Zamenhof pri judaj temoj," *Israela Esperantisto*, Julio 2004 (n-ro 140) ["The last article by L.L. Zamenhof on Jewish themes," *Israeli Esperantist*, July 2004, no. 140, available on line.]
- E.Y. Kutscher, *A History of the Hebrew Language*, Jerusalem: The Magnes Press of the Hebrew University, 1982.
- Jürgen Leonhardt, *Latin: Story of a World Language*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013.
- Ulrich Lins, *La danĝera lingvo: Studo pri la persekutoj kontraŭ Esperanto*, Moskvo: Eldonejo "Progreso", 1990. [*The dangerous language: A study of the persecutions against Esperanto*, Москва: Издательство «Прогресс», 1990 г.]
- Norbert Lynton, *Tatlin's Tower: Monument to Revolution*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Paul Mendes-Flohr, "Hebrew as a holy tongue: Franz Rosenzweig and the renewal of Hebrew, in Lewis Glinert, ed., *Hebrew in Ashkenaz: A Language in Exile*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 222-241.
- Shelomo Morag, "The emergence of Modern Hebrew: some sociolinguistic perspectives," in Lewis Glinert, ed., *Hebrew in Ashkenaz: A Language in Exile*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 208-221.
- N.Z. Maimon, *La kaŝita vivo de Zamenhof: originalaj studoj, kun enkonduko de G. Waringhien*, Tokio: Japana Esperanto-Instituto, 1978. [*The hidden life of Zamenhof: original studies*, with an introduction by G. Waringhien, Tokyo: Japanese Esperanto Institute, 1978]
- Henri Masson, "Zamenhof: condition juive, universalisme et non-violence," *Diasporiques* 27, Sept. 2014, pp. 32-37.
- Theodor Nöldeke, *Neue Beiträge zur Semitischen Sprachwissenschaft*, Strassburg: Trubner, 1910.
- Moshe Pelli, "On the role of *melitzah* in the literature of the Hebrew enlightenment," in Lewis Glinert, ed., *Hebrew in Ashkenaz: A Language in Exile*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993, pp. 99-110.
- Wendell Phillips, *Qataban and Sheba: exploring the Ancient Kingdoms on the Biblical Spice Routes of Arabia*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955.
- Ramatis, kun la partopreno de la spirito Atanagildo: *La misio de Esperanto*, Verko de Ramatis pere de la Spirita mediumo Hercilio Maes, Braziljo, 2000. [Ramatis, with the participation of the spirit Atanagildo: *The mission of Esperanto*, a written work by Ramatis conveyed through the spirit-medium Hercilio Maes, Brasilia, 2000]
- Yael Reshef, "The Re-Emergence of Hebrew as a National Language," in Stefan Weninger, ed., *The Semitic Languages: An International Handbook*, Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2011, pp. 546-554.
- Christian Julien Robin, ed., *Le Judaïsme de l'Arabie Antique* (Actes de Colloque de Jérusalem, février 2006), Turnhout: Brepols, 2015.
- James R. Russell, "On the Origins and Invention of the Armenian Alphabet," *Le Muséon* 107.3-4, 1994, pp. 317-333.

- James R. Russell, "The Armenian Magical Scroll and Outsider Art," *Iran and the Caucasus* Vol. 15.1-2, Jubilee Volume, Leiden and Erevan, 2011, pp. 5-47.
- James R. Russell, "Armenian Secret and Invented Languages and Argots," *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana*, Transactions of the Institute for Linguistic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, Vol. VIII, part 3, St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2012, pp. 602-684.
- James R. Russell, "The Seh-lerai Language," *Journal of Armenian Studies* 10.1-2 (2012-2013), pp. 1-85.
- James R. Russell, "The Bible and revolution: some observations on Exodus, Psalm 37, Esther, and Philo," *Judaica Petropolitana* 7, 2017, pp. 109-134.
- James R. Russell, "The Nativity of Ben Sira Reconsidered," forthcoming in Andrei Orlov, ed., *Festschrift Fr. Alexander Golitsyn*, 2019.
- Max Schloessinger, *The Ritual of Eldad ha-Dani*, Leipzig: Rudolf Haupt, 1908.
- Esther Schor, *Ponto el Vortoj / Bridge of Words: Esperanto and the dream of a universal language*, New York: Henry Holt, 2016.
- Eidō Tai Shimano, text, and Kōgetsu Tani, calligraphy, *Zen Word, Zen Calligraphy*, Boston: Shambhala, 1992.
- Harry Simonhoff, *The Chosen One: A novel of the Marranos in Portugal and the Inquisition*, New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1964.
- Isaac Bashevis Singer, *Nobel Lecture/Di Nobel Rede* [in Yiddish and English], New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 1978.
- Joseph Skibell, *A Blessing on the Moon, a novel*, Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin, 1997.
- Joseph Skibell, *A Curable Romantic, a novel*, Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin, 2010.
- J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1984.
- Maurice Tuchman, ed., *The Spiritual in Art: Abstract Painting 1890-1985*, Los Angeles County Museum of Art and New York: Abbeville, 1986.
- Lou Ureneck, *The Great Fire*, New York: Harper/Collins, 2015, with Preface by James R. Russell.
- Thorstein Veblen, *A Veblen Treasury: from leisure class to war, peace, and capitalism*, New York: M.E. Sharpe, 1993.
- Paul Wexler, *The Schizoid Nature of Modern Hebrew: A Slavic Language in Search of a Semitic Past*, Mediterranean Language and Culture Series 4, Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990.
- Edmund White, *Hotel De Dream: A New York Novel*, New York: Ecco, 2007.
- Elliot R. Wolfson, *Open Secret: Postmessianic Messianism and the Mystical Revision of Menahem Mendel Schneerson*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2009.
- Marina Yaguello, *Lunatic Lovers of Language: Imaginary Languages and Their Inventors*, London: Athlone, 1991.
- Yirmiyahu Yovel, *The Other Within: The Marranos, Split Identity and Emerging Modernity*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009.

THE BLACK DERVISH OF ARMENIAN FUTURISM

James R. Russell

Harvard University and California State University, Fresno



© Kara Darvish, 1910. © H. Genjyan, 1910.

Abstract

The article portrays the life and work of the Tiflis Armenian Futurist Kara Darvish, against the background of the development of Futurism in the world generally and in Russia in particular. It analyzes the linguistic and graphic features of his verses, and provides the testimonies of his contemporaries about him and his circle, about the historical and literary character of the city of Tiflis before and after the Great October Socialist Revolution, and on the fate of the poet and the Futurist movement in the Transcaucasus. The Appendices offer the reader translations of the poet's works, with detailed commentary.

Keywords: Kara Darvish (*Hakob Genjyan*), *Kostan Zarian*, *Arthur Rimbaud*, *Velimir Khlebnikov*, *Shreshthar*, *Vasily Kamensky*, *The Fantastic Little Tavern*, *Futurism*, *Tiflis*

Аннотация

Статья представляет жизнь и творчество тбилисского армянского будетлянина Кара Дарвиша (Акопа Генджяна) на фоне развития мирового и русского футуризма. В исследовании анализируются языковые и графические особенности стихов Кара Дарвиша, приводятся свидетельства современников о нем самом и его окружении, об историческом и литературном облике Тифлиса до и после Великой Октябрьской Социалистической Революции, а также о судьбе поэта и футуристского движения в Закавказье. В приложениях представлены переводы произведений поэта с подробными примечаниями.

Ключевые слова: Кара Дарвиш (*Акоп Генджян*), *Костан Зарян*, *Артур Рембо*, *футуризм*, *Велимир Хлебников*, *Шреш-блур*, *Василий Каменский*, *футуризм*, *Тифлис*

There is an Armenian saying that one must turn a library inside out to write a single book. One might adapt an English adage, too, to this just reflection on the process of scholarship: No work of research is an island. (And there is no library worth turning inside out without a librarian to help.) I was not aware of the work of the poet studied here till Michael Grossman, the cataloguer of Georgian and Armenian books, showed me a reprint of the volume dedicated to Sofia Mel'nikova with the poems of Kara Darviš in it. Shortly thereafter, Marc Mamigonian of the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research unearthed copies of the poet's manifesto and two novels that had been bound with other pamphlets of the era in hardcover miscellanies donated to the NAASR library in

Belmont, MA.¹ And another friend mentioned Krikor Beledian's superb work on the Armenian Futurists to me around the same time. It has proven very useful in this study, though my approach and method are quite different.

One had the pleasure to present preliminary work on Kara Darviš as a lecture to the Armenian Studies program at California State University, Fresno, on 20 March 2014, by invitation of its directors, Profs. Barlow Der Mugrdchian and Sergio La Porta. I am grateful to them and to my host in Fresno, Larry Balakian.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge wrote, as we can tell from his manuscript, a complete and fully formed poem called *Kubla Khan*. But he claimed in his published prologue that the poem, which he was capturing on paper from the fast fading memory of a dream vision, was interrupted in the course of his work on it and was to have been much longer. The unexpected visit of a tradesman from the nearby town of Porlock interrupted the magic and the poet forgot the rest of what he had intended to describe. The man from Porlock has become a metaphorical figure, the *coitus interruptus* of the creative process; Stevie Smith has a poem that wonders playfully about him. Perhaps Coleridge was inducing the reader herself to feel the keen delicacy of a vanishing reverie, the poignancy of its loss. Armenian culture has endured millennially in spite of loss: the fall and desolation of the city of Ani, the collapse of the Cilician kingdom. But the suddenness of 20th century catastrophes is the dire man from Porlock for real. These calamities leave one with the sense, not only of the loss of monuments of culture brought to completion and perfection, but of interruption— of creation cut off in the midst of the act, leaving one to wonder what the ripened fruit of the endeavor might have been. On the eve of the First World War, Daniel Varuzhan and his associates on the board of the magazine *Mehean* intended to re-infuse their language with the abundant lexical material and idiom of the numerous Armenian dialects of the native Anatolian highlands that had been obscured by the strictly controlled rules and lexicon of Classical Armenian (*grabar*) on the one hand and the normative, standardized literary Western Armenian of the urban centers (*aṣṣarhabar*) on the other. (There was also, of course, equally standardized and canonized Eastern Armenian *aṣṣarhabar* of the Russian Empire.) So, had mass murder not intervened, we might today have a Third Armenian, an unknown, rich, flexible tongue for a people still standing on a verdant earth.² Perhaps Indra's

¹ Two novels and a manifesto of Kara Darviš were found in two different hardbound miscellanies of pamphlets and soft-cover Armenian publications, from the collection of Harry and Araxie Kolligian, donated to NAASR in 2001. I list the contents of each, as they may afford a glimpse into the reading habits of educated American Armenians in the mid-20th century. Contents of the first volume: 1. *Hatantir ant'erc'uack' azgayin ew ötar matenagimereḡ k'aluac antameac' ew dproc'ac' hamar* ("Select readings excerpted from national [i.e., Armenian] and foreign writers, for families and schools"), author given as MBak ("Cultivator") (MBak 1880); 2. E(ḡia) Tēmircipaṣean (Yeghia Demirjibashian), *Nor keank', A: Azgayin lezu* (Tēmircipaṣean 1879); 3. Kara-Darwiš, *Im' ē fur'utizmo?* ["What is Futurism?"], with the stamp of the *Zardarian granon* ["Librairie Zartarian"] (Kara-Darwiš 1914) (see plate appended to this study); 4. Kara-Darwiš, *Keank' ē fur'uto* ["The Violin of Life"] (Kara-Darwiš 1917). Contents of the second volume: 1. E. Vöyniḡ, *Bor, nēp eresnakn i'wert italakan jekap'ona'ean örerik* (Vöyniḡ 1906); 2. Kara-Darwiš, *Erwand Göḡ* (Kara-Darwiš 1911). The back cover of the latter advertises literary works translated from Russian to Armenian by Akop Gendzhian and available for sale.

² See the excellent new study by Nicheanian, (2014: 124–127) to which the American labor organizers might have replied with their intrepid slogan, "Don't mourn, organize".

novel *Neraḵcarh* ("The Inner World") was the first and only book in this Third Armenian, a tongue worthy of the dream of Kubla Khan.

The vibrant literary culture of Armenian Constantinople in the late Ottoman period ended suddenly with the murders of its young poets at the outset of the general slaughter of 1915. What might have come from the pens of Varuzhan, Siamant'o, Sevag, Indra, had they lived on, to be old men? What music might have reached our ears, had the composer Komitas not been driven mad by the horrors he saw? The Stalinist purges of 1937 swept away Charents, Aksel Bakunts, Zabel Esayan, and hundreds of others: what if they had lived? Socialist Realism imposed a deadening puritanism on the arts: what if culture in Erevan had been allowed to develop in conditions of liberty? As the centenary of the 1915 Genocide approaches, it seems as much a moral duty as well as a worthwhile scholarly task to offer to the English reader some of the treasures finished before the man from Porlock darkened the door and interrupted the dream. Just as Armenian culture was becoming avant-garde, Futurist, countercultural, it was lost, and most of its contribution to the progress of the free arts and letters of humanity was forgotten. Nobody has the right to forget, any more than to deny.

• • •

This is not the first introduction in English to the Armenian poet who styled himself Kara Darviṣ, the Black Dervish, but it is the longest; and it offers texts, both by the poet and of supplementary interest, that have not been translated hitherto but are of some importance to



the history of the Futurist movement. This material augments our understanding of modern Armenian literature, and situates it in the context of both world culture and the artistic scene of the early 20th century in the last years of the Russian *ancien régime* and the early history of the Soviet Union. Our poet lived and worked in the Georgian capital, Tiflis, during the tumultuous years of the First World War and the Russian Revolution—roughly two decades in all, from 1910 to 1930. These events destroyed and transformed much of the world, and had a particularly devastating impact upon Armenians. He lived, though, not only in that historical maelstrom but also at what he and his friends believed was the dawn of a new culture. He was more than a time traveler; he was a denizen of the times to come.

For Kara Darviš was a Futurist, excavating the foundations of his native tongue, the Armenian language, with the aim of creating new sounds and visual patterns for a poetic language and method of graphic art of that a different kind of man, freer, healthier, honest, unconstrained by tradition, was to speak, write, and paint tomorrow. The Futurists in their new literature experimented with the shape of words,



the look and size of typefaces and the direction and orientation of texts, their words bursting off the line, running up and down the page, dashing in circles, leaping skywards. Their paintings and sculptures sought to depict the stages of motion, not still lives; so the metal statue of a man scalloped the successive movements of his muscles over time, and the same part of a horse repeated itself in freeze frames across the canvas, embracing its gallop. Their aim was not so much to change what we see and hear but to release the senses from the stereotypes of conventional art and literature in order better to express and depict what is really there—and what is there right now, too. Not a classical landscape standing stock still, but a city of clean-lined skyscrapers and streamlined stations and airports teeming with cars, factories, airplanes. Words are not monotonous, linear phenomena crawling in straight lines across a page. There are different sounds all around and above and below us, with different accents and pitches. The operations of the mind are not limited to the limited scope of conscious awareness, but embrace also the irrational and the subconscious. So why not write in different directions, with letters of different sizes, using not just the words that are part of everyday speech, but nonsense words, or magic spells—the sounds of dreams, of childhood, of nature, of machines? Airplanes were taking men into the sky and radios were conveying speech invisibly across great distances at speed: why should art and literature crawl slowly on the ground?³

Kara Darviš was born Hakob Genjian in the north Caucasus, in the twilight decades of the Russian Empire. Like many Armenians in the Empire, he was deeply connected to Russian culture and the Russian language, which he spoke with native fluency, peppering his Armenian prose very liberally with Russian words that would have been utterly incomprehensible to an Armenian living not all that far away, in Ottoman Turkey. (In this he was no different from other educated Armenians in Russia; and Western Armenian writers, to a greater or lesser degree, flavored their work with Turkish, Persian, and Arabic words.) He was married to a Russian woman, and most of his fellow Futurists at the various cafés he

³ One of the best surveys of the art of the movement remains the monograph and exhibition catalogue by Taylor (1962).

frequented in Tiflis were Russians. But he moved in Armenian circles just as intensely—he worked as a correspondent for several Armenian papers, and mixed with the Armenian literati, befriending the novelist Kostan Zarian and the young revolutionary poet Yeghishe Charents. In the company of nonconformist artists, he still stood out as an original, true to his cognomen of dervish. He was an eccentric who dressed oddly, behaved scandalously, detested economic inequality, liked a drink, and believed in the centrality of eroticism to life, in free love. He was proud of his nation and its ancient culture; but this feeling was not shaded by the racist and chauvinist bigotry of writers like Zarian. He proclaimed himself the brother of all men and a citizen of the world, a cosmopolitan. His poetic manifestoes echo Walt Whitman and William Blake; and they foreshadow the American Beat poet Allen Ginsberg.

Kara Darviš is noteworthy for the wider field of Futurism for occupying a particular place in it. There were several Armenian Futurists; but the others simply joined a larger movement whose center was in Europe. Kara Darviš was consciously a man of the (Near)East who appreciated the language and culture of the streets of Tiflis and Baku, and addressed his criticisms of conservatism and repression not only to mainstream culture in general but to the particular tendency of Armenians, Iranians, and others to denigrate their own culture and to imitate everything western. That imitation, often slavish and superficial, led more often to alienation from oneself than to authentic partnership with the rest of world culture; and it reaffirmed imperial politics by deifying the ways of colonial rulers. By focusing on this inferiority complex as a cultural phenomenon, and calling on Armenians and their neighbors to respect and value their own everyday culture, and, thereby, themselves as human beings worthy of full social and political equality with all other men, he anticipated later studies of what has come to be called Orientalism. He, and his friend Charents in the decade following his eclipse, were indeed the heralds of an authentic and authentically Armenian counterculture.



Until the early decades of the 20th century, Armenians were, and had been for centuries, a stateless people. As a Christian minority in the Muslim world they were barred from the traditional social positions that secured power: land ownership, the military, and government. In the coastal cities of Turkey in particular, they gained wealth and prominence through trade, industry, and communication—all of these skills demanding a cosmopolitan outlook and receptivity to progress and change. The Armenians living in the interior of Anatolia likewise developed modern schools and businesses in the cities, but villagers and farmers labored under oppressive conditions, paying tribute to Ottoman officials and Kurdish tribal gangs. In the Russian Empire the position of the Armenians

was considerably more secure; and after Russia's liberation of Erevan in 1828 many thousands of Armenians emigrated from Turkey and Iran to rebuild their lives under the protection of the Christian tsar. But they were still not members of the dominant nationality, whose official policy was Russification, and the Armenian Church was not recognized as Orthodox—so to a great extent the same cosmopolitan model of world view, economic activity, and urban development applied. This is perhaps one reason why Armenians did innovative things common in the west but unknown in the east. An eccentric Armenian of Smyrna named Bedros Tenger, not a Turk, Arab, or Persian, strove to transcend the boundaries of ethnicity and religion, laboring in hope for a new world where those limitations might no longer cripple human endeavor, and invented the only artificial language ever to come out of the Near East whose express purpose was to promote universal human solidarity. The West, by contrast, produced about 500 of them in the 19th and 20th centuries, though only Esperanto has endured (Russell 2012-2013). And another Armenian, the subject of our present study, invented a specifically Near Eastern Futurism.

But it is indicative of the very precariousness of the situation of the Armenian people that neither *Seh-lerai*—the Armenian “Esperanto”—nor the Futurist language and poetry of Kara Darviš, found receptivity in the lands of their birth and survived. Far from surviving, neither is even remembered by any but a very few specialists. In the wake of the 1915 Genocide, the formation of the Soviet Union in 1922, and the imposition of the deadening official dogma of Socialist Realism about a decade later under Stalinism—as we have noted above—Armenians were made subject to restraints beyond their control and were necessarily preoccupied with vital concerns of survival in the here and now, rather than an imagined tomorrow. Still a minority culture in the USSR, and entirely a diaspora culture outside the latter, Armenians clung to their ancient foundations as limpets do to a rock battered by the breakers of a stormy sea. These were anything but avant-garde or countercultural: an established church upholding accepted morals, and a canonical literature of traditional forms, underscoring these. Those were the very institutions and forms Kara Darviš found intolerably stifling and hoped to demolish. It would seem he had labored in vain. But this is not entirely so. Kara Darviš and his comrades had still contributed vitally to a humanistic and revolutionary Futurism, and its kindred movements, the streams nourished by it—Cubism, Surrealism, Dada, and the rest—did not disappear. They gained strength wherever life allowed, and became a vital motive force in the growth of the movements that spearheaded cultural, philosophical, even scientific change in the 20th century, that championed human rights, diversity, and liberation in all its forms, and thereby created much of the future, the future in which we live now. Kara Darviš is a part of that countercultural inheritance, the blessed dissident, eccentric force of the 20th century. Remembering him, one resists the genocidal tide of oblivion. Translating him, one re-inscribes his work in the annals of world culture: the dervish is no longer alone.

But for literary scholarship, which requires that one probe the sources of a work as part of understanding its meaning, even a movement with the name Futurism still must have a discoverable past. It begins, I think, with another war, another revolution, another young, rebellious, eccentric genius, in another country. This other poet, a very young man, first

sounded articulately the themes of changed consciousness and depiction of reality, the transformation of language, universalism, the magic of words. Like Voltaire, like the citizens-in-the-making storming of the Bastille, like the band of black and white artists playing the Marseillaise in Monsieur Rick's nightclub, he was French.

In 1911-1914, the *Nouvelle Revue Française* published the letters of the poet Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891). Rimbaud sought to transform the physical world through his poems, which he began writing in earnest at seventeen, and gave up writing at the age of twenty-one when he thought he had not. But ironically, he created more than he could possibly imagine, since consciousness and thought are what lead us to change the world around us in fact. So he transformed the world more profoundly than any alchemical operation might essay to do. He made modern poetry. His visions transformed all the arts, and Futurism, Surrealism, and the cultural movements of the Beats and their successors— everything from Picasso to punk rock, not to mention Zdanovich, Larionov, Kamensky, Goncharova, Mayakovsky, Robakidze, Kara Darviš, and Charents— can in a way be traced to him. He came to the French capital, to scandalize its literary circles and to piss on its pedestrians from a great height, in the wake of the Franco-Prussian War and the fall of the revolutionary Paris Commune. His *Lettre de voyant* ("Letter of a seer"), dated 15 May 1871, is his most famous, a kind of manifesto and guide.⁴



"I say that one must be a *seer*, make oneself a *seer*."

The poet becomes a *seer* through a long, immense, and reasoned *derangement of all the senses*. All shapes of love, suffering, madness. He searches himself, he exhausts all poisons in himself, to keep only the quintessences. Ineffable torture where he needs all his faith, all his superhuman strength, where he becomes among all men the great patient, the great criminal, the great accursed one— and the supreme Scholar! For he reaches the *unknown*! Since he cultivated his soul, rich already, more than anyone else! He reaches the unknown, and when, demented, he would end by losing the intelligence of his visions, he has seen them! Let him die in his leaps among unheard-of and unnamable things; other horrible workers will come: they will begin from the horizons where the other one has collapsed!

⁴ From the translation in Jean (ed.) (1980: 11-15). On the circumstances of the letter, see Robb's (2000: 85-88) acerbic, funny, learned biography.

... So the poet is actually a thief of fire.³

He is responsible for humanity, even for animals. He must see to it that his inventions can be smelled, felt, heard. If what he brings back from *yonder* has shape, he gives shape; is it shapeless, he gives shapelessness. To find a language. Moreover, speech being thought, the time for a universal language will come! Only an academician, deadlier than a fossil, could complete a dictionary, in any tongue; weak people, who might begin to *think* about the first letter of the alphabet, and would soon jump into madness!

This language will be soul for the soul, summing up everything, perfumes, sounds, colors; thought hooking thought and pulling. The poet would define the amount of unknown awakening in his time in universal thought; he would give more than the formula of his thought, than the measurements of *his march toward Progress!* An enormity becoming a norm, absorbed by everyone, he would truly be a *multiplier of Progress!*



This future will be materialistic, as you see. Always filled with *Number* and *Harmony*, these poems will be made to stay. Basically, it would still be Greek poetry somehow.

Eternal art would have its functions, in the same manner as poets who are also citizens. Poetry will no longer give rhythm to action; *it will be in front...*

Meanwhile, let us ask *novelty* from the *poet*— ideas and shapes".

The challenge to innovation, derangement of the senses, love, progress, a new art, and a completely new kind of language, had been flung down. Among those who were to answer the call was Hakob Genjean (Genjian). He was born at Stavropol in the north Caucasus in 1872, duly entered the Armenian seminary at Nor Naxijewan (Nakhichevan)— Rostov-on-the-Don— but left in 1893 without taking holy orders. Then he taught at the Geworgean college in Ejmiacin (Echmiadzin, the holy see of the Armenian Church, near Erevan) in 1906–1907, and wrote poems of a neo-pagan, decadent, mildly erotic, mildly Symbolist sort. He adopted the pen name Kara Darviš⁴ with the publication of his short story *Leran*

³ That is, he is Prometheus, who rebelled against the hegemony of the other Olympian gods by giving fire to man and then suffering unending torture for it (on a mountaintop, as it happens, in the Caucasus).

⁴ *Kara* is Turkish for "black". In compound expressions it is often a term of endearment; *kara oğlan* (or Arm. *manuk*) "black boy" has the implication of beauty, even valor. The New Persian word *darvīš* means, literally, a poor man. It derives ultimately from the Avesta: *dragu-* (later Middle Iranian *drjōš*, from which the modern Persian form comes) was the designation of a follower of the Prophet Zarathuštra, who saw

astuacuhin, "The goddess of the mountain", in the Tiflis journal *Msiak* ("The Cultivator") No. 205, 1909. This was the comfortably liberal paper of record for the Russian Armenian community and intelligentsia, centered in the Georgian and viceregal capital—Erevan was then still a sleepy provincial town. In 1910 he settled permanently in Tiflis, working as a journalist for *Msiak*, *Surhandak* ("Express Messenger"), and *Kayser* ("Sparks"). He and his Russian wife Ol'ga translated and offered for sale recent and avant-garde Russian literary works (Leonid Andreyev, Fedor Sologub, A. Kuprin, and others) in Armenian translation, at prices ranging from three to eight kopeks—but the market proved disappointing. He also translated into Russian the works of the Armenian writers Avetis Aharonian and Levon

himself as in need of the gift (*magu-*) of the revelation of Ahura Mazda, the Lord Wisdom. From this first insight, which did not imply material destitution, only the consciousness of spiritual need, came the ritualized practice in Iranian Islam of a material asceticism by mystics who were itinerant loners wandering about draped in scarves, with a begging bowl and an ax for cutting wood. Dervishes also joined fraternal orders, employing techniques of ecstatic prayer, music, and dance to seek God through love (Arabic *'aṣiq*, hence *'aṣīq*, "lover", Arm. *ashugh*, a wandering minstrel). The Arabic translation of *darvīsh*, *faqīr* "poor man", is another designation of the Sufi. *Faqīr fakhīr*, "My poverty is my pride" is a slogan attributed to Mohammed. A balance, even a symbiosis, gradually obtained between Sufism and the communal structure of normative Islam with its strict laws and morals; but for the eccentric or the free spirit suffocating in society, the way of the dervish was an escape hatch. At the turn of the century the image of the dervish was, understandably, popular with Armenian writers, including some more conformist than Hakob Genjian. Even the thoroughly mainstream Western Armenian writer, scholar, educator, and communal leader Aršak Č'obanian (Chobanian 1872-1954) used the pen name *Devriş* on occasion. Another writer, considerably obscurer, styled himself *Devriş* (with metathesis of the consonantal cluster); and the cover of one of his books is illustrated here to afford an idea of the image of the dervish in Armenian. I summarize and annotate this communication of Marc Mamigonian, NAASR, Belmont, MA, 24 March 2014, about him: Krikor Arakel Keljik (1883-1963) published poems and novels under the name "Devriş" (author's spelling; Arm. *Tēvriš*). Like his elder brother Bedros Arakel Keljik, Krikor was a writer and activist, an Oriental rug merchant and a founder of the Twin Cities (i.e., Minneapolis and St. Paul, MN) Armenian community. They contrasted, however, in their political and literary leanings: Bedros, a former *Hm'ak* (Arm. "Bell", after Alexander Herzen's Russian *Kokokol*: a progressive democratic party), was a local-color realist with a slightly cynical edge, whereas Krikor, a staunch *Dalnak*, remained a romantic through and through. Both brothers were maternal uncles of the writer Vahan Totovents (1889-1938), who worked in the Keljiks' St. Paul rug business between semesters at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A 1922 profile in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press* says that Krikor was a frequent contributor of poems and short stories to the Armenian-language American press, both newspapers and magazines. He contributed to the Boston Armenian-language *Dalnak* paper *Hayrenik* as "Devriş". The books printed with the author's name as "Devriş" or "K. Devriş", with some description of their content courtesy of Lou Ann Matossian:

1. *Tēvrišin K'ēskiwrā*, Boston: Hayrenik' Press, 1930. The author's first book. Contains a short novel, *Bakhefujin* ("The Fortune-teller") and a novella, *Nowakham* ("The Locket"). Both works incorporate poems and songs.

2. *Murmurs of [the] Muse*, St. Paul: Devriş Press, 1941; 2nd edition, 1949. Verse in English, dedicated to the author's daughter, Sossy Armenia Keljik, who died young. Self-published, with typography, printing and binding all done by the author's hand.

3. *Žayterni Sarang* ("Heir of the Rocks"), *Tēvrišin tpanan* ("Devriş Press), 1947.

The cover page of "A Dervish's Begging Bowl", illustrated here, affords a sense, both of the romantic image of the mystical mendicant, and of his embodiment of a longed-for *convivencia* of Christians and Muslims—a notion as wistfully fanciful as the picture of Muslim, Christian, and Jewish harmony in Spain before 1492 for which the term was coined. Behind the dervish in a romantically half-wild, half-paradisiacal landscape rise the pointed, cross-topped domes of Armenian churches, one of which is inspired by the 10th-century island church of the Holy Cross on Alt'amar (Aghtamar) in lake Van.

Shant and the dramatist Shirvanzade. All this so far is a standard literary trajectory for the time and place.

But by this time, he had also begun innovative experiments in writing: in 1911 he was woodenly attacked for what the critics perceived as his misuse of Armenian grammar, morphology, and syntax in his novel *Erwand Gōš*. He offered a spirited reply: "It is my conviction that every new writer, if he is entering the literary arena with a calling, must bring new literary forms with him, and is not to masticate and employ only that which the generations before him masticated and used". We should recall at this point that at the other pole of the Armenian world, Constantinople, the writer and poet Tiran Črak'ean (Chrakian), writing under the pen name Indra,⁷ had also published a novel, *Nerašxarh* ("The Inner World") full of neologisms and linguistic experiments—and had weathered exactly the same sort of criticism. The Black Dervish had become a Futurist.

The movement was new. Filippo Tommaso Marinetti (1876-1944) had published the first Futurist manifesto, in Italian, in 1909 (translated in Apollonio (ed.) (1973: 19-24), and his movement spread very quickly across Europe and to Russia, where in December 1912 the first Futurist anthology, *Poshchēchina obshchestvennomu vkusu* ("A slap in the face to public taste") was published, with contributions by Khlebnikov, Mayakovsky, David Burluk, and others. It was a resounding slap, encouraging the young "to throw Pushkin, Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, etc., etc., from the steamship of the contemporary (*sovremennost'*)". In the summer, local Futurists painted their faces and paraded through St. Petersburg and Moscow, scandalizing the public. Futurism in the Russian Empire grew quickly to such importance that Marinetti himself lectured in Moscow in 1914 and lectured there. Kara Darviš summarized his remarks in a manifesto of his own, *Inc'v Fut'urizm?* ("What is Futurism?"), published the very same year. (It is translated in its entirety in an appendix here.) It is astonishing how Armenians in Tiflis, nearly a century before the Internet, stayed abreast of cultural trends in other countries this way. And there is an interesting Armenian connection to mainstream Futurism anyway. One may justly call Velimir Khlebnikov (1885-1922) the intellectual leader of the evolving movement in Russia, at least as far as its language is concerned; and he wrote in an autobiographical note, *V moikh zhilakh est' armyanskaya krov' (Alabovy) i krov' zaporozhtsev (Verbitskie)... prinalozhu k mestu Vstrechi Volgi i Kaspiya morya (Sigai)* "In my veins there is Armenian blood (the Alabovs) and the blood of the Zaporozhian [Cossacks] (the Verbitskys) ... I belong to the place where the Volga meets the Caspian Sea (Sigai)" (Xardžiev 1940: 352).



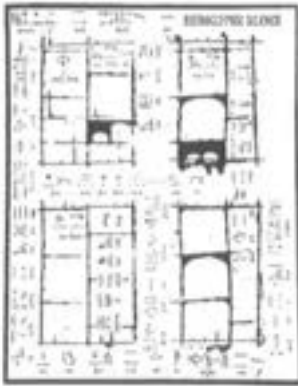
⁷ The name is an anagram in Western Armenian of his first name; but as a word on its own it is also the name of a dragon-slaying (*vrātrahmān*) Hindu god of lightning, who was akin to the Zoroastrian Varathraghna (the Iranian equivalent of Indra's Vedic epithet), ancient Armenian Vahagn. We know of the later from an epic fragment about his birth preserved by the classical historian Movṣēs Xorenac'i; Kara Darviš was also to use this source for the ancient and mythological material in his Futurist verses. He and Indra reflect a widespread interest at the time in the nation's primordial, pre-Christian culture and way of life.

He endowed the followers of the movement with the more Slavic name *Budetshyane*, “What-will-be’ers”, had studied Sanskrit and other eastern languages at St. Petersburg University, and would have been, like many educated Russians, fairly knowledgeable about things Armenian, even aside from his background. But what is important as regards the work of Kara Darviš is that Khlebnikov, in collaboration with Roman Jakobson (who emigrated and in his later years worked as a Slavist and linguist at Harvard) devised what they named *zaum*’, or “transrational” language. *Zaum*’ borrowed and played with folk spells, sectarian glossolalic incantations, and secret argots, as well as street sounds and nonsense syllables. A famous example is his song of the *Rusalki*, or undines, illustrated here. This derangement of linear, canonical language was accompanied by innovations in typography and graphic design: the Futurist movement coincided with the Cubism of Picasso and Braque, and with the *Calligrammes* of Apollinaire.⁸ The latter’s poems were placed on the page in order to echo their subject as images, as drawings inseparable from poems. The poem was no longer only articulate speech, but enfranchised sound; the text itself was no longer a conventional page of horizontal, orthographic lines, but part of the art that illustrated it, even an object the reader had to manipulate in order fully to appreciate—a kinetic experiment.⁹



⁸ The Futurist artists drew not only on local antiquity but also on the “primitive” art of distant regions. This was a period of intense scholarly interest in the monolithic *moai* and the still undeciphered Rongorongo script of Rapa Nui (Easter Island). Gauguin used Rongorongo in his painting, especially in the famous portrait of his young lover, *Merahi meua no Tehamana* (Tahitian, “Ancestral Guardians of Tehamana”), 1893 (see Greub (2011: 221 pl. 205, discussion on pp. 166–168); and Vasilii Kandinsky experimented with it to the end of his life: lines of his own kind of Rongorongo appear in his final, unfinished watercolor (illustrated here, from Weiss (1995: 209, pl. 202) as a kind of post-Futurist meta-text. The painter sought “an art in which a direct equivalence between sign and referent could exist, one that he believed would, in effect, be a non-discursive and universal language” (Morley 2003: 35). The Futurist Il’ya Zdanevich wrote a play, *Outraf Paskhi* (in phoneticized Russian, translatable, if one wants to keep the intertextual misspelling, as something like “Easter Eyeland”), one of whose main characters is a sculptor (see Compton 1978: 62).

⁹ See the excursus here on visual language and Armenian magical manuscripts as a source for the design and intended kinetic qualities of Futurist texts.



Kara Darviš was quickly to adapt *zawm*¹⁰ to Armenian, using native sources and references and the urban sounds of polyglottic, exotic Tiflis, invoking also musical instruments and chords to imply an additional dimension to the sound of his poems. His poems play with different typefaces, sizes, and orientations of Armenian letters, inviting the reader to see them as pictures; the reciter, perhaps to attempt a chanted, musically experimental rendition. His poems are self-described incantations, too; and in Armenian magical texts words of known semantic value and *voces mysticae*—mantric “nonsense” words—are often written in different directions and patterns and in association with other

graphic designs (cf. the sigils of western grimoires—that is, the ritual books of practicing witches). One recalls that Rimbaud was so disappointed that his poems did not exercise visible, *magical* power that he gave up writing and left France to become a gun runner and slave trader in Abyssinia. Another resident of Tiflis at the time, though, did employ both painted shapes and mystical, chanted words—some of them, Armenian—for the purpose of psychological growth and transformation, the making of a new and enlightened man. This was George Gurdjieff (1866–1949), born at Alexandropol (later Leninakan, now Kumayri, in the Republic of Armenia), ran his mystical school for a time in the city before decamping to Paris after the establishment of Soviet rule. Gurdjieff (the name is Persian for “Georgian”, with a Russified ending) was completely fluent in Armenian, though his ethnicity is often given as Greek.¹⁰

¹⁰ In his autobiographical *Meetings with Remarkable Men*, Gurdjieff claims his father Adash was an *ashugh* (musician and bard) who sang at Van and Kars, and in Karabagh, and kept alive an oral tradition of the stories of Gilgamesh. He worked for a time on the Kars-Karakilise-Tiflis railway, and claimed to have found books in the ancient and incomprehensible Armenian of Father Telvant and the Sarmoune Brotherhood: these were hidden in a cave blocked with stones in the ruins of the medieval Armenian metropolis of Ani. Elsewhere he refers to a book called *Merharvat*, i.e., Arm. *mer harvat*(k’), “our faith” (cf. perhaps the Clas. Arm. *Knik’ harvatoy*, “Seal of faith”); and Armenians of this kind abound in his huge tome, *Beetsebab’s Tales to his Grandson*. There he mentions a religious festival called *Zadik*, i.e., Arm. *Zatik*, “Easter” (Voltaire had liked the Armenian word, too, cf. his *Zadig*); and the real name of the planet Mars is *Mdnel-outianlink*, with Arm. *mnel* “to enter” and the abstract nominal ending in the genitive, -*ur’eant*. These are just examples drawn at random. Gurdjieff claimed to have seen the writings of the pythonesses of the *Imasturs* (cf. Arm. *imastur*, “wise”), which could be in four directions on a page, depending on the direction from which they were receiving a communication—this could be a reference to a multi-directional Armenian magical text. Few of the flamboyant mystic-writer-painter-musician-adventurer’s claims can be verified, though; and Gurdjieff enjoyed playing games of mystification: see Wilson C. (1971: 385). One way to contextualize Gurdjieff, perhaps, is to compare his wild tales, extravagant cosmologies, and polyglottic inventions to those of Ali Mirdrekvandi, whose long novels, with their mixtures of Persian, Kurdish, and possibly Mithraic and Zurvanite mythology, baffled and entranced the great Iranist R.C. Zaehner. The latter wrote a Foreword to one, *No Heaven for Gunga Din* (1965); many others languish unpublished at Oxford.



The Moscow Futurists visited Tiflis in 1914— Kara Darviš, as noted above, wrote and published as a pamphlet *Ինժ' և futurizm*, "What is

Futurism?" the same year. This was not just a summary of Marinetti's views, or those of the Russians, but a manifesto of his own, Armenian Futurism. Its combative, scandal-mongering style was doubtless intended to attract attention outside the official press; and it is a provocative attack on Armenian traditional culture, values, and morality that singles out for ridicule the beloved elder of Armenian letters, Yovhannēs T'umanean (Hovhannes Tumanian) and derides the popularity of *ashugh* poetry—the songs of bards such as Tiflis' son, the great Sayat' Nova. He was himself to assume that bardic mantle, declaring himself an *ashugh* and the authentic and unmediated voice of the Armenian people; but then, consistency is the bugbear of small minds. If the purpose was to start a fight with the establishment, it was a success. The great literary historian Garegin Lewonean (Levonian), whose works on the *ashugh* genre are of fundamental importance, found these assaults both trivial and offensive. He excoriated the activity of the Futurists as *ōyınbazut' iwn gelaruesti tačarum* ("tomfoolery in the temple of fine art") and fumed in russified Armenian at their *šarlatanut' iwn, šantiaž* ("charlatanry and blackmail") in an article in *Gelaruest* ("Fine Art") in 1916 that Beledian has cited. The official doctrine of Socialist Realism, with its stress on clarity and realism, and its contempt for "formalism" (art for art's sake, as it were), was to embrace Levonian and Tumanian, not by any fault of their own, and to celebrate the epic and balladic recitations of unlettered bards "from the people". And Stalinism consigned Kara Darviš and his circle to the dustbin of history— some of them, to the literal concentration camp dust (Rus. *lagernaya pyl'*) of the Gulag.

Kara Darviš wrote his Futurist poem *Šrēs-blur* ("Asphodel Hill") in 1914: it is translated and annotated here as an appendix here, and the text is provided in the illustrations. His novel *Keank' i futak* ("The Violin of Life"), 1917, which is in a conventional Eastern Armenian, attracted no attention (perhaps not surprising, considering recent events, including a world war, two revolutions in Russia, and the Armenian Genocide two years before the latter). It deals with a lonely, middle-aged Armenian broken by family bereavement and leading a weary life, whose spirits and neglected, decrepit body revive when he meets a beautiful Russian woman. Free love was very much a part of the Futurist program; but Beledian is probably right in his assertion that the Armenian writer here was inspired more by Mikhail Artsybashev's softly pornographic novel *Sanin* (1907)— the *Fanny Hill* or *Lady Chatterley's Lover* of its day— than by more sophisticated avant-garde works.¹¹ Kara Darviš welcomed the Russian Revolution for its erotic as well as social and economic possibilities,

¹¹ This is not to downplay the nearly forgotten Russian sexual revolution of the time (overshadowed by subsequent Stalinist puritanism), that gave us Mikhail Kuzmin's gay novel *Kryl'ja* ("Wings"), Nabokov *père's* legislative project to decriminalize homosexuality, and Nijinsky.

thinking it was to lead the ship of humanity (on which, you recall, we had just made 19th-century Russian literature walk the plank) to dock at a *siroy nawahangist*, a "safe haven of love". In a lecture of 1918 or 1919 entitled "Prologue", he writes, "A great energy is acting, a great forward push is emerging and the new man, the man of the great force of thought and struggle, is being born. I side with the conviction that futurism is advancing and expanding among oppressed peoples, be that oppression moral or economic".

Georgia did not unite, though, in a happy conjugal embrace with Soviet Russia, at least not at first. It declared independence as a socialist/nationalist republic ruled by the Mensheviks, ideological opponents of Lenin; so for a time Tiflis became a safe haven indeed for writers and artists who found Lenin's red terror something less than a love-fest. Kara Darviš was a habitu  of the short-lived Fantastic Little Tavern, where he recited his poems and mixed with Futurists and other artists, socialites, and eccentrics, most of whom had fled the Bolsheviks. The poet wrote declamatory verses at once boastful and meek—he was, after all, a *dervish*—and these typify his recitations at the crowded tavern, to a friendly and appreciative audience. In his poem of 14 May 1921 "Who is the hero?" Kara Darviš declares, "The hero is the one who shatters human law and tramples it underfoot, who converses with the stars and champions their law; who goes out into the street naked and crazy and outside the crowd, treading underfoot the clothing of law and order men have worn for a thousand years. The anarchic, lawless, mad man: that is the hero".

There is something of Nietzsche's *Übermensch*, his Superman Zarathustra, in this, though Kara Darviš was emphatically not a Nietzschean; but what matters much more, what



by *zawm*, the “transrational” language of Khlebnikov and other poets and writers. The latter drew upon the fanciful sound combinations, glossolalia, folk spells against mermaids (*rusalki*), and the secret language of sectarians such as the Flagellants. Accordingly, Kara Darviš tapped the sources and resources of his own, ancient language— of Armenian mythology and oral epic preserved in the writings of the Classical historian Movsēs Xorenac'i, and the cadences, images, and sound patterns of Armenian incantations. He also drank of the neo-pagan springs of contemporary Western Armenian literature, especially the *Het'anos erger* (“Heathen Songs”) of Daniel Varuzhan, who was murdered in 1915 by the Turks. His work inspired, in turn, the younger Soviet Armenian poet Yeghishe Charents, who became acquainted with him in Tiflis.

Kara Darviš was not content merely to write poems in non-traditional form; he altered to his vision of a future art their type of production and distribution, printing them on postcards and selling them in front of the cinema and opera houses of Tiflis. The poet's friend Kostan Zarian describes the spectacle in his novel *Anc'orda ew ir ĉamban* (“The passerby and his road”): “Kara Darviš is selling his poems and postcards¹³ outside the doors of a big movie theater. Kara [*sic*! The word is an epithet, not a first name] is a unique phenomenon in our literature: a hero, and in any case a kind of rebel. He is a man standing outside the realm of social prejudice, devoid neither of talent nor of general education. The Armenian merchant, the fossilized Armenian schoolmaster, and the Armenian literati of the Caucasus, slithering from table to table in clubs and salivating, look upon him with scorn and ridicule. But he is the hero. He is the real successor to the dervishes and bards. He preserves the honor of a poet. He is our conscience.”¹⁴

After the October Revolution many Russian avant-garde writers and painters emigrated, some settling for a time in Tiflis. I have noted the debt of Armenians to the Russian avant-garde, but the Russians in the Transcaucasus learned something from their hosts, too. Vasilii Kamensky's Futurist sketch map of the city, which he styles a “poem in reinforced concrete” (his famous sketch of the Sun, discussed in the Excursus on visual language here, bears the same title), notes the location of favorite hangouts, and at the foot

¹³ Literally, *bac' nowakner* “open letters”, a calque on the Russian *otkrytoye pis'mo*; the latter is abbreviated with a diminutive ending to *otkrytka*, and Arm. follows suit with *bac'ik*.

¹⁴ *Erker* (“Works”), *Ant'ilias* (Antelias, Lebanon), 1975: 94), cit. by Beledian (2009: 196, 273). One might adumbrate here a vexing question. A man proclaimed the conscience of Armenian literature might have been expected to speak, no, scream, about the genocidal murder of the Armenians of the Ottoman Empire, taking place just across the border. The massacres of 1894-1896 were alive in memory and might have alerted public attention to this second, incomparably greater disaster. The events of 1915 and after were well known: the mass killings and deportations were the subject of British parliamentary inquiries and made the front pages of the world's papers, including *The New York Times* and *The Boston Globe*. Kara Darviš not only read the poems of Daniel Varuzhan— one of the first victims— he even used Western Armenian in writing a line in homage to him. Armenians had organized a volunteer corps in the Russian army to assist their compatriots; and refugees from Van and elsewhere were flooding into Russian Armenia. Even so, why did not the Armenian writers of Tiflis and elsewhere in the Russian Empire react and respond commensurately to the greatest catastrophe in Armenian history? Surely they had enough to occupy their attention; perhaps, too, their minds simply could not comprehend the scale of events that were still unfolding. Did the more banal human qualities of indifference to the suffering of others, a lack of empathy, play a part?

of the drawing is a transliteration into Russian of the Armenian word *erjankat'wn*, "happiness".¹⁵ So Russians and Armenian mixed and there seems to have been some linguistic interchange— not just Caucasian peoples learning and using the language of the Imperial ruler, but Russians taking a keen interest in the ancient cultures of their hosts.¹⁶ The Russian friends of Kara Darviš published an anthology of his lyric poems and short stories in Russian translation, *Pesni buntuyushchago tela* ("Songs of a rebellious body") at Tiflis in 1918. (No Futurist compositions are included.) The book is a paperback brochure of mimeographed typescript: the typeset cover has a cameo photograph of the poet. It bears no fewer than four prefaces by the poet himself:

"(1) TO MAN. With a torch kindled in my soul and a smile of love on my lips I come to thee, a poor, broken, spat-upon man.

KARA-DARVISH, June 1918.

(2) TO THE PRESENT ANTHOLOGY.

The present anthology has been translated with my assistance in the form of a literal rendering into Russian of my novellas/songs. My translator-friends have expended every effort to depict the visage of the poet in its full convexity, warming their labor with great love and tenderness. It remains to me only to thank them from my soul, from my burning heart, for the opportunity to make my few works accessible to the wide Russian reading public. In the near future I hope to publish in Russian translation my longer works, as well.

KARA-DARVISH, May 1918.

(3) DEDICATED

¹⁵ The map/poem is illustrated here, and see Rowell/Wye (eds.) (2002: 108 pl). The four inscriptions read: *Gruzija= Salami artvepe/ Armeniya= ěndzhankat'wn/ Persiya= Ay choban koyun/ Rossiya= Saryn' na kitku* "Georgia= greetings (next word unintelligible)/Armenia= happiness/ Persia= Hey, shepherd, sheep!/ Russia= Crew to the prow" (a rallying cry of river bandits on the Volga).

¹⁶ The itinerary of emigration ultimately took many from there to the Georgian port of Batumi(i), thence to Turkey or Greece and the penury and insecurity of exile in Europe and the Americas. The hero of the novel *Nawa leran way* ("The Ship upon the Mountain") by the Armenian writer Kostan Zarian, a friend of Kara Darviš, is Herian, a sea captain based in Batumi. Chapter Nine of the novel is dedicated to Kara Darviš, his café, and his friends: it is translated as an appendix here. The author evokes the dire conditions of the refugees from civil war and Red terror. One of the more curious personalities and odder literary figures to pass through Batumi at the time was the Russian-Jewish writer Lev Nussimbaum, born to a rich family of Baku oilmen in 1905. His family reached the port, which his biographer calls "a kind of Czarist Casablanca— the bottleneck for all those fleeing west", in 1920 and were able to purchase Georgian passports and depart for Constantinople (see Reiss 2005: 100.) Nussimbaum converted to Islam and under the pseudonym Kurban Said published in German *Ali and Nino*, the love story of an aristocratic Azeri boy and a tender Georgian maiden caught up in the whirlwinds of war and relentlessly pursued by an evil, lascivious old Armenian named Nakhararian with a big black powerful car. (*Naxarur*, the ancient Parthian term for a local hereditary dynast, now means "government minister".) Under the pen name Essad Bey, Nussimbaum authored a pioneering biography of Stalin. Though pursued by Azeri Nazi sympathizers anxious to expose him as Jew, he managed to die peacefully in wartime Fascist Italy. In his anxiety to conceal his origins, Nussimbaum can be compared in some ways to the Armenian Imaginist Alexander Kasikov.

to the friend about whom I dreamed and in whom I was ever disillusioned.

If the entire world takes up arms against my words, thoughts, and feelings, you, my friend, will be standing to the side, you will understand me, you will come up to me, and will give me your hand.

KARA-DARVISH.

(4) Whom I love.

I love those whose soul is like a shoreless sea and whose conscience rings like a silver bell.

KARA-DARVISH".

The poems in the book deal with themes of voluptuousness and love, for the most part, in a not particularly enviable style one might characterize as *fin de siècle* Orientalizing Symbolist-lite. For instance, on p. 48: "I became weak, and wordless, and without a moan/ I instantly awoke. The silence, pitch black./That spellbinding lass from the land of the Pharaohs/ Veiled herself with murk from stares..." No luck for peeping toms in the land of the Pyramids. On p. 55, a lily-bodied hetaira sprawls invitingly on a Khorasan carpet: one prefers the iterations of Varuzhan and Medzarents, where she is at least dancing. The prose pieces are eminently forgettable as well: One story introduces a forest nymph who strips down for a dip in the sea in the buff. Then she dries herself off, heads back to the woods, and the sun smiles at her. In another, a man wandering in the desert dreams, plausibly, of water, then he sees a goddess standing on a mountain and acknowledges her as his Ideal. He continues on his thirsty way. A third opens on the disturbing scene of people hauling crosses up to Golgotha; but the reader's anxiety is assuaged by the assurance that they are all brothers, helping each other. (But then, to do what?) The book does contain translations, by Tatiana Vechorka, of the important poems "Who I Am" and "The Cup of Life"; mostly it testifies to the esteem of the poet's Russian-speaking friends and their readiness to help his poems reach an audience beyond readers of Armenian.

These included the Russian Futurist Alexei Kruchenykh (1886-1968), who lived from early 1918 to the end of 1919 at Tiflis in the family home of his fellow Futurist Il'ya Zdanevich (1894-1975), a permanent denizen of the city. Together with the writer Igor' Terent'ev they opened in Nov. 1918 the *Fantasticheskii kabachek* ("Fantastic Little Tavern"), which became a meeting place for the Russian, Georgian, and Armenian "Syndicate of Futurists", of which Kara Darviš was a founding member, till it closed its doors in July of the following year. Kara Darviš published his cycle *Yurut'k' Ulunk'* "Incantation Beads", including the earlier *Šreš blur* "Asphodel Hill", in an anthology dedicated by the habitués of the tavern to the beautiful dancer Sofia Georgievna Mel'nikova (1890-1980), the charmed center of their circle. It includes poems by Vechorka, one of the

translators in *Songs of a Rebellious Body*.¹⁷ The Georgian poet Grigorii Robakidze, whose poems appear in the anthology, described the place: (Compton 1992: 44).

"Tiflis has become a fantastic city. A fantastic city needed a fantastic corner, and on one fine day, at No. 12 Rustaveli, in the courtyard, poets and artists opened a Fantastic Tavern which consisted of a small room, meant for ten to fifteen, but which, by some miracle, had about fifty people in it, more women than men. Phantasmagorias decorated the walls of the room. Virtually every evening the tavern was open, and poets and artists read their poems and lectures".

One visitor to the tavern, for instance, was the famed hostess and socialite Vera Sudeikina-Stravinskaya, whose family arrived in Tiflis in April 1919 and stayed there six months. Her album includes entries by numerous painters and writers including Il'ya Zdanevich and the poet Osip Mandelstam, who translated a poem by Kara Darviš (dedicated to Robakidze) into Russian (Bowlit 1995: xix-xxi). The writer Konstantin Paustovsky (1892-1968) met the Zdanevich family during his stay in Tiflis, in 1923, and mentions in his memoirs a book they had entitled *Tsveti, poeziya sukina doch'* (perhaps best rendered now, with apologies to the gentle reader, as "Flower, O poetry, you fuckin' bitch"). It was printed in various typesfaces, and "between individual words were inserted various lines, rows of dots, clefs, letters from the Armenian, Georgian, and Arabic alphabets, musical notes..."¹⁸ It seems likely Kara Darviš had a hand in preparation of the text. It is noteworthy that there is an element of musical notation: the variations in size and position of letters in Futurist publications suggest a musical score, so that one might attempt a tonal performance of them; and Kara Darviš refers often in his poems to music.¹⁹

The greatest and most important of the Armenian poets Kara Darviš knew in Tiflis was, as noted, the great Yeghishe Charents (1897-1937). The latter was a protean figure who, it can fairly be said, mastered and perfected every poetic style known in Armenian. He wrote poems in the styles of Symbolism and decadence in his early years, then turning to the stridently proletarian verse of the great bard of the Revolution, Mayakovsky (who was born in Georgia, and who in 1914 sketched a portrait of Kara Darviš, illustrated here). In 1920, in the midst of revolution and chaos, Charents wrote his *Talaran* ("Song book"), a cycle of

¹⁷ The volume, entitled *Sofia Georgievna Mel'nikova, Fantasticheskiĭ khabachek, Tiflis, 1917 1918 1919* ("To Sofia Georgievna Mel'nikova, Fantastic Little Tavern, Tiflis, 1917 1918 1919"), was published in Sept. 1919 in an edition of 180 copies and included poems by Russian, Armenian, and Georgian Futurists and illustrations by Natalia Goncharova, Alexander Bazhbeuk-Melikov, Lado Gudiashvili, and others. It was reprinted in 2012 by the Georgii Leonidze State Museum of Georgian Literature, Tbilisi. All the poems by Kara Darviš printed in the volume are illustrated, translated, and annotated here.

¹⁸ *Poves' o žizni* ("A tale about life"), cited by Janecek (1984: 183).

¹⁹ The Russian Constructivist A. Chicherin (Zelinskij/Čičerin 1924) in his "Mena vsex" ("Change of All"), introduces a novel form of musical notation that breaks with unidirectional straight lines (see Janecek 1984: 197 fig. 160). It is noteworthy that there is an Armenian connection to later experiments of this kind in the west. "Aria", written by John Cage in 1960 for a singer named Ms. Berberian, has a score consisting of drawings of lines in black ink, accompanied by blotches of various colors and the words HAMPART-ZOUM (W. Arm. for *Hambarjunt*, "Ascension", used as a man's name), DIROUHI (W. Arm. for *Tiruhi*, the fem. of *Tēr* "Lord", used as a woman's name), DI QUESTA TERRA (Italian, "of this earth"), NAPRASNO (Russian, "in vain"), CONSCIENCE ET (French, "conscience and"), and A-RISE! (English); see Sauer (2009: 44).

lyrics in the style of Sayat' Nova, in a very clear and limpid Eastern Armenian. For a time he associated with the Imaginist school in Moscow, that included the great Sergei Esenin—the Rimbaud-like bad boy of Russian poetic legend—and the curiously furtive, russified Armenian poet, Alexander Kusikov.²⁰ Charents was to experiment with, then disavow Futurism when it fell out of favor, as he became a leading figure of the new Soviet Armenian literary establishment. But he mentions in a letter of 18 March 1934, three years before his arrest and death, that he had met Vahan Terean (Terian), the Armenian Symbolist poet, at the *Chashka chayi* (“Cup of Tea”) in Tiflis, back in the days of the Revolution. Kara Darviš, whom he calls “the only Armenian writer whom I knew personally at that time”, was there. Since there were plenty of others, the comment suggests that the Futurist poet stood out among them and that Charents sought his company and held him in high esteem, even though he was to condemn him a few years later (Čarenc’ 1967: vol. 6: 480).

In 1921, with the Communist annexation of Georgia, Kara Darviš gamely attempted to adapt to the new order, hoping to find a niche of acceptance. He began writing on literature and theater for the paper *Karmir Astl* (“Red Star”); Osip Mandelstam, who was passing through Tiflis, translated his poem *Para leran vray* (“The Dance on the Mountain”) into Russian that year. The Soviet Union was established in 1922; and in 1923, as a Soviet literary and cultural policy began to take shape, the Soviet Armenian press commenced attacks on the Futurists. On 15 November the Armenian House of Culture at Tiflis held a full-court “literary trial” of Kara Darviš, who was condemned in a seven-point verdict. Charents, Gevorg Abov, and Azat Vshtuni, a self-appointed triumvirate of official taste, declared that Futurism had no place in Armenian culture. But by the late 1930s, it was to have no place for them, either. In the twilight years of his life, Kara Darviš wrote occasionally for *Mardakoc’* (“The Call to Battle”, Tiflis) and *Hayastan* (“Armenia”, Erevan) till 1927. In his last months he was shuttling back and forth between Erevan and Tiflis in an unresolved dispute about his pension. One of his last poems is the wistful gaze of an old man back into the past, not forward. He saw only death ahead, and perhaps he understood also that Armenia had been robbed of its future. “Again my heart thirsts/ For its vernal spate of health;/ Again summer’s the embrace/ Of the giving body of a girl./ Come come do not forget/ That in Apollo’s might arms/ Great power from the past is yet./ My heart pounds again/ Like the hammer on the anvil/ And garlands of sparks/ Light up the black of night./ ... Steamy summer heat/ Comes like a faraway cry/ And with a fevered heart/ I just want tea with lemon” (Palotean 2009: 268).

He died 16 December 1930 and was buried in the Armenian cemetery of Xojavank*. Two lines from his poem *Ov em es*, “Who am I” are engraved on his tombstone: *Es hamarharhayin k’olak’ac’i em/ Astarhn ē im hayrenik’o* (“I am a cosmopolitan citizen/ And the world is my fatherland”) (Beledian 1992: 39-53)²¹

²⁰ On Kusikov, see Russell (2014).

²¹ On the response to the criticism of *Erwand Göß* see Beledian (2009: 200); on “Who is the hero?” (200: 251). Beledian is the principal scholar, theorist, and critic of Armenian literature, particularly of the modern period, in France; and the groundbreaking archival work on Kara Darviš is his. I have widened the scope of analysis somewhat to understand the poet’s work in a philological manner, examining his use of language

So, Kara Darviš was the great Armenian Futurist. His career is testimony to the tragic oblivion to which historical circumstances have condemned Armenian innovators in art and thought whose contributions might otherwise have nourished the Near East and the world and advanced human progress. Had the Genocide not happened, had the October Revolution not degenerated into a sanguinary tyranny, there might have been a Europe without Hitler and a Near East without Hezbollah and Hamas. Instead, the cultures of the East might have joined as equals, not as antiquarian curiosities, the great stream of world thought. But the life of Kara Darviš is testimony, too, to the speed at which world culture reached distant Armenia in times when to be a Futurist meant to be hopeful rather than apprehensive, and to the astonishing receptivity of Armenians to innovation when their conditions permitted. One might add to the valediction of his epitaph the letter, cited in an appendix here, that another great Armenian eccentric, William Saroyan, addressed posthumously to Charents. In the end, Charents and Kara Darviš alike said no to power and did not betray their muse and their inner liberty.

In his 1939 obituary article on Khodasevich, Vladimir Nabokov wrote that the personal loss was unendurable, so let us turn to the poems. Let us turn here to the texts of the manifestos, the literary evocations of that nearly forgotten time, and listen to their lost hopes, evanescent dreams, and their resurrected music.

APPENDICES

1. Kara Darviš, *Bac'ikner ew antipner, aforizmner* ("Postcards and unpublished [poems], aphorisms", *Kam, handēs verluçakan* ("Kam, an analytical journal") 6, Los Angeles, 2005, pp. 209-234. The aphorisms were selected by the editors from a total of 800; I have made a further selection here.

(210) *Ov em es, "Who am I?" from the cycle "Towards new heights".*

I am a crazy-minded dreamer—the stars and the moon are my dream.

I am a solid man of the earth—the earth and nature are my roots.

I am a wakeful guardian—the alert observer of all values.

I am a cosmopolitan citizen—the world is my fatherland.

I am a man, and Man is my comrade and compatriot.

I am a satrap and tyrant—the executioner of all impostors and Pharisees.

and of ancient Armenian sources; and I have expanded the multi-cultural and historical context considerably. None of the poet's work itself has been translated into English hitherto; so I have endeavored to present a representative sample.

I am a slave, a lamb, a dove, and a child—

I am the servant of all the righteous and the truth-sayers, the doer of their will.

I am a fierce, proud Scythian²²— I am the first Armenian who loves the Armenian people as forty thousand brave and manly brothers.²³

I am a Bolshevik— I am a democrat, a socialist, to the tips of the hairs on my head.

I am an anarchist— to everything petrified I am death, thunder, and lightning.

I am a maximalist— I break, tear up by the root all that is rotten, old, and stale.

I am a Futurist— fiercely proud smasher of idols, the vandal who topples venerable statues from their heavy pedestals and shatters them.

I am a mad lover— I place the stamp of fiery kisses on a lovely woman's bosom and with wild arms grip her strongly in my stormy and lustful embrace.

I am everything and nothing.

I am Kara Darwiš.

* * *

The Cup of Life [Kenac' bažakə]

Let the dead bury the dead.

—The Gospel

²² The word used here is *ask'amaz*, from Biblical Hebrew *Aškenaz*, the name of one of the sons of Japheth in Genesis. The -n- might have been an early scribal error for -u-, from a form like *iğwaz*, i.e., Scythian. The Armenians numbered among their ancestors *Paroyt Skayordi*, i.e., *Partatua* the son of the Scythian, mentioned by *Movsēs Xorenac'i* in his genealogy of the nation; and in heroic epic legend king *Artakēs* (*Artaxias*) married the Alan princess *Sat'inik*, i.e., *Satana*, the mythical progenitrix of the Narts (see J.R. Russell, "Argawan: The Indo-European Memory of the Caucasus", *Journal of Armenian Studies* VIII.2, Fall 2006 [2007], pp. 110-147). These were the epic heroes of the Ossetes, or Alans, a North Iranian people related to the Scythians. Alexander Blok thought his fellow Russians *Šitfy*, Scythians; and the Polish nobility also laid romantic claims to descent from the Sarmatians, also related to the Scythians. The locus classicus for the Scythians is the *Histories* of Herodotus; and it is no mystery why poets advocating atavism and a return to "nature" would have sought origins for their nations in the hard-riding tribes of the Eurasian steppes. A modern British poet put it best in his quatrain "Hedonism": "After the Scythians, how advance/ In the pursuit of happiness?/ They went around in leather pants,/ And every night smoked cannabis" (Gunn 2000: 42).

²³ Beledian (2009: 277), notes that the original version read, *Es dāznak'akan em*, "I am a Dashnak". The Armenian Revolutionary Federation (*Hay hełap'axakan dāznak'ut'ien*) is a nationalist political party that dominated the first Republic of Armenia but was driven into exile after the Comenianist takeover; despite its socialist beginnings it subsequently adopted a stridently anti-Soviet line and in the 1930s and 40s some of its members, particularly in Europe, were associated with fascism and nazism.

I am a hero at the wedding feast of life.

I am a deserter from the war waged by barbaric, patriotic bandits.

I am a citizen of the democracy of the spirit [ogu hasarakapetut'ean].

The demonic cackle of ridicule on my quivering lips is for you, you citizens fattened on law and order.

And I pass through the dark, cloudy tumult of the avenues of great cities, fully armed with the shield of the spirit.

Let the sky thunder— let fire and lightning flash and crash down on my bare head. Let the naked sword glint over my breast.

Let the slippery noose of the gallows loop and tighten at my throat— my body is weak, my spirit is strong, free, bold, soaring over the plains of an untimely death.²⁴

My spirit is an eagle's strong pinions soaring, coursing high above stupefied, slaughtered skulls.

Howl of hatred and scorn— and a leap, a mighty leap up the dizzying mountain of skulls,

The goblet for a toast to life in my hand— dedication, song, and dance, demonic wedding...

Sing, poet! The world is a graveyard.

And let the crystalline tears of repentance stream down and pour from sockets of the skulls of the stupefied victims.

That is one peaceful cemetery, that world.

It is night. The giant sphere of the Moon swims across the sky, its silver layers gleaming down upon me, the mad lover, standing over the vast grave pit of skulls with the cup of life foaming in my hand.

That is the monument to the dawning future [fut'ur]²⁵ life.

It is the road to new ascents to new heights.

²⁴ This line anticipates, and probably partly inspired, the poem by Eghishe Charents, *Mahvan testil*, "Vision of death" (1920), in which the poet sees a gallows in Erevan, describes with horror the noose, and asks to be hanged as the ransom for his people. Charents met and conversed with Kara Darwiš in Tiflis, his memoir of the encounter is cited here.

²⁵ Although Russians and Armenians borrowed from Marinetti's Italian the name of their movement as *Futurizm*, Russians invented for themselves also a Slavic designation *будетъеизм*, "it-will-be-ers", and Armenian scholarship calls Futurism *գոգոյաբանութիւն*, lit. "worship of what comes after", Kara Darwiš here seems to emphasize that the movement with the name Futurism is the future itself.

And howl, and cymbal and castanet,²⁶ and violin, and lyre, and drum, and celebration, and feast...

Gods, hear my prayer—the melody of my lips. Receive my offering, and from bygone centuries, from beneath ruins, raise the golden sunbursts of your heads.

I come from the pagan temples, and Nisibis is my fatherland.²⁷

Sound the trumpets, strike drums and shake the castanets: life's bridegroom comes, holding the bride of the new life by her hands—the mad lover comes, with the cup of life in his hands.

The road!

The hero of the new life comes, riding his victory chariot, bearing an invitation to the new life.

Sound the trumpets, blast the horns.

Roses, flowers, laurels: scatter them, and plant them.

The conquering hero comes.

Sound the trumpets, strike the strings of the lyre!

10 May 1918

Tiflis

• • •

²⁶ *Ev mrmurj, ev cncloy, ev hambir, ev jut'ak...* Kara Darviš stresses variously the musical signature of his poetry and his vision. The poem "Incantation Beads" plays upon the alliterative quality of Arm. *tsntsgħa*, "cymbal"; and the poet's novel about a desiccated man's awakening to sexual passion and health is entitled *Keank'i jut'akā*, "The Violin of Life". And at the beginning of the poem "Vision of death" by Charents noted above, which these verses might have inspired, the poet's vexed heart is described as the strained chord of a *t'ayjauk*, a viola. In Kara Darviš' story *P'otofoṃac jut'akā* ("The dust-caked violin"), published in *Sarḥandak*, Tiflis, 25 March 1912, a mysterious violinist named Kara from the legendary medieval metropolis of Ani travels to Crimea (whither many Armenians had fled following the fall of the city to the Seljuk Turks in the 11th century) and gives his instrument to a youth who endows it with new life.

²⁷ *Baginmeru mejēn ku gam—Mchian ē hayrenik's*. The line is, markedly, in Western Armenian, and refers to the cycle *Heṭ'amos erger* ("Heathen songs") and the long poem *Harčā* ("The Concubine"), by the W. Arm. poet Daniel Varuzhan, whose work Kara Darviš esteemed. Nisibis (present-day Nusaybin) was an ancient center of Syriac Christianity on the southern borders of historical Armenia. Kara Darviš wrote of Varuzhan, "And when your monument is erected on the future plaza of Armenian creative thought, I, standing in the front ranks, will lag on my shoulders your bronze statue towards the Nisibis of the heathen world that you sang of and loved" (cited by Beledian 2009: 280-281).

Untitled

Where are you, O man? I celebrate you.

I see a king, a nobleman, a soldier, a worker.

I don't see you, O man—you're hidden away in the darkness, extinguished and unseen.

You are a burnt out candle, a dying fire, a wilted flower.

I pass through the misty, beclouded streets wrapped in dark fog:

You stare, emaciated, draped in rags, forgotten by all,

And lament your lot, lamenting and cursing the infidel world.

I approach you and clasp your chilled and desiccated hand

And with fiery lips and hot breath I kiss your bony hand.

I hear your strangled cry—it is your soul, shattered and broken, ringing.

*That is a man speaking, protesting, and opposite him tramp soldiers with bayonets shining
at their shoulders,*

Singing a song of pride and brotherhood, fiery-red banners snapping,

But you, O man, where are you, I'm searching for you.

*You're in tatters, you're under the bayonets, you're under the imperial purple, you're a
worker, you're a nobleman.*

I'm looking for you, O man—you're not there.

*I looked for you and found you murdered, shattered, wasted, frozen, fallen before the powers
that rule this world, your hand stretched out.*

*I have no money or wealth—I have nothing—I have a warm kiss, brotherly, fiery—I give
you that.*

*Don't despair, you're not alone, I'm a man, I'm with you, let that kiss enflame the dying fire
of your heart and inspire you with hope.*

Do not despair!

(n.d.)

* * *

(227 f.) **Selected aphorisms:**

Everything (*Amēn ban*)

1. *People, I want very little from you. Just a little bit of freedom.*
2. *I'm weak because I don't understand you; I'm strong because you don't understand me.*
3. *Children are wise; big people are stupid, and those who strive to follow and resemble them are stupider still.*
4. *Everything that comes out of me is valuable and true; everything that comes, not from me, but from others, is false and fake.*
5. *You want happiness for man? Strip him naked and let him loose on the earth.*
6. *Look at life with the eyes of Adam and let your sole property be the fig leaf, and you'll be happy.*
7. *The freest man is the one who has nothing and knows nothing.*
8. *Even the lion lowers his head before the sun.*
9. *The world was created for me and I am lord in it.*
10. *Revolution at its high point of fever is a prayer for the pure and the noble, but sexual sadism is for lewd and repulsive cowards.*
11. *Go, don't stand still, even if you are about to make a mistake.*
12. *The strong one gets up last; the weak one's the first to jump.*
13. *Real creativity justifies everyone; king, slave, pauper, rich man, martyr, criminal, the talented and the dullard, everyone.*
14. *Be awake, that you be a keen sword.*
15. *Write in such a way that your every line is worth a chunk of your life.*
16. *Ink is the sea out of which, like nymphs, my thoughts are born and emerge.*
17. *If even a drop of ink remain at the tip of your pen, don't let it dry up— write! So that the reader may bless and remember you.*
18. *Stay awake, so that life around you will not slumber.*

* * *

2. Kara Darwiš, *Arewelk'a ibrew albiwr nor gelaruesti ew stelcagorcūt'ean* (*Hin goymers nor p'ayli tak*) ("The East as a source of new fine art and creativity— Old colors with a new shine"), reprinted in *Kayk'* Literary yearbook 3, Paris, 1993, pp. 113-120.

Creation is life's greatest joy. Just as day wakes with the early morning, the dawning of the sun, so can the life of a man, an individual, a whole people, awaken, open its eyes from slumber, when it begins to create— that is, when all the strings in the soul of a man or an entire people begin to sound with a single powerful harmony, to act— in other

words, for its mind and soul to live with a strong rhythm. Mankind, you would think, has begun to wake up from its deep slumber. A new morn is dawning for mankind, when the golden rays of the rising sun illuminate the world. It is necessary to create in order to live and wake, to resound with all the strings of the soul.

Futurism has been the first and greatest stimulus of the present age: it has come to tell us that you, all of you, are poets, you are geniuses, all of you are endowed with the same energy, the same heavenly spark, and you must believe that you are the chosen of heaven—if only the conviction rest firm and steady in your hearts that you are creators of life. So, here are three men for you, sitting around and talking—and behold, they are creating a piece of life. The nations are creating big chunks of life. We too as a people are creating a big piece of life. But that piece is only one slice of the life of mankind. If you create a bad, crude, uncultivated piece, then you spoil the whole splendid edifice of man—his piece of life. Here's a building, a beautiful building, and, all of a sudden, it has shattered windows and broken ornaments. We Armenians are an ornament of the edifice of the world also. Come, let us give a marvelous shape to that ornament. Let those who view it be amazed. But to fashion this ornament, we have to do creative work. We have to start the new morn of our life with faith and hope. The individual is powerful in his creativity only when his environment is creating, when the environment in which the individual is living awakes. (114) The individual must sense the life that surrounds him and comprehend its intimacy to him so that he may do creative work, so that he may attach a new ornament to the edifice of the world, to build it higher, or to open a new window and gaze boldly through it at the new horizons unfolding before him.

The only ones who are afraid of every open window or aperture are those who are petrified on the finished and accepted edifice of the past—lest the blast of the icy wind chill and blow away their senile flesh. New, fresh thinking emerges out of new, fresh feelings and impressions; is it not the case that thought is condensed emotion? The more the feelings and impressions you carry within you are compressed, the more purely and powerfully crystalline your thought will become. Healthy thought is healthy feeling; and healthy feelings arise from healthy impressions, when you do not constrict them with your decayed conceptions, your backward and ossified traditions. Creativity cannot tolerate petrified ways of thinking or slavish subjection to ancient traditions. Futurism is the powerful force that is to whip and flog our mental life, to stir and disturb the world concealed within us, so that we can start moving, and advance. We write the way we feel and understand; and we say what is pleasant and comprehensible to us, because we ourselves in the first instance derive a great sense of fulfillment from creating rather than apishly imitating. And creativity is the greatest joy of life.

Rejoice that you may create; and create, that you may be happy, say I. And for that purpose, one must free the mind, the brain, from the iron cage of "This is impossible" and "This is unacceptable".

*Karabalakh dzan blan
Dublakh-dublakh.*

This is ridiculous to you, but I receive and feel pleasure from (115) the new feelings and emotions that speak powerfully within me. Perhaps that dublakh is obscure and unclear even to me, but the passion for searching, for creativity, and the refusal to submit to your slogan "This is impossible", conveys me, opens me, to new creative worlds. Our brilliant Futurist poet Kornak Yovsaržean has trodden this path, writing in his wonderful poem²⁸ "Birth pangs" [Erkunk'], Hē, ui, ut, ayē.²⁹

But in order to create one must tread known, felt, experienced paths. One's feeling of racial identity [c'elakan ink'nazgac'um]³⁰ must take first place. I am deeply convinced that when I pronounce the word dublakh, which has never appeared in any Armenian dictionary, I place within myself a comprehension of my race, the "voice" of the blood, the "call" of the blood. I am persuaded that all my meaningless words are not to be found in any Anglo-Saxon or Latinate tongue, but perhaps my dublakh could have been a word possessing "meaning" in the mouths of Seljuks or Mongols, or of an Urartean.³¹ That is the feeling of racial identity and the familiar path of creativity. The Armenian painter has to draw his lines and daub his colors in an Armenian fashion, so that his picture will be intimately familiar; and the source of his creativity, unblemished. No Frenchman could ever paint an Armenian family, or the portrait of a woman from Akhaltsikhe,³² with the kind of taste, the way of an Armenian painter. That is because the subject the Armenian painter has selected for himself is a familiar one, and his creativity is set on a known path. The same Armenian painter, who spent his childhood in some Oshakan or Khotortjur,³³ is unable to convey the peasant of Champagne in a talented and intimate manner. Only the Frenchman can do that. Why is it that Repin and Makovsky draw their most intimate material from the life of Russia's present or its historic past? And why is it that our Proshian or Abovian will be of no less interest to us than the cool Ibsen or the lively Rostand?³⁴ Proshian captures the

²⁸ The Russian poem suggests a work longer than a lyric poem or ballad and shorter than an epic, but with something of the high seriousness of the latter.

²⁹ The famous ancient Armenian poem preserved by Movsēs Xorenac'i on the birth of the god Vahagn contains numerous complex plays on *erka*, "labor", and one name of his temple at Aštisat, Vahevahean, suggests his worshipper might have used a ritual exclamation something like the Diormysian *evohē*, formed from a diminutive of his name. This may have inspired in part the composition of *Erkunk'*.

³⁰ Such sentiments and terms, which are properly deeply offensive to civilized people today, were part of Armenian discourse as elsewhere. In the USA the nationalist Dashnak party controlled a C'elakrōn (pron. Tsaghagron), "Race Worship" society through the 1930s. Sometimes the intention of such terms was not racist or fascist, but often enough it was.

³¹ Akkadian *Urartu*, Hebrew *Ararat*: the name of the kingdom in the Armenian highlands whose non-Indo-European language predates the attestation of Armenian (an individual branch of Indo-European related to proto-Greek and Phrygian) in the region. The Seljuk Turks conquered most of Armenia late in the 11th century; the Mongols, early in the 13th century.

³² This is the name of an Armenian-speaking district now in the Republic of Georgia.

³³ The town of Oshakan, in the Republic of Armenia, is the burial place of St. Mesrop Mashtoc', who invented the Armenian alphabet at the beginning of the fifth century. Khotortjur, a mountainous region in Western Armenia south of Pontus, was mainly Catholic before the 1915 Genocide eradicated its native population.

³⁴ Il'ya Repin (1844-1930), a Russian painter in the Romantic-realist style; the canvases of Vladimir Makovsky (1846-1920) are similar. Perē Proshian (b. Yovhannēs Tēr Arak'elean, 1837-1907) was a realist Eastern Armenian prose writer, Xal'atur Abovian (1809-1848(?)), wrote in Eastern Armenian the first vernacular novel in the language, *Vērēk' Hayastani*, "The Wounds of Armenia". Edmond Rostand (1868-1918) was a French neo-Romantic poet and playwright.

scent of the flowers of the familiar plain and wood, their aroma. And my loquacious Proshian is a thousand times more precious to me than the lofty Western idealist Ibsen or the genius Shakespeare.

This is where I offer my most conservative slogan. Fine art must grow and develop in a free and open context, free of absolutely all sectarian concepts and modes of understanding, and, without question, on its own native soil. It is accepted to divide and recognize men according to the label stuck on their foreheads. Once upon a time (116) Grigor Artseruni saw the salvation of the Armenian people in his journal *Mshak*,³⁵ and anybody who didn't have its label glued to his forehead was no Armenian, maybe not even a human being. The same label exists now as well. You would think people were being saved by a label, like the pairs of animals on Noah's ark, from life's universal deluge. I know some wonderfully corrupt Armenians called intellectuals who have boarded Noah's ark with a shiny brand name affixed to their foreheads and have entered the ranks of good men or holy cows. And I know wonderful, lofty men whose brows are clear as the blue sky, their hearts as open as the broad sea— but since their foreheads don't have the soap wrappers of the Baudelot or Ralle companies,³⁶ or the label of a tin sardine can, plastered to them, they have not gained admission to Noah's ark and are floundering in the worldwide flood of human stupidity and ignorance. And we, the new men, arrive like the Napoleons or Vahagns³⁷ of Armenian thought to rip those labels to shreds and to strip the confining labels from the brows of men called [illegible word in the original text], and to reveal the genuine, pure, soapy foam. Talented men cannot be confined within the limits of politics and sectarianism. They make their own talents and they discover their own world, so that we may stand, our brows unclouded, facing the dawning of the morning sun waking our consciousness. Life will be the cause of our joys, will inspire the consciousness of the fact that it is we who are called on to enjoy this world, to become intoxicated on the gifts of the bounty of the earth and the universe. And if we want to lead healthy and happy lives, then it is necessarily by taking from the earth that which is essential to us, to all men generally, and even at the moment of death to raise the cup of life in our hands and cry out as we die the salutation "Live long!"

For all of us, for man, good and healthy nourishment is a necessity, so that we, as human beings, may be healthy and beautiful in soul and body. When healthy food enters our stomachs and we are standing close to nature we are fortunate— since we grow, since our stature is not arrested but increases, waxes greater and stronger. Our thought must grow and strengthen in the same way; our emotions, too, cannot lag behind. For thought is condensed feeling, and thought is healthy when our nerves, our feelings, are freshened by familiar, pleasant, and cheering impressions and moods. For that reason it is necessary for us, the universal masses, to have accessible and digestible fine arts and literature. That art

³⁵ The left-liberal Armenian newspaper *Afak* ("The Cultivator") was published at Tiflis, 1872-1921, with Grigor Artseruni (1845-1892) its founding editor.

³⁶ Both are illustrated here; for a general discussion of Tsarist Russia's exquisite soap wrappers in Art Nouveau and other styles, see Anikst/Chernevich (1990: 40-43).

³⁷ Vahagn was the Armenian equivalent of Herakles in the pre-Christian era; see the note on *Erkawk'* above.

and literature which is accessible only to the chosen few (117) is private property, like a palace in the midst of myriad hovels. The masses have to turn from their huts to the palace of thought, and to do that one has to have accessible literature and art. But accessible, digestible art and literature can be achieved only in an environment that is familiar and intimate. For me, *Pepo*³⁸ is worth a thousand times more than the famous *Hamlet* or *Doctor Stockmann*.³⁹ *Pepo* is ours, it is related to us, and we understand and love it, while *Hamlet* and *Doctor Stockmann* are foreign, alien to us. The clouds massing in the mountains of Scandinavia will never be able to irrigate our plains. We are men of the East and we are accustomed to the rays of a hot sun. The pale beams of the north cannot warm us. The winds blowing out of the west cannot refresh us unless that wind comes through our familiar mountains and over our plains.

Our Proshian has his taste and aroma—in his writings I sense the taste, the smell of our wonderful grapes and peaches from the plain of Ararat; but what is there for me—and I'm not even speaking about the owner of a stall in the Armenian Bazaar or the Armenian of an Armenian Molladursun⁴⁰—in Rostand's *Chanticleer* or Mirabeau's *Garden of Torment*, where the French soul addresses me in tone alien and incomprehensible. Everything has to be natural. Let crows caw like crows, and nightingales sing their enchantments as nightingales. But woe to us, when we want to sing like nightingales if we are crows, or if we try to force a crow's squawk out of a nightingale.

Russian literature is familiar to us and we are close to Russian life, but can some Armenian Markos from Qishlaq Karapet or Molladursun understand Chekhov's humor or [Saltykov-Shchedrin's satire? No, he cannot, not at all. He will understand Baronian's⁴¹ Baghdasar and laugh, the face of deacon Arut'ik will crease in a smile, and so will that of our stall owner in the Armenian Bazaar and that of the Armenian intellectual in his top hat. Proshians "The Moths" will move the denizen of Oshakan and the Armenian immigrant in Boston, since Armenian speech is transmitted by invisible wires, from every place to Shresh hill and the summit of Aragats, where the unwilting blossom and our familiar mandrake grow.⁴² That which is intimately familiar always smiles at us, while the unfamiliar and strange taxes our minds. Unfortunately, how many men know Ferdousi, the poet of the East, or Varuzhan, mighty and powerful in spirit?⁴³ While of course a great many know Schiller

³⁸ A play on the urban life of middle- and lower-class Tiflis Armenians of the 1870s by Gabriél Sundukean (1825-1912); Hamo Beknazaryan directed a film based on the play in 1935.

³⁹ A character in Ibsen's "Enemy of the People".

⁴⁰ A village in the Ejmiacin district of Armenia, now called Sahumyan after an Armenian hero of the October Revolution.

⁴¹ Yakob Paronean (W. Arm. Hagop Baronian), 1843-1891, an Armenian writer and playwright from Constantinople whose work satirizes the manners and personalities of the Armenians of the Ottoman capital.

⁴² *Šēs Mur* ("Asphodel Hill") is Kara Darvish's most famous Futurist poem; Mt. Aragats is the tallest peak within the present borders of Armenia, in view of the plain of Ararat.

⁴³ Abo'l Qāsem Ferdōsī (940-1020), was the author of the *Šāh-nāme* ("Book of Kings"), the national epic of Iran. Daniel Varuzhan (W. Arm. Taniel Varuzhan, b. Č'puk'k'earean, 1884-1915) was a Western Armenian poet and co-founder with Kostan Zarean (who describes an encounter with Kara Darvish in Ch. 9 of his novel "The Ship on the Mountain", partly translated here) and others of the Constantinople journal *Mehean* ("Temple"), which came out the first seven months of 1914: the outbreak of war put an end to the enterprise. Zarian was the motive force of the journal: his philosophy, an unabashedly fascist refraction of

and Byron. (118) *We always scorn the East. Aren't we always contemptuous of a Persian countryman and his creations when we see him, but even if the voice of a minstrel bard coming from the world of the smoking jacket, tuxedo, and top hat does not ring sweet in our ears, he still dazzles our eyes and our hearing throbs with the drumbeat of his talent. The toy civilization of the West...*

We, the educated, we who are infected with the malarial jaundice of Western civilization, have learned to look with contempt upon our own culture, our art and literature, seeing a halter on the neck of every thing. Even the crow of the west seems a nightingale to us, while our peacock with crow's wings— has it not lost its European feathers? The masses are more sincere, uninfected by that malarial jaundice of European civilization. They walk by the promptings of their innards, their hearts, but for good or ill when they love something, create it, appreciate it, we have words in our dictionaries to evaluate their taste, calling their theater vulgarity,⁴⁴ defining their literature as the "immoral fare of the streets", even though very often we, perched on the heights of our culture, buy tickets to that very vulgar theater and find pleasure and fulfillment in it. Who has not gone to see Arshin Mal Alan⁴⁵, and who has not taken his fill of laughter, drinking of the waters of the heart, with those wonderful Eastern melodies? The educated inrtelligentsia, its face equipped with a pharisaical mask, makes fun of the people and the theater of the masses, deriding it and its beloved Arshin Mal Alan as immoral.

But the blood of the race has something else to say, and it speaks within. The accepted cast of mind condemns because the accepted, lofty, contemporary understanding of the public is that way. But the depths of the heart laugh, delight, and bless the hand of the creative artist. Arshin Mal Alan is that talented written work, that flower of the plains, that fine art accessible and digestible to the understanding of the masses, of the people in common. Doesn't even Kirakos in Molladursun have a demand for art? And are you going to serve up Doctor Stockmann or Wagner to satisfy it? It's just the same as feeding the stomach heavy leather strips cut from old boots and expecting it to digest them. And if Kirakos from Molladursun or that stall owner from the Armenian Bazaar turns in scorn from your Chanticleer or Hamlet, embracing with open arms Vali Ghazo,⁴⁶ don't be surprised. He's known Vali Ghazo for a long time, and Ghazo is a talent he embraces, caresses, and honors. My Ghazo is much more precious to me than the Frenchman's

Nietzschean thinking, is overtly and repulsively racist and anti-Semitic. He believed that the Armenians, an "Aryan" race, share with their blood brothers a genius for mythology, as opposed to the arid prophecy of Jewish religion. Christ supposedly overcame and destroyed the Jew in himself. The journal was dedicated to nativist and innovative currents in Armenian art, literature, and revolutionary thought. Varuzhan was arrested with other Armenian intellectuals of the capital in April 1915 at the start of the Genocide and was deported and murdered with them. Zarian survived and ended his days in Soviet Armenia. On Zarian and Varuzhan see Nichanian: (109f., 203f).

⁴⁴ Kara Darvish uses the word *balagan*, from Persian via Russian, which deprecatingly denotes street theater put on with an open wooden box for the characters, something like a Punch and Judy show.

⁴⁵ A 1913 Azeri comic opera popular with Armenians: the cover of an American-Armenian musical score of the opera published by Prof. James Mosagofian of Astoria, NY, it is reproduced here.

⁴⁶ A character in *Arshin Mal Alan*.

Mouset-Sully⁴⁷ or the German's Possart,⁴⁸ because he grew up in the sun of the East and on the East's soil. (119) Doctor Stockmann, Possart, Mouset-Sully, and Hamlet are all the same to the Armenian Krpo with his tattered trousers and hungry stomach— you might as well drape a sumptuous smoking jacket made by the Sheremetyevs⁴⁹ tailor on his bare back and stuff his starving gut with tasty sweets by Massieux. Krpo's back won't be warmed and his stomach won't be sated. The East, the East, is where the sun warms an oriental, where the breeze refreshes us. Our art and literature must be very profoundly and intimately eastern, for an oriental, so that it may occasion joy for us and be digestible and accessible to our souls and minds.

Then we will grow and flourish on our own soil and beneath the rays of our own sun, and not in a hothouse, the fire of whose furnace is stoked with coal.

Kara Darvish

1916

20 December

Tiflis

• • •

3. Kara Darviš, *İnç' ē futurizmā?* ("What is Futurism?"), Tiflis: Tparan "Ēpōxa", Muzeiskii pereul(ok) ("Epoch" Printers, Museum Lane) No. 8, 1914.

From Sayat' Nova towards Futurism.⁵⁰ New ideas, new feelings have come to the fore in all epochs, in all nations, and chiefly in nations that have attained to high culture. The backward nations are always more conservative and are more firmly bound to ancient traditions and customs than the enlightened and civilized nations.

⁴⁷ Jean-Sully Mouset (1841-1916), a famed French actor.

⁴⁸ Ernst von Possart (1841-1921), a German actor and theater director.

⁴⁹ One of the wealthiest families of the pre-Revolutionary Russian nobility.

⁵⁰ The songs of the bard Sayat' Nova, d. 1795, which he recorded in his *davt'ur*, or notebook, in his own hand in Tatar (Azeri Turkish), Armenian, and Georgian, are considered the finest of the works of the Armenian *ashughs*. Since their publication and study by Akhverdian in the mid-19th century the fame of the poet steadily increased. In the late 1950s and early 60s Soviet Armenia celebrated the poet's bicentennial with numerous monographs, editions, and translations of his work. His dramatic life: initiatory dream, victory in competition with other singers, doomed love affair with a Georgian princess, exile to the monastery of Sanahin, and death at the hands of Turkish marauders— became the subject of the avant-garde Soviet Armenian director Sergei Parajanov's famous film *Nyan gnyo* ("The Color of Pomegranate"). The poet Paruyr Sevak (1924-1971) wrote his dissertation on Sayat' Nova. Sevak died in an automobile accident. His son, who survived the crash, has written to me that although the catastrophe was not orchestrated by the authorities, the Soviet regime had bounded the poet to his death. Parajanov was arrested and imprisoned by the Soviets on charges of homosexuality and foreign currency transactions (both criminalized by Stalin). So the 18th-century bard of Tiflis was not just a national icon, but the patron saint of freethinking Eastern Armenian artists as well. That makes the suggestion by Kara Darviš that the cult Sayat' Nova holds back artistic progress all the more delightfully scandalous.

And it is not surprising that the more ignorant, benighted, and backward a nation is, the more ferocious and fanatical it is in its conflict with new ideas, new feelings, and innovations generally.

Change in the philosophical world view of peoples, their taste, and their customary sentiments, is not affected easily: everything that is ancient, wasted, and sapped of its strength gives way in the face of a hard fight, a strenuous contest.

The desire to live and the sense of possessing existence, it would seem, endure even in abstract conceptions— for do they not spring from the realm of a man's feelings and thoughts, while thought itself is nothing if not compressed emotion?

But how impoverished and desolate life would be, were the new thoughts, new feelings from time to time not to form currents, streaming into and refreshing man's life, endowing their experiences with health.

Here are the Asiatic nations for you, immobile, lingering behind the progressive course of life. How monotonous and stagnant their life is!

It is true that amongst those who love color, perhaps, one might still find poetic motifs in a life of that kind; maybe in that sort of life, for the sake of stylization one might find elements for the display, the expression of the visage of a particular culture. But it is questionable how useful to the improvement of human life that culture is, how positive its aim, for all the great ethnographical interest its stylized forms present.

One does not have to be a prophet to resolve that question. Wherever movement and progress are absent, life is never capable of renewal, the conditions of life cannot improve, and the lot of men cannot be bettered.

In order to make the matter clearer, let us turn to examples. The backward nations are opposed to enlightenment, and so, too, to science. By science one means the kind of knowledge that sets life and its social conditions on forward-looking paths leading to progressive renewal. Science is taught in our diocesan and parish schools— but let life itself attest to what kind of science that is. It is a science imbibed by the students who go on to fill the ranks of the intelligentsia of our deacons and seminarians. There could be no better name for this than the one given by one of our newest poets: a "parochial intelligentsia".

Science, by changing the technological, external aspect of human life, transforms men's conceptions also with regard to the life they lead. Paring your fingernails and keeping your hair free of lice is a much more life-giving science than the chemistry and physics taught at an Armenian seminary. But will our educators turn their attention to such minor matters, especially those teachers draped in the toga of a German doctorate?

It is interesting to consider: Where are men more oppressed, enslaved, and subject to worse living conditions, than in the more backward nations and countries? Authentic culture and science serve above all the cause of ensuring human happiness. And all the small and large achievements that science is accomplishing and has made, serve the task and aim of situating human life in better conditions.

Most men react with displeasure or even animosity to every novelty or innovation in any sphere of life. Morality necessarily plays a great role in this.

As is well known, some of the younger representatives of the Russian Futurists, chiefly the painters, paint their own faces. That is, they paint various images (flowers, animals, and so on) on their own faces and foreheads. Youth, in the principles and faith it professes, has always been stormy and unrestrained, and always will be. One can regard this innocent behavior as mere mischief. As, indeed, the noted Futurist scholar Kulbin⁵¹ says in his lectures, that is not in the essence of Futurism and one must adopt an attitude of forgiveness to such manifestations.

But take a closer look: it's not all that true. Archaic morality slithers like a snake through the petrified concepts of mankind. Just such an intellectual and even a famous actress, face reddened by agitation as though she were in the grip of a fever, nerves taut like blue ropes on her face, set out to prove that the behavior of the Futurists—painting their faces—is morality-dissolving stupidity of the highest degree. This is not true fine art, but repulsive charlatanry, shrieked the agitated actress, evidently defending the received, recognized art of her own.

At that moment I was unable to restrain myself and said, quite simply, "So why is your own face painted and powdered?" (The lady had put on mascara.) The woman became slightly agitated, but, restraining herself, she pronounced, That is accepted. Yes. That is the very best answer I could expect: it is our morality, said I. The particular conditions and situation of life create the morality of a particular period, and that becomes the flesh and blood of the inner experiences of men. And that is the reason why when a new shift⁵² comes to the life of men, to propel forward a new movement, people are instantly nervous and are seized by the sentiment of contrariness, fearful lest their situation in life be disturbed, not wanting to turn their carefully ordered existence, customary aesthetic, and sundry other tastes topsy-turvy.

That is the situation of a way of life centuries old, a morality structured over the centuries, that protests against new ideas and innovations, occasioning psychological disturbance and distress. This inner drama tends to be especially powerful in people at a low mental level, in benighted nations at a low cultural level. As an example for you, take the patriarchal family of olden days. The parents. How many dramas do we know from that world, when a son or daughter—the children, in a word—has acted contrary to the old, traditional customs, forms, and rules. There have been tragic consequences when the son or daughter, against their parents' will, went off after a lover. Here is a frightful protest against individuality and a struggle on behalf of individuality.

Individual uniqueness: this is what both individual men and life acquire through great struggle, wresting it away from a fortified, sedentary life. A little brook with its strong push is better than a monotonous, wide-spreading, malodorous swamp. Life is thus: a little healthy, dynamic sliver of it is more life-giving than life's monotonous and wide-spreading sea, which is great in extent but shallow in depth, motionless, and stagnant.

⁵¹ Nikolai Ivanovich Kul'bin (1868-1917), a Russian painter, musician, philosopher, and scholar of the avant-garde and the fine arts.

⁵² After Arm. *bravun*, Kara Darviš has in parentheses Russian *shvig*. This was a watchword of Futurism that Compton (1978: 21) renders as "shift".

Even thus is morality, which has often been the cause of economic and moral collapse, furthering disintegration between two colliding conceptions, world views— old, long accepted and sanctified morality, and a new morality.

In the course of the history of diverse nations, there have been of necessity moments when there has come a mighty flood of new ideas, overcoming the entire inheritance and treasure of the earlier culture, often with the élan of a vandal smashing it to smithereens. Of course, that kind of boisterous current of new ideas can call forth great confusion and dissatisfaction, and reaction amidst the ranks of traditionalists. But the new ideas, the new concepts, as they accomplish their conquest, settle down and solidify in life, becoming the foundation stone of a new morality and a new life. The same historical phenomenon occurs in the realm of art. Innovation, the new schools of art do not easily find a place in our life, and it is only through the dark woods of persecution, under attack, that they make their way, make it through, and force back the artistic forms of an obsolete taste.

New fine art [nřđ-gelarwestā], to which they assign the name Futurism, is engaged in such a battle and is passing through just such a dark wood of persecution. The opinion of the famous Russian critic and scholar of the arts, Alexander Benois,⁵³ about this artistic trend deserve the keenest attention. Here is what he writes: "I am fully convinced that the last genuine Greeks and Romans would have felt the same thing we feel now. They fell into perplexity, seeing how all the world around them was being destroyed, how underground forces were digging a grave for everything that was the most beautiful, the wisest, the most sacred.

Year by year the ardor of their anger towards these vandals waned, and from year to year their fascination with the utterly strange and alien blossoms grew. Of course the Burluiks of those days would say absurd things, but they still directed their gaze to those absurdities, for hidden beneath their surface was a great and immediate, elemental power.

Surely the Burluiks⁵⁴ of those times (the innovators) have been lost without a trace, but did they not bring us to the thing we now call Byzantine art, which it is now customary for us to look at with wonder and admiration? Is it not thanks to them that the face of the world has changed? And even if it has lost its wondrous clarity, still it has become deeper and more meaningful".

One can clearly conclude from these lines that even such a critic and scholar of fine art as A. Benois does not reject the usefulness of innovation, even if it is Russian Futurism, which is still totally disorganized, looking for itself. In another place Benois has some profound comments worth close attention that I consider it particularly important to cite in order to elucidate the matter. Here they are: "I confess I lack the conviction to step forward and angrily declare a crusade against them (the Futurists). Of course they are untutored, they are vandals, but perhaps it is also a good thing that they are untutored vandals. Let them work on their own for everything that exists and stands on the brink of destruction: Ein

⁵³ Alexander Nikolayevich Benois (1870-1960, Rus. Benua), a painter and art historian, one of the principal organizers and ideologues of the "World of Art" (Rus. *Mir iskusstva*) group.

⁵⁴ David Davidovich Burluik (1882-1967), a founder of Russian Futurism.

*neues Leben wird aus den Ruinen blühen—A new life flowers in the midst of ruins.*⁵⁵ I have no personal need of their creative work—to our way of thinking it is crippled and poor. But the excitement they inject into our aesthetic life is useful and in any case it can carry one anywhere, it transports. The whole idea of culture consists in not standing still. One has to advance, not stop. Burlinuk and his like press on. They are restless, excited, they infuse agitation and do not allow stagnation. But they do not really know what it's all for, and neither do we. It is quite possible that individually, in fact, they are not doing anything, but something or other is still being done, accomplished, and that new thing is expressed through strange but inevitable, useful exertions".

So here, too, is a proof spoken by the mouth of A. Benois, that the new, that innovation generally, stirs, moves, and freshens not just our aesthetic lives but even our everyday existence. For does not life, too, change in accordance with our tastes and perceptions?

Here you have three men talking; and now they are creating a piece of life. Life—they themselves, these men, are creators of an atmosphere and the way men are is how the atmosphere now will be. The kind of men they are: that is how the life and atmosphere they shape will be. Innovation in literature and art plays a huge role. Innovation, as we have seen, introduces excitement and disturbance into our intellectual and spiritual world; and accordingly it does not allow the possibility of stasis and stagnation. Futurism, or, properly called, new fine art, has introduced such ferment and disturbance today into Russian literary and artistic life.

And, astonishingly, we too have literature and fine art, as it were, but it has always been guarded by antiquarians and dustmen from external "harmful" influences. Our ignorant, clerical press has played a big role in this, having been always a countervailing force opposing new trends, nipping in the bud every tendril, every flower of any modern literary current or influence, clasping tightly to its breast and elaborating upon the moldy dustcovers of its medieval tomes.

I recall how when eight or ten years ago modernism—Symbolism—was making its way with shaky and uncertain steps into our literature. One of critics cried, "Help! Help! Armenian literature is being corrupted!" And our petit bourgeois,⁵⁶ clerical intelligentsia immediately averted its gaze from the newest "face" of literature, since the representatives of the new literary current did not belong to any of the existing big political parties or work for either of the two major newspapers of the time. Is it not the case that till now among us the stubborn conviction of the common herd⁵⁷ prevails that all "talents" and "developed" men are to be found only at the two existing papers, *Mtsak* and *Horizon*—and those who express themselves elsewhere than in those pages are neither writers nor talents. At the moment only by mixing with the party herd and adopting the art that smiles on the present time is it possible to be acclaimed a talent and to earn the title of a writer. A small price to

⁵⁵ This is a somewhat garbled citation of the verse of Schiller: *Das alter stürzt, es ändert sich die Zeit/ Und neues Leben blüht aus den Ruinen* "The older falls, time changes/ And a new life flowers from the ruins".

⁵⁶ Kara Davit' here uses a loan, *mek'ian*, from Russian *meshchanin*.

⁵⁷ Arm. *sherivakan*, pron. *shariv(v)-akan*, an adjectival formation from Tk. *sarv*, "flock, herd, gang".

pay for tasting the sweeter things of life. Yet however easy that art may be for those who have acquired the facilities of literary tightrope walking and flexibility, literature and fine art for all that have their natural ways and needs, and if in the event one does not satisfy them, both the healthy mind and authentic art will wilt and wither and waste away.

Armenian thought today has wasted away. Armenian art has wilted, because conforming to the psychology of smiling at the times, of following the herd, cannot be adequate to the task of wakening a new and fresh kind of Armenian thought and bringing forth a new Armenian art.

And that is why our life has turned into a stinking, rotten swamp whose surface is covered with a layer of green that appears to one coming from far away, who is not familiar with the situation, as an emerald meadow. But it is sufficient for the naïve stranger to set foot on the deceptive pasture for him to be sucked in, suffocated, and drowned. And the hideous croaking of the aroused frogs, filling the world with their clamor, drowns out the weak cries for help of the stranger.

Understanding this, the stranger coming from modern literature will not be misled by the green "meadow" on the horizon, but will go toward unknown horizons and seek his meadow in other climes, where even if only the first buds are sprouting, they are at least not the green of a reeking swamp. Armenian life is so decayed and stagnant that the Armenian mind has become a dry gum drained of its sap. Talent and original thought are persecuted in the public forum; and banal thoughts and banal feelings have become the by-words of Armenian progressivism. And it is not surprising that it is so, for if even the poet-president of the company of Armenian writers is capable of spending an entire night pondering the question of whether the bard Sayat' Nova was a bishop or just a celibate priest, and then, after wearing himself out at length is still unable accurately to solve that huge literary problem,⁵⁸ then it can never come as a surprise that Armenian literature has become a swamp and needs bold Burluks to come and stir up that stagnant pool, even if the aroma of that particular garden of roses makes them gag.

Over the last two or three years a literary clique that has assumed control of the Armenian literary company has expended trouble and effort to advance the bardic movement in our literature.⁵⁹ And they propose, as the standard of this literature, the essentially lyric poems of the 18th-century bard Sayat' Nova, which with respect to their language and form of versification, can at best be an object of ethnographic and antiquarian interest in the time of their composition but cannot serve as the foundation stone of our literary movement now, at the present day, when the psychology of today's Armenian, particularly the urban Armenian, is entirely different from that of the Armenian or two centuries ago. In this instance it is not at all surprising that today's generation is demanding

⁵⁸ A swipe at the grand old man of Armenian letters in Tiflis, Yovhannēs T'umanean (Hovhannes Tumanian).

⁵⁹ Arm. *afutlukun hosank'*: this "current", going back to ancient oral literature, would include Sayat' Nova but also folk poets of the early 20th century like Jivani, whose song *Jaxord örer* (pron. *Dankord örer*, "Unlucky days") is still popular today.

singers who sing about its own life, desires a literature and art of one's own, and is not carried away by the sing-song⁶⁰ of 18th-century bards.

Urban life has developed most powerfully today; and the overwhelming majority of the Armenian people live in the cities that have seen the great miracles of technology and industry: Tiflis, Baku, Rostov, Moscow, Constantinople, Alexandria, Cairo, the cities of America, etc.⁶¹ Village life, lagging behind that of the great cities, is gradually crumbling as urban industry penetrates there, too. It is clear that for a man of the present moment there is a demand for a different literature, a different kind of art with its corresponding modes of thought, that speak to the soul and mind of modern man, and not a literature specific to Armenians or driven by the winds of Romanticism. The cultivators of literature who lag behind the demands of the life of the present age, and who are powerless to satisfy those demands, are the only ones who profit from the situation.

Life itself possesses the greatest power, and it will scatter to the winds those artificial birth pangs and set literature and art on the paths of authenticity. And the first indications of the trend of such paths are the expressions emerging in our literary life of those particular experiences, the ones that bring a new literature and a new art to the present generation. Questions, questions, and more questions—like the myriad trees of a forest, they crowd around us! But let us turn to our issue, to Futurism, and explain what it is, something our wise literary sages,⁶² uncomprehending, keep on explaining as abnormality, even though nowadays the soundest literary normality will not pass muster with even a healthy fool.

⁶⁰ Arm. *neymnerov*, Tk. *neym*, a deprecatory term somewhat like English *la la la* or Persian *dalang* *dalong*, is one Charents also liked to use in his broadsides against vulgarity in contemporary culture. It mocks the hackneyed and mindless clichés of popular songs—doggerel, three-chord wonders, elevator muzak, and all the rest of the musical and poetic kitsch that is the background noise of life.

⁶¹ A strange and interesting list, demonstrative of the cognitive disconnection one often observes between the Russian and Turkish Armenians. Kara Daviś mentions the comparatively minor north Caucasian city of Rostov (Armenian *Nor Nakhichevan*); but except for Constantinople the Western Armenian cities—Smyrna, Kharpert, Tokat, Gesaria-Kayseri, Sepastia-Sivas, Malatya, Dikranakert-Diyarbakir, Bilein, Mush, Van, etc.—escape his notice entirely. Nor does he seem to be aware (though this may have been only a polemical ploy) that a vast number of Armenians, again in Western Armenia (90% of the historical territory of the country), were rural farmers, not city dwellers. As to America, by 1914 there was a significant working-class urban diaspora in the Northeast—Worcester-Lynn-Boston-Pawtucket-Providence and New York. But again, there was by then a significant Armenian diaspora community of farmers in Fresno, California and environs (the great Armenian conurbations of the Los Angeles basin remained in the distant future).

⁶² Arm. *Xikar imazhamera*. *Xikar*, whose name as a common noun or adjective has connoted a wise man in vernacular Armenian since medieval times (the bard Yovhannēs T'ikuranc'i uses it, for instance), is *Abiqar*, the hero of a late Assyrian wisdom tale in Aramaic that entered the corpus of Biblical apocrypha. The story was popular in the East Christian world generally: *Akir premdryē*, "Abiqar the exceedingly wise", was one of the manuscripts bound in the miscellany that—it is reported, since the precious volume was supposedly consumed in the great Moscow fire of 1812—contained the unique copy of the great Old Russian epic *Slovo o polku Igoreve*, "The Lay of Igor's Campaign". It was first translated into Armenian in the 5th century and remained popular, finding a place in the miscellany of didactic tales of wisdom and adventure called *Patmut'wn Phytē K'alak'i* ("History of the City of Brass"). That is the name of the main story in the collection, which derives from Indian and Iranian cycle of stories gathered together in Arabic as the *Thousand Nights and a Night*. The last edition in Classical Armenian of *Patmut'wn Phytē K'alak'i* was printed at Tiflis in 1865. It was intended for popular entertainment and edification: another case, if one wishes to see it so, as the arbiters of literature clasping dusty medieval tomes to their breasts and forcing

Marinetti in Moscow

When Marinetti was in Moscow his lectures, as we know from the papers, enjoyed thunderous success, even though the Futurists themselves adopted a thoroughly negative attitude towards him. It is sufficient to recall the letter printed in the paper from one of the most typical representatives of the Futurists, the painter Larionov, where he calls Marinetti "tasteless and vulgar"; and the message he preached, "an absurdity". And maybe that was the reason the majority liked him— that he found for himself and his listeners a common language in which to be understood. One can fairly consider this a sign of banality,⁶³ since the apostle of a new art and movement, an innovator, has always historically stirred the taste of the public, its perceptions. It is inevitable for a clash to emerge in the world views of the innovator and the masses; few understand genuine art and it is accessible only to a few. Marinetti in this instance proved more diplomatic. In his lectures he did not issue a clarion call about the cult of war as a soul-fulfilling hygiene for the world, (Marinetti 2014: 61, pl. 26)⁶⁴ nor did he have the temerity to discuss the cowardice of Tolstoy; and, finally, he neglected to express himself on his contempt for women and his fond dream of begetting a "mechanical son".

He spoke of the healthy instincts of peoples that break away and long to press forward against the earth's forces of stasis. He spoke of the values of races, and that carried some notes of bravery yet at the same time was unexpected. He spoke of the slavish, follower, museum mentality, of arid bookishness. Finally, he said that for any tendency to emerge victorious it is necessary to unite forces, rather than split into party factions. In the end, the essence of every trend is not just in its excesses or its strange features. And all this is just as understandable, especially for us, the Russian intelligentsia (and this is to be understood as the Armenian intelligentsia also), for we are eternally, forever arguing, getting twisted in knots, trying to break all records. Look at it: anyone who does not get the last word in, is unable to rest easy afterwards.

Marinetti himself confesses that an ideology of Futurism has not yet been created, that it is a task for subsequent generations, and right now it is necessary to labor just for mental hygiene— the preservation of health. Futurism is an expression of contemporaneity. And one is to express mental health through the cultivation of physical strength— sport— and by boycotting museums and libraries. "Every day an adolescent boy spends in a

them upon the populace— though there is no indication anybody resisted the book, and anyway the living speech of Kara Darviš himself owes something of its rhetorical panache to it!

⁶³ Arm. *k'awahit'ean*, gen. sg., a word whose meaning I cannot find, may be a misprint for **banahit'ean* "of banality", cf. Kara Darviš' use above of *banal* as a loan from Rus. into Arm.

⁶⁴ The essays in this recent exhibition catalogue examine unflinchingly the dehumanism and anti-Christianity of Marinetti in particular. The first Soviet commissar of the arts, Anatolii Lunacharsky, and the great Italian Communist theoretician Antonio Gramsci initially regarded Futurism as revolutionary, but Marinetti turned decisively towards fascism. He disapproved of the Nazi suppression of so-called *entartete Kunst* "degenerate art", but nevertheless followed Mussolini to the bitter end. Emilio Gentile concludes in his essay in the volume that the Futurists "were not precursors but they were prophets" of the Nazi concentration camps (65–75, 172).

library⁶⁵ is a day lost", proclaims Marinetti; and, as an example of an ideal poet, points to a comrade of his who is a Neapolitan sans culotte⁶⁶ who has never heard of Petrarch or even Dante.

And for us, infected by the diseased narcissism of the Oriental, with our slack and sickly nerves, it may be helpful to be infected by Marinetti's adolescent joie de vivre. But that religion of muscle is insufficient for living and believing.

The Aims of the Futurists in Italy

In a relatively short time Futurism has gained numerous adherents, both teachers and students. Futurist pictures, prose, and poetry have appeared. Futurist lectures have started to be read and now Futurist fashion cabarets have sprung up. The public, quite naturally, wants to become acquainted with the essence of a new current in art. Futurism is an artistic current, even though genuine Futurism preaches the renewal of all strata of life.

It is most natural that the voices of that renewal were first heard in a country that is living through the period of its decline, a country that presents the spectacle of a gigantic cemetery, where the creation of new frames of reference for life and art died out long ago. That is Italy.

At the time when the other states of Europe were flowering—at that very time Italy was gradually declining culturally, and in the midst of that process of decline and disintegration it was by historical necessity that new, keen, convulsive forces were born. Futurism manifested as the first such force.

Futurism in Italy is a political and social movement, and is so serious that the Futurist's ringleader, Marinetti, declared his candidacy in the last parliamentary elections in Italy. Although Marinetti did not win a majority of votes, the fairly significant showing of the Futurists indicates that Marinetti's campaign was taken seriously.

The political, or, to put it more precisely, social credo of Futurism is as follows:

- 1. Love for one's country, and, correspondingly, hatred for Austria as Italy's most threatening and powerful neighbor.*
- 2. Spreading urban culture, with its production, factories, and mechanized environment.*
- 3. Militarism, as an indispensable means for a nation to acquire power with relation to other peoples.*
- 4. Doing away with sentimentalism and possessing an iron will, both of which are essential for those creating the country anew.*
- 5. Hatred towards philistinism, because a country needs heroes, and philistines are never capable of being heroes.*

⁶⁵ For "library" Kara Darviš uses the most august and venerable term in the language, *matenadaran*, which is generally reserved for a repository of manuscripts and rare old printed books, rather than *gradarum*, the more quotidian public library.

⁶⁶ Arm. *sankhewot*.

6. *And, finally, hatred of Woman as the single source and cause of weakness, who takes away from males their best years and disposes them to inanity; and this is the case insofar as Woman herself does not evince the strength to be a hero and creative force, and is thus incapable of being the equal of the male.*

This is the political and social program of the Futurists.

The Aims of Italian Futurism in Art

In the sphere of art Italian Futurism expresses itself through the de-divination of old art. It is necessary to cut oneself off from everything old; it is necessary to get far away from museums, and if it is not feasible to do that, then one is obliged to destroy them.

So here Futurism introduces into art a thing completely new: The sermon of motion. Futurism states that life is embodied motion. Life moves forward without cease, and a powerful, ceaseless labor is being accomplished by which the city grows, the culture of the city grows, and the rural and agricultural way of life diminishes and turns to dust. So this is that side of the city: life itself, motion, which the Futurists are working to transfer, to inculcate, into art.

Futurism is an elemental phenomenon. The history of literature is uninterrupted motion and the new generation of poets is never able to rest content and satisfied with the axioms of its predecessors. The young poets instinctively desire in their verses to embody every new thing that has entered the psychology of humanity in the last decade; and for better or worse those poets are seeking to express it.

So that is the historical justification of Futurism, that spread swiftly from Italy and France to Germany and even England, and has reached even us, the Armenians, here in the Caucasus. Here I would like to pause longer than usual on Italian Futurism and chiefly on Marinetti, who is justly called the father of Italian Futurism and is the most powerful chief and leader of the Futurist movement. Futurist philosophy is founded on personal, individualist thinking; and its aesthetic taste, on purely individual feeling. In each and every individual, there is a totally different, distinct, particular expression. From this comes the total absence of a theory, a program of the kind typical of the collectivists, for whom viewpoint and theory take first place; while the Futurist is himself the individual and his unique perception, mode of understanding, and viewpoint constitute theory. Man himself is the center of the universe, to which everything refers, as a focus— that is the entire viewpoint and theory of Futurism.

As many men there are, there are that many centers and focuses, in which every spectator relates to the world in an entirely different way, illuminating it with the beams of his particular colors and inner qualities. So this ultra-individualism impels the Futurists towards personal modes of thinking and creation without any kind of connection to the past. To the contrary, the entire momentum of the Futurists is directed to carving away the thick layer of bark of the past, in other words, to casting off the back of modern man the oppression, the heavy yoke of the past.

The principal goal of Futurism is to sever the tie linking the present to the past. The Italian Futurist sculptor Boccioni says, "The ghost of Michelangelo has entered me and is keeping me from creating. I must at any price free myself of this monstrous specter". Marinetti says, "Italy is oppressed beneath its great and glorious past. That past greatness sits heavy and smothers the present, and buries beneath itself the new sprouts of young geniuses".

In the glare of the past, Italy in its present eclipse looks very trivial. Marinetti does not denigrate the great creations of the past; rather, he is even pained in his very soul that they are so very great and by their greatness have held back young forces, young talents. The man of today, according to Marinetti, thinks and feels in an entirely different way, because the man of the moment, equipped with a "telephone",⁶⁷ has a completely different way of thinking than his forefathers, who had no idea of telephones.

Genuine Futurism is the victory of youth and of healthy and enlightened energies. It is to renew man, instill confidence in youth, and render to our present the style, color, and visage we have lost. To make just that point, Marinetti says, "Twenty-year-old poets have gathered around me: Buzzi, Cavacchioli, Libero Altomare, Armando Mazza, Aldo Palazzeschi—on whom fame is already smiling. Together with me, through their verse and prose compositions they have been unmasking the outrageous situation that our intelligentsia has put us in with its opportunism and mediocrity, and have been calling for the need to elevate national honor, without which literature and art are impossible. One has to be infused with a free and living spirit and to feel oneself the builder of the future, rather than a slave, a worshipper buried in the dust of the past. We declare our aim to be the waging of an impassioned fight to destroy the cult of the past. Have you ever thought of the countless and innumerable dead geniuses, who crowd around and beset from every side and smother the few living ones?

Men are accustomed to think only of dead geniuses, work only on them, trade only them with each other. For them, everything is easy and prepared, the paths are smoothed out and the doors are wide open. They appear ceremoniously everywhere, pass through our cities, enter our houses, and spoil the air of our springtime with the stench of the grave. And people who live by the greatness of the past, for whom the past is one of the chief elements of their inner lives, are called Passéists.⁶⁸

In that way, the creations of past, dead geniuses and talents are bought and sold and used up, but as far as the living are concerned, their lot is just contempt, insult, and abuse. The young—that is whom we are fighting for, because they are the liveliest of the live. The young—whose lot is starvation. One has to say that the money which is spent on art in Italy is being collected in the tightly sewn up pockets of gravediggers. I regard as such the Passéist publishers, professors, scholarly and powerless critics [Arm. kriticosnerin:

⁶⁷ Arm. *telefon*, from Rus., rather than the usual native calques *herazūs* or *herajayw*, later in the essay, in his section on Futurist aesthetics, Kara Darviš uses *telefon* and *herazūs* together as though they were two different instruments.

⁶⁸ This is an Armenized version of the French translation of Italian *passatista*, rendered "traditionalist" in Greene (170).

perhaps a typo—J.R.R.] with their base mercantile spirit and their envious slander, against which we are fighting”.

Isn't the situation with us about the same? Don't we, too, have the crude critic who approaches newly-sprouted, newly-budding Armenian belles lettres and its representatives with his primitive taste and clumsy bricklayer's fingers, especially if they have been cast overboard from the safety of the existing great ships—our newspapers? Aren't all talented and learned people secured like the animals, pair by pair, of the patriarch Noah's ark, in those ships? And on the other side, aren't our publishers the very same *Passéists*? Don't we, too, have all our companies and accumulated funds just to publish nothing but Khorenats'is and Agathangeloses?⁶⁹ And haven't we got so-called scholars working specifically on them, whose entire *métier* and *raison d'être* is to find the tail that fell off a letter at?⁷⁰ We have publishing companies and organizations that are *Passéist* in the broadest possible sense of the word. They consider publishing the writings of a budding writer as throwing their money away down a hole. But they are quite capable of publishing the works of any writer who has accumulated enough dust to be consigned to a museum of antiquities, or a translation of any talent recognized in Europe—all of which become equally tasty food for mice on the dusty shelves of library stacks. For the present generation demands fresh mental nourishment—that is to say, the literature of now, and the singers of life the way it is now.

And in the days of domination by those profiteering from the past, declaims Marinetti, they kill every day any poet of genius, hurling at his head the desiccated mummy of some great poet of five centuries ago. The publishers toss the manuscript of a starving talent into the wastepaper basket and spend their money on the publication of masterpieces that are already well known. More than well known. And already published a hundred times over. America's billionaires, excited by grave-digger ad men, flock to Italy and pay insane sums for any work whose chief value consists in its having been buried in dust and muck that have entombed this precious morsel of past centuries.

The cult of the worship of antiquity has spread universally, even amongst us. For although we don't have billionaires, don't we still collect hundreds of thousands to erect an ethnographical palace where excavated stone vessels and bits of old, rotten wood and rusty nails are to be kept?⁷¹ While our talented artists and writers are perishing of starvation.

⁶⁹ The *Patmut'wn Hayoc'* ("History of the Armenians") of Movs'ēs Xorenac'i, the deeply revered *patmahayr* ("father of history") of the nation, is the classical text in which Kara Derviş himself found most of the epic and mythological material he used in his poems. The great critical edition of Xorenac'i that is still authoritative was published at Tiflis in 1913 by Maruk Abelean and S. Yartut'wnean so the remark is topical (as well as unfair). The *Patmut'wn Hayoc'* attributed to the mysterious "bringer of good tidings" (Gk. Agathangelos, Arm. Agat'angelos) chronicles the conversion by St. Gregory the Illuminator of the Armenians early in the fourth century to Christianity and contains his Teaching (*vazdapat'wn*). The critical edition of that central text of the nation's history, also still the authoritative edition, was likewise published at Tiflis, 1909, by G. Tēr-Mikrē'an and S. Kanayecan'. Both books were printed in the series *Patmagirk' Hayoc'* ("Armenian Historiographers"), edited by the great lexicographer Step'an Malxaseanc'.

⁷⁰ That is, the vowel *ə* in the Armenian alphabet. Kara Derviş' version of the "least jot and tittle".

⁷¹ Having savaged the extraordinary monuments of Armenian philology published at Tiflis at the time, Kara Derviş now takes aim at the study of Armenian folklore and anthropology. Again, the time and place produced the enduring works on the subject, such as the periodical *Azgayrakn handēs* ("Ethnographical review").

*Our poetry is completely unfettered, free and spontaneously flowing as the eruption of a volcano, as fire. One must tear up the rails of verse— of rhyme— and blow up the bridges of the “already said” (Rus. *uch skazannago*) and let loose the locomotive of inspiration to traverse new and unknown plains.⁷² A smash up is better than a familiar, monotonous trip, says Marinetti.*

All freedoms and every kind of progress have to be on a national level. We glorify patriotism. We sing of war, that tremendous conflagration of enthusiasm and greatness of soul, without which the races are fettered, ossified in soporific narcissism and a base, corrupt poverty and stinginess— says Marinetti again.

We scorn and condemn the tyranny of love and of erotic charm— a tribulation that saps the energy among us, the Latin races.

In this respect, we men of the east, one must admit, are not lacking in the qualities of the Latins.

All these burning, moving, dynamic ideas, says Marinetti somewhere else, incite and stir the public. But we are convinced that there is nothing so base and trivial as giving pleasure and satisfaction to the public, as stroking its crude, traditional tastes. That is why we want to please and satisfy only our own, great Futurist ideal; and at the present time we demand nothing of the public, which is hostilely disposed towards us, save jeering whistles.

*And as a counterweight to that whistling, Marinetti, as a Futurist with a profound belief in the “greatness of beauty”, says in his novel *Mafarka the Futurist*:⁷³ “I alone dare to write this masterpiece; and it will die, too, by my hand, when the waxing splendor and magnificence of the world render it superfluous and unnecessary. Whatever the residents of Podagra and Stroke may say, it unfurls with a roar on the highest mountaintop, as the banner of the immortality of human thought, driven by the gale of glory. And my pride, the pride of a creator, is satisfied”. The hero of the novel says at one point, “Our spirit, as the highest expression of ordered, living matter, throughout all its metamorphoses follows that same matter, preserving in its new forms its past emotions, the delicate vibrations of its developed energy. And let the actions of the stormy will of our life be impelled towards splendor and magnificence. From risk to risk, ceaselessly circling death, which with its rough kisses will render all the fragments recalled above immortal, in their entire beauty”.*

A sacrifice! A sacrifice! Cries Marinetti elsewhere. And truly, he says, we desire that the work of art be incinerated together with the corpse of its creator. That which endures after the death of its author infects living geniuses with sorrow, pensiveness, and a treacherous wisdom. Florence is one titanic medieval folio volume that has fallen with a thud upon the happiest place on earth.

⁷² The locomotive, like the steamship, is a potent metaphor of modernity of the time. Nash parovoz vpered' gudi, v kommune ostanovka, exults a song of the Russian Revolution. “Forward, whistle, our locomotive—/ Next stop, the Commune!”

⁷³ Arm. *Fur'arist Makari*.

The Attitude of the Futurists towards War and Women

We affirm as a general principle of Futurism man's unceasing and endless physiological and intellectual progress. We do not accept the friendly integration of nations, and recognize for the world only one form of public hygiene: War— says Marinetti at another point.

Marinetti expresses the hatred and contempt of the Italian Futurists towards Woman this way: "Yes! We despise Woman, that reservoir of love, that instrument of voluptuous passion, Woman the poison, Woman the tragic plaything. We despise that fragile, brittle, intoxicating, lethal Woman— dreamlike Woman, at once aglow and misted in the moonlight, her smothering, fateful voice meandering amidst the trees of the forest. We despise terrible, dangerous Love, which enfeebles the progress of mankind and hinders man from breaking out of his humanity that he might redouble and surpass himself, that he might become what we call multiplied man. We are convinced that Love, emotion, and sensual pleasure are the least natural things in the world. Only the continuation of generations is natural. Love, romantic infatuation, and sensuality are the immediate concoction of poets, bestowed upon mankind. The poets are to take it back from mankind then, too. The tragicomic experience of love is close to its end, because it has never brought any benefit, but to the contrary has visited upon us innumerable evils. Now we Futurists (says Marinetti) are driving love, that literary product, far away. In their effort at emancipation the Suffragettes are our best associates, since the more rights and power a woman acquires, the more rarely will she resort to love and the faster she will give up being sentimental, from being the hearth of the black satisfaction of desire. Especially since that monstrous development of female excess will make Love a slave who will display lesser or greater outbursts of rebellion only beneath the repressive fist of money".

Multiplication Man and the Kingdom of the Machine

The worship of machines has begotten among the Futurists the idea that it is possible to increase and multiply man's energies, to make him a machine.

We preach a great and new idea that exists and is current in contemporary life: that is, the idea of mechanical beauty. We praise love for the machine— says Marinetti.

That love already exists in life. You have certainly chanced to witness the love and tenderness with which the engine driver of a locomotive washes down his machine's giant body. Often you'll hear from the owners of automobiles or the manager of a factory that motors are a riddle. They seem to possess soul and will, and it is necessary to flatter them, to win their love over, to fuss over them and never to mistreat them roughly or fail to care for them. And if you act accordingly with them you'll see right away how much more productive they become, performing two or three times better than before.

It is necessary, the Italian Futurists say, to equate men with machines. Man is to have mechanical intuition and rhythm, instinct and discipline like a machine—qualities unknown at the moment to the majority and understood only by the most penetrating brains.

Receiving Lamarck's hypothesis of transformation in this manner, the Futurists dream of creating an un-human type (this is not Nietzsche's Übermensch).⁷⁴ In it all moral torments will be annihilated, exhausted: goodness, tenderness, love—as they say—all of which poison our inexhaustible life energy and obstruct the mighty physiological electricity within us.

We believe—the Futurists declare—in innumerable transformations of man and proclaim without a smile that wings are slumbering within the human body. The non-human, elemental, mechanical type is to possess the swiftness to reach everywhere; so it is natural that he is to become cruel, all knowing, warlike, combative, and struggling. And in order that we may prepare that non-human, mechanical, multiplication type, the Futurists say, it is necessary to reduce in an extraordinary fashion the feelings that bind and fetter man, but which live still in man's blood.

The Attitude of the Futurists towards the Symbolists

We reject the Symbolists, our teachers, the last lovers of the moon, cry out the Futurists. We sacrificed everything to our Futurist conception of life and that is why you'll easily understand why we now detest our glorious intellectual fathers, whom we used to love beyond measure, those Symbolist talents: Edgar (Allan) Poe, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Verlaine.

Now we find them an obstruction because they floated down the current of time's river, constantly craning their heads backward. One of those head turners emerged as our own poet Vahan Terian,⁷⁵ who put on the latest duds and plunged up to the cuff in the dust-choked Armenian catacomb but instead of cleaning out the dusty mummies he started snogging with them. Traditions are still strong, it seems, among these most up to date poets. They turn back towards the distant, deep Wellspring of the past, the skies of yesteryear, where beauty is flowering. For them there is no such thing as poetry without grief, without summoning back past times, without the fog of history and legend.

We hate the Symbolist masters—we who have dared to emerge naked from time's river.

We sing the swelling victory of the machine, which they stupidly hate.

⁷⁴ That is, "Superman", transliterated into Armenian as *Hubermant* and left untranslated. Subsequently however, in his critique of Nietzsche, Kara Darvish translates the term into Arm. with the calque *germand*.

⁷⁵ Vahan Terian (Teryan, Terian), 1885-1920, the most lyrically powerful Eastern Armenian Symbolist, inspired Charents with his vision of a spectrally supernal, ideal, or lost Armenia to which he gave the name of the ancient Urartean kingdoms, Nairi. Charents in the throes of youthful revolutionary fervor sometimes ridiculed the poet, but found the idea of Nairi infinitely fertile in his own writing and returned to Terian's verses with reverence and remorse in maturity.

Our Symbolist fathers are infected with a craving that we consider risible, that is, a desire for eternal things, a striving for the eternal, for that which does not pass away. But we think the contrary: there is nothing lower or more pitiful than to think about immortality. It is necessary to create without prizes, without thinking that one will be rewarded or that one's creation will outlive one as an actual witness. We counter the poetry of wistful expectation with the poetry of ardent expectation. We counter beauty inclining tenderly over tombs with the bold, sharp profiles of pilots and drivers of cars. We counter the conception of the permanent and eternal with the concepts of the transitory, of destruction, of ephemerality in art.

We transform Edgar (Allan) Poe's bitter joy, the nevermore [thus in the text, in English—J.R.R.] by loving and teaching the beauty of feeling and emotion, since those things are unique and are fated ab initio to irrevocable obliteration.

In our eyes history is an inevitable falsifier, or at the least just a collection of postage stamps, medals, and counterfeit coins. The past is baser and of less value than the future. So we are able to recognize amongst our foes that ferociously deceitful and hateful care for the past, as the most dangerous servitude. We sing of the speed of machines, which demolishes the poetry of the distance of wild deserts. And we sing of and praise railway bridges, the huge pipes of turbines, those muscles of the earth, that giant mechanical movement of the earth, for it destroys the earth's diseased sensibilities.

Futurist lyricism is the eternal dynamism of the mind: energy is movement. It is the unending flow of mental pictures and sounds, and it is only Futurist lyricism that can express the inconstant, infirm, and symphonic universe that is being forged with us and in us.

Nietzsche and the Futurists

The Futurists also reject Nietzsche, and the supposition some hold that there are Nietzschean elements in the Futurist world view is mistaken. The English press even terms the Futurists Nietzscheans, while Marinetti in his book protests against this.

But it is sufficient to become acquainted with the body of the work of the great German philosopher to be persuaded that his superman comes out of the cult of Greek tragedy. This introduces the supposition that Nietzsche has a retrograde desire for paganism and mythology. And despite his strivings towards the future Nietzsche remains one of the most ardent defenders of the greatness and beauty of antiquity. His superman is of Hellenic origin and is a fusing-together of three decomposing corpses: Apollo, Mars, and Bacchus. This is a mélange of elegant beauty, warring force, and Dionysian ecstasy, of the sort Classical art displays. We counter this Superman hatched in the dust of Greek libraries with man multiplied upon himself, who is the enemy of the book and the friend of personal experience, a pupil of the machine, ardently exercising his own will, and in the glow of his own inspiration the possessor of a cat's sensitivity, a lightning bolt's comprehension, a wild beast's instinct and intuition, with both craftiness and lack of common sense as well.

And you will wage a desperate fight, say the Futurists, against the three irreconcilable enemies and destroyers of art, which are: imitation, good sense, and money. They bring art and cowardice to the same end point. Cowardice: with respect to remarkable copies and received formulas. Cowardice: when one faces the imperative to be loved and the terror of destitution.

Futurist aesthetics

Futurist aesthetics, too, have been transformed; and in place of the idealized aesthetics of the man of the past, there has come a mechanical, technological, so to speak, aesthetic. That is, an emerging aesthetics of great locomotives, tunnels, battleships, airplanes, automobiles, and other technological wonders. Futurists have created a new aesthetics of speed, practically eradicating the concept of distance and greatly reducing the concept of time. The steam locomotive, the airplane, the telephone, the wireless, and so on now easily perform that function of speed and are transforming the concept of time and space. In this manner multiplication man is being readied everywhere.

Of course enrapture with such a process has also brought forth the principle of cruelty, and here is what Marinetti says: There is no better thing than planks and pillars lying about a house in construction, with their rhythm of cranes and hammers and the occasional cry of a falling worker with great gobbets of blood gushing from him. Be afraid of the decayed past, says Marinetti: In every thing, hope in the future. Have faith in progress, which is always just, even when it errs, for it expresses movement, struggle, and hope. Be careful of being drawn into a conspiracy with progress. Let progress be deceptive, a scoundrel, a thief—it is still just.

This is the cruel paganism that is expressed in the name of progress. Italian Futurism, although it is opposed to Nietzschean philosophy, is still constructing its world view on the foundation of Roman paganism and is wakening from the murk of centuries the ancient, cruel Rome of Nero.

But one of the most striking symbols of Futurism comes from Japan, where the firmest, most potent coal⁷⁸ is being produced from human bones and used in factories to produce the most explosive products. However crude this conception may be, however offensive to one's sensibilities, still it is comprehensible in the name of progress. Particularly where the cult of motion is being promoted and where man as machine is the ideal, existence cannot have any sentimental lyricism, even if your loved one's bones in the form of coal are heating the tea in your samovar.

One must also not forget that Futurism expresses itself in completely idiosyncratic forms among various nations. Thus, Russian Futurism is quite different from the Italian variety. Racial identity plays a great role in this instance.

⁷⁸ Tk. kumar, with Arm. acax added by way of explanation.

Futurist painting

The views and principles espoused by the Italian painters, by which one means, of course, Futurist painters, are interesting with respect to the most recent Futurist art. A growing interest in the truth, they say, can no longer be expressed in form and color the same way as these were understood hitherto. The gesture we want to portray on the canvas can no longer be a fixed photographic moment of cosmic dynamism. And really everything moves, everything runs, everything is being shaped swiftly. Moving subjects multiply, change shape, and continue like a vibration over space. This way, a galloping horse has not four legs but twenty; and their motion is triangular in shape.

Everything in art is conditional, and there is no general rule in painting. That which was true for the painters of yesterday now comes out as an untruth, a lie. For instance the Futurists declare that a picture of something should not resemble it, its nature, that the painter carries landscapes within him that he wishes to photograph onto the canvas.

Just as the individual scrutiny of the human spirit has swept away the static darkness of dogma, in the same manner the life-giving deluge of science will soon liberate painting from academic traditions. Whatever the case, say the Futurists, we desire to return towards life. Science in our day, in its victorious advance, has rejected its past, so that it might be better equipped to answer the material concerns of our time. We desire that art, shunning its past, might at last be able to answer the intellectual demands that excite us. Our renewed science does not permit us to consider man the center of the life of the universe. Human sorrow is about as interesting in our eyes as the sorrow felt by a light bulb.

When a man becomes a machine, when feeling within it changes into a product, when his spiritual attachments are severed and he lives moment to moment, then these are already the characteristics of the future "mechanical son". In order to grasp and understand the beauty of Futurist pictures, the human soul has to be purified, the eye must be freed of its lid of atavism—its primordial type—and of culture; and the sole control is finally to be nature, not the museum.

Futurist music

As we saw, creativity is paramount in Futurist art; and the first condition of creativity is freedom. Futurism is opposed to academism; and for the sake of individual initiative and untrammelled individual expression it dissolves all those rules that are in one way or another present an obstacle, or that fetter free expression.

From here comes free music, which seeks ways now to express voices, sounds that are not in the power of normal music. Thus, for instance, the music of nature: light, lightning, the sound of the wind, noise, the rush of water, and with that also the urban stridor and the din of machinery. All these, as we know, choose their sounds freely. The nightingale sings wonderfully; but not with the notes of contemporary music alone. It sings, rather, with all the sounds that please it. One makes free music by the same laws that govern

the music of nature, indeed all the art of nature. The free musical artist, just like the nightingale, is not confined to tones and half-tones. He can use quarter-tones and eighths and such music as is free for his choosing in its sounds.

As a beginning, quarter-tones are coming into use. These tones still exist in ancient Indian music and are employed by eastern instruments, especially on the *chonguri*.⁷⁷ Thus the advantage of free music consists of the following: the pleasure derived from the new and unprecedented juxtaposition of sounds; new harmonies with new chords; new dissonances with their new solutions; and new melodies.

* * *

4. Kara Darvish, *Horut'k' ulunk'* ("Incantation Beads"): *Du dewuk p'ok'rik* ("You, little demon, little one"), *Jun jnyan, Čaxrēr i čaxr* ("Soared into soaring"), *Šrēs-blur* ("Asphodel Hill"), in *Sofia Georgievna Mel'nikova, Fantasticheskiĭ kabachek, Tiflis 1917 1918 1919* ("To Sofia Georgievna Mel'nikova, The Fantastic Little Tavern, Tiflis 1917 1918 1919"), pp. 69-77. I attempt a translation here of the semantic parts of the poems, with a discussion of the translational words and mythological allusions.

(70) [Epigraph, in Russian] The poet Kara Darvish greets Sofia Georgievna from the summit, stained with his heart's blood, of snowy Ararat.

(71) Incantation Beads [*Horut'k' Ulunk'*]⁷⁸

(72) [Caption to illustration, in Russian] Sigismund Valishevsky: Kara Darvish offers his verses to S.G. Mel'nikova (watercolor, 1919)

(73) You petty demon⁷⁹

⁷⁷ Arm. *čumuri*, perhaps a misprint. The *chonguri* (Georgian; Azeri *choghur*) is a long-necked string instrument common throughout the Caucasus. The bard Sayat' Nova played it, though his favorite instrument was the bowed *kamancha*.

⁷⁸ The locus classicus for these words is the famous story of Semiramis and the Armenian king Ara the Beautiful: in Movsēs Xorenac'i 1.18, the Assyrian queen casts her *zywnut'su i cov* "talismans into the sea", which the historian considers the origin of what he calls the common expression *ulunk' Šamiramay i cov*, "the beads of Šamiran [Semiramis] into the sea" (see Russell 1987: 443 with refs.). Xorenac'i explains repeatedly that he learned such myths and poems from listening to the recitations of the *gusank'* (a Parthian loan-word referring to bards and minstrels; it was later largely replaced by an Arabic loan via Turkish, *azul*, pronounced *azhugh*, literally "lover"), to the accompaniment of the *p'andzura*, a stringed instrument. The poem of Kara Darvish is meant to be modeled on spells and folk poetry, as kindred Russian Futurist verses were; and Beledian (2009: 273-274), notes that the poet called the postcards with his translational verses printed on them (*počta-i' ovč'ank'ner*, "[poetic] charms" and reminds us that called himself *hrc'akavor hay-guson-futurist* "the famous Armenian-bard-futurist". (How far is he, really, from the bardic boasts of Allen Ginsberg, a scant two generations on?) The poet appreciated alliteration of the Arm. synonyms in the two Classical expressions as is intrinsically poetic, and with his strong belief in freeing the sexual urge, he would have appreciated the robust passion of the Assyrian queen for the young Armenian, so like Dido's love of Aeneas.

⁷⁹ Cf. the novel *Melkii bes* ("The Petty Demon"), by Fedor Sologub (1863-1927), published in 1905. Kara Darvish, as noted at the beginning of this study, advertised his translations from Russian into Armenian.

zaranDZar errant

YoU *little baT of the darK

faranar at the dOor

defile of crevAsses

and far from the dark'S midst

youareplaying waterlily [munufar]

you are the wheel's squeak;

you are the Flute's trill

arAndzar of a Solo song

sonG dance zarangar

your vOice Mar Abgar⁸⁰

*Rome morom string [lar]

Single note [mialar] note of spring [garunlar]⁸¹

(74) DZun [cf. dziun, "snow"]

ōndzn

ndzin

These include Sologub's novella entitled "The Golden Stairs" (probably a part of the novel *Slazhche Ada*, "Sweeter than Hell", 1912), price 8 kopeks, available from Akop Gendzhian, Yelizavetinskaya 114, Tiflis.

⁸⁰ *Mar* is the honorific in Syriac of a saint or monk; *Abgar* was the king of the Syriac-speaking city-state of Edessa (modern Urfa), claimed by the Armenians as one of our own. He was in legend the first ruler to accept Christ.

⁸¹ There are two groups of words with alliterative patterns forming the text of this spell. The first and longer is attached to the flute (*string*); the shorter second, to the single voice (*meneng*). A pattern of nonsense words suggesting the ringing of a bell or cymbal follows thereafter. The spell has thus a musical as well as a verbal sound signature.

- I. *Zarandzar, faranar, k'arandzar, far, munufar, arandzar, zarangar*. These contain Persian elements: *zar* "gold", *munufar* "waterlily", and possibly *farr* "glory"; the word *dzar* in Arm. is the hair of the tail or mane of a horse, and is often sworn by in spells invoking the three mounted saints, Sergius, George, and Theodore. These saints' martial aspect recommended them to the Armenians, always fond of heroic epics. They are thus popular and such spells are numerous: see Harut'yunyan (2006: 106, 147-149, 160).
- II. *Lar, mialar, garunlar*. The Arm. word *lar* means a string of an instrument or a note that is played; but as an ending with *garun*, "spring", it looks like the common pl. ending in Turkish. There is also an obvious phonetic and semantic affinity of *dzar*, a horse hair, to *lar*, a musical string.

DZndzanN [cf. *tsntsgha*, “cymbal” and *ts’ntsai* “rejoice”?]⁸²

DZndzandzN

DZandzN

DZōndzaN

Ho-to-M

Ho-to-M

Pu-pU

Pu-pU

Aioŕn i mU

Jurm i jarm [cf. *ferm* “warm”?]

ISjarm erased [*hvjēr*]⁸³

ISagarm i kArz

Entered *i p’arz*

(75) SOARED INTO SOAR [*čaxrēr i čaxr*]⁸⁴

seized [*bṛnēr*] *i k’axr*

hearded into news [*luēr i lur*, the first word is aor. stem *lu-* of *lsem* “hear” + impf.]

entered the furnace [*mutēr i p’ur*]⁸⁵

zarp’arb i zarb

*fwrt’ēr i fwrfr*⁸⁶

⁸² On bells and their sound and echo in Armenian poetry see Russell (2012: 127–168).

⁸³ Erasure is part of some spells, cf. Harut’yunyan (2006: 95): *Surbu T’oros nsteal grēr ew durjeal fwrfr; ew č’arakan patarēr; fur mits xarakan kurasc’i; xarakan xawari; druc’akon c’amak’i; Ah, mal, komarxi* “Saint T’oros, seated, wrote and again erased/ and the evil eye he tore to shreds/ That eye be pierced and blinded/ That blue eye be darkened/ That eye be out and dry/ Ah, mal, komarxi [voices mysticor]”.

⁸⁴ The subsequent nonsense lines of the stanza, which emphasize the sound *f*, exotic to Arm. but common in Persian and other Islamicate tongues, preserve the Classical Arm. syntactic structure of 3rd pers. sg. impf. verb + prep. *i* “into” + obj. in acc., except for the final verse, with Clas. Arm. acc. def. marker *z-*.

⁸⁵ Perhaps a reference to the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace in the Book of Daniel; two, Setrak and Misak’, are popular Armenian names.

zurt'ēr i zarfr

zrt'ēr zt'ar

Dubēr Dpar

i harb Zak'ar [Clas. Arm. "into by means of father Zacharias"!]]

zurt'n zot'ar

(76) Asphodel Hill [*ŠRĒŠ-BLUR*]⁸⁷

The dance of the darvishes

*KarabalakH*⁸⁸

KarabalakH

Zan-blaN

DZan-blaN

*ublakh-dublakH*⁸⁹

⁸⁶ The sound *f* exists in Armenian dialects and a letter representing it was introduced into the alphabet in the 12th century; but it is not found in Classical Armenian and has retained a sense of foreignness and exoticism. Thus, when an Armenian in Georgia in the 18th century invented an artificial language, which he called R(ə)štuni—after a region south of Lake Van whose argot was famous—he made it as un-Armenian-sounding as possible by using lots of *f*'s and *ö*'s (see Russell (2012: 602–684).

⁸⁷ Arm. *srēš*, "asphodel" (see Bedevian 1936: 89, no. 529; Ališan 1895: 499, no. 2373–2374; Gabūcean (n. d.: 183, no. 1360), is a loan from Persian *serēš*, with characteristic assimilation of initial *s* to the following *š*, cf. Arm. *šrewāk*, a loan from Iranian **srwākaka*-, "an instrument of discipline"; see Russell (1996: 69). *Šrēš* hill, near Ejmiacin, was excavated in 1913 by Ervand Lalayan and yielded artifacts going back to the bronze age (see Melik'-Palaian/Nazinyan (1983: 27). The place is mentioned in an ancient oral epic passage cited by Movses Xorenac'i, II.65: ... *zormē yaraspelsn asen: Hatusac govac'eal Vardgēs manuln i Tuhac' gawarēn, zK'asal getov, ckeal nstaw zŠrēš blrov, zArtimēd k'alak'aw, zK'asal getov, krel kop'el zshutn Erwanday ark'ayi* "They say about him in the legends: The young boy Vardgēs took off and went from the province of Tuhā, along the river K'asal, came and settled around Šrēš hill, around the city of Artimēd, along the river K'asal, to cut and hew the court of Ervand [Orontes], the king." We have seen that Kara Darviš, a champion of native Armenian antiquity and folk culture as the sources of fresh creativity, took the title of the cycle from epic recorded by the same historian; and here he would have liked the princely name Vardgēs, "Rose-tresses" and the alliterative pair of verbs *krel kop'el* "cut and hew".

⁸⁸ Tk. *karu* "black" is part of the poet's nom de plume; Tk. *bulak* or *mulak* is a buffalo calf. But he probably just liked the sound.

⁸⁹ Kara Darviš wrote that the word is not found in dictionaries, but anybody from Urartu in the remote past to Mongolia in the remote East would sense it had a meaning. Turkish *döbrü döbrü* means "say it country simple" and colloquial Armenian *qəghə qəghə* means "it fits like a glove". So *ublakH* hovers just past the edge of definition, wavers at the corner of the eye, vanishing around the corner, just as the Russian Futurist poet Velimir Khlebnikov's *znaw*, transrational language, ought to do.

He called out again and again from the darkness of the East

Father mine *good

From there you-came

(77)

KarabalaKH

KarabalaKH

DZan-blaN

DZan-blaN

Dublakh-dublakh

From Asphodel Hill

From roundness of Kōnd⁹⁰

Light will come

The sun will dawn

KarabalaKH

KarabalaKH

DZan-blaN

DZan-blaN

DUBLAKH-DUBLAKH

* * *

5. In "Letters from 74 rue Taitbout" (New York: World, 1969), William Saroyan (1908-1981) remembers the dead and addresses them. Many are eccentrics, men whose particular character or genius set them apart, left them alone, and sometimes led to a tragic death.

⁹⁰ An old district in Yerevan, the present-day Armenian capital. Its name sounds like *gund*, "ball"—hence its roundness!

There was Professor Kalfayan (p. 49 f.), the composer who had lived in Paris, who dressed like a dandy, and was adrift and insane in Saroyan's sleepy home town: Fresno, CA was the land of opportunity for hardworking Armenian farmers but it was not then a center of high culture. Or there was Doctor Anoushavan Chomp (p. 151 f.), the publisher of Armenian weeklies in Sofia, Bucharest, Cairo, and Paris, also a flamboyant dresser: nobody in Fresno's cafés bought his satirical paper *C'axawel*, "The Broom", and he vanished. In 1935, Saroyan had visited the Soviet Union with a delegation of American writers. There he met the poet Charents, who had experimented with every avant-garde movement that had swept through the dying Russian Empire and the young Soviet Union, a consummate scholar and editor and one-time friend of Kara Darviš, who injected himself with morphine, who got drunk, who had been confined in a mental hospital, who had written lyric, symbolist, bardic, revolutionary, and homoerotic poems. Charents was already in official disfavor and was gradually being ostracized from Soviet Armenian literary and civil life: the KGB arrested him during the great purge of 1937. He died late in November of that year: according to one account, he smashed his head against the wall of his cell during withdrawal from drug addiction. Others assert that he was murdered. His body was dumped in an unmarked mass grave near Erevan and has not been found.⁹¹ If the life and work of Kara Darviš marked the beginning of a new kind of literature and life—a counterculture—in Russian Armenia, then the death of Charents was the end. At their meeting, Charents advised Saroyan when dealing with the authorities, the custodians of propriety and convention, and the rest of them, to say yes and then spit in their eye. Saroyan wrote from his Paris apartment to the dead poet (p. 122):

"Why didn't you say yes? I'll tell you why, Charentz. Because you are more than an Armenian, more even than only another member of the human race. You are a poet, so shocked by the treachery of all men seeking to save their skins at any cost that only with the help of cocaine could you stay among them and pretend to be one of them.

God love them, as every poet is obliged to say, not with contempt but with charity. They all did, they are all doing, only what you advised me to do, which I have never done, which you never did".

* * *

6. Osip Mandelstam's translation of Kara Darviš, "Dance on the Mountain", with translation of the Russian by J.R. Russell:

АКОП КАРА-ДЕРВИШ

ПЛЯСКА НА ГОРАХ

Ночной хоровод

⁹¹ On Charents, see Russell (1996-97 (1999)): 17-35; idem (2000); idem (2004: 1365-1432); Astourian 2012.

Посвящ^{ается} Гр^игорию> Робакидзе
Не плач, не рыданье, не воплеиц крик -
Подари мне веселье и пиршества зvon.
Позабыть бы удары и смертный стон,
Катафалков тух и умершей лик,
Пустить по миру тяжёлый дым,
Развезть горечь дымяных туч,
И кто любим, и кто не любим,
И кто повержен, и кто могуч,
Побежденный, победитель - всё прах и дым,
Да пройдут они здесь, - мое сердце там,
Забывать, забыть - уйти далеко
К шарообразным легким мирам,
По новым звездам взвиться легко,
И только с тобой, только с тобой,
Повелительница моей души,
Атом крови моей огневой.
Пойте мне песни, хоровод, пляши,
Тризну на грудах костей соверши.
Пусть бесы топчут и воют глухо -
Я слышу богов чародейный бег,
На вершинах гор рождение духа:
Ночь разрезает человек.
Жизнь вернулась, гроба раскололись,
И славы былой поют руины.

*К нагорной крепн взмыв мощный голос:
 Всѣ забыть и ринуться в звездные пучины!
 Через тучи, туманной поштые прижсей,
 С посяистом адским уйдем на высокые кряжи.
 Всѣ позабудем, забудем, забудем.*

Akop Kara Dervish

Dance on the Mountains

(Nocturnal Choral Round)

Dedicated to Grigori Robakidze

*Neither crying nor sobbing nor cries of professional wailers—
 Let me be merry 'midst the ringing of feasts.
 Forget the blows and dying moan,
 The coffins' trim, the dead girl's face.
 Scatter the heavy smoke through the world,
 Blow away the heavy clouds' grief,
 And he who is loved, and he who is not,
 And he who is conquered, and he who wields power,
 The defeated, the victor, are all smoke and dust,
 And here they will pass, but there is my heart.
 To forget, forget, and go far away
 To the spherical delicate worlds
 And lightly soar past the new stars.
 And only with you, only with you,
 Mistress of my soul,
 Atom of my fiery blood.*

*Sing songs to me, O chorus, and dance
 Your rite on the piles of bones.
 Let demons stomp and hollowly howl;
 I hear the spellbinding onrush of the gods,
 The birth of the spirit on the mountaintops:
 Man cuts to shreds the night,
 Life has returned, the coffins crack and break,
 And the ruins chant their elder fame.
 To the mountain cyries the strong voice ascended:
 Forget all, and plunge into the gulfs of the stars!
 Past these hovels, spun in a web of fog,
 With hellish ululation to the high crags away
 We will go and forget it all, forget, forget.*

* * *

7. Kostan Zarean, *Narwā leran vray* ("The Ship on the Mountain"), Boston: Hayrenik, 1945, a part of Chapter 9 (140-152).

Herian had known Tiflis, the viceregal capital of the Caucasus, in those good days when after returning from a distant journey he and a few mates would come to spend their extra cash and have a good time while the ship was being loaded. Those times were so far away now...

He recalled well those nights he whiled away till dawn in rooms overhanging the Kura river, in wine shops below street level dense with the aroma of shashlik and wine, where in the semi-dark life crept up to the top of the thermometer, its tongue ringing bitter and tinny, and songs rang out in alternating happy and philosophically melancholy tones. The wine flowed and young girls danced, their shapely arms floating in the air, the fire of their great, dark eyes sharing their ardor with his heart.

In those days, Tiflis was the rendezvous of all the peoples of the Caucasus, living on permanent vacation. It was gay, official, carefree; mascaraed, dolled up, light.

The palace rearing high over the broad avenue of the viceroy, motley crowds of soldiers, military parades with their stirring music, splendid, captivating women and the idle populace strolling up and down from morning till late at night, without purpose or care. The Tiflis of lók'ō fish, Kakhetian wine, and lölinal.⁹²

The most beautiful quarter of the city, called Sololak, which Armenians had built, teemed with horses of noble breeds harnessed to magnificent carriages in which magnificent women with great, swooning eyes would glance about with lightning-stricken looks, and then, after their reveries had wafted over the heads of the passers by, would swiftly roll on.

Life rolled on, to the rhythm of the airs of soundless, trilling flutes. Abundant, voluptuous. The sweet shops, teeming with customers, displayed cakes and confections of impossible dimensions. In front of the shops, on the sidewalks, were heaped little hills of cloth and velvet. Groups of women gathered around them and with delicate, sensitive fingers palpated the silks and lazily examined the multicolored fabrics. The rustle of crumpled cloth, merging with the sweet aromas pouring in from every direction, resembled a tipsy breeze stealing over a rose garden. And here, swathed in a tent of particolored silks, her dress shivering with gold coins worked into its hem, went a Turkish lady. You would think a hive of bees was passing. Or here, a stately and supple Circassian maiden⁹³ with the eyes of a gazelle and the gait of an ibex; or a Persian girl sashaying along, her little head nodding, round and musical.

To reach the lower quarter of the town one had to pass through narrow, twisting lanes. Down below was the square the locals called the Mēydan,⁹⁴ which unfolded before your eyes like a Persian miniature sketched by a naïve hand. Camels, lazily seated, thick lipped, heads held high, as though they were grazing on the sun. Goats with bells tinkling, dragging along dried branches by their tips. Eastern types seated with their legs folded beneath them, with dreaming eyes and dazed motions, smoking long pipes.

⁹² Michael Grossman informs me that Georgian gozinaki is a confection of grape syrup hardened around string of walnuts to resemble a sausage; it is also popular in Armenia, where I have heard it called *awd anjux*, lit. "sweet sausage", or *ročik*. The element *guz-* would be from Iranian for walnut, cf. the loans Arm. *avkoyz* and Heb. *egōz*. The *lōko* is a catfish.

⁹³ These picturesque women of the East have not only a reality in Armenian life, but a contextuality in literature. Petros Durean (Bedros Tourian) (1851-1872), the youth who in his brief life singlehandedly invented modern Western Armenian lyric poetry, wrote two poems, startling for the time in their artless, laconic literalness, about a Turkish woman and an Armenian woman he exchanged gazes with in Constantinople (see Russell: 2005). A Circassian maiden dances in the bewitching palace of Dream before the Oriental potentate and narrator of Daniel Varuzhan's poem *He'amosakan* ("The Heathen Poem"), in the cycle *He'amos erger* ("Heathen Songs"): at the end of the poem he takes her in his arms and consummates his passion for her. But perhaps, given the setting, the spasm is only imagined. Like most of Varuzhan's verse, the poem is as extravagant in its rich vocabulary as it is in its imagery and theme. There is little doubt it inspired in part both the subject and the words of the poem *Kaycer* ("Sparks") by Misak' Mecarenc' (Medzarents')(1886-1908), whose great lyric gift and brief life make him the successor to Tourian. In the latter, the poet imagines that he watches the sensuous undulations of an Oriental dancing girl through the night and begs for the vision to linger a bit more, as dawn is breaking. Kara Darvil loved and venerated Varuzhan; and Zarian, too, knew the work of the contemporary Western Armenian poets.

⁹⁴ Persian and Arabic *maydan*, used, famously, also of the main square of Kiev in the Ukraine.

The acrid odor of tar, raisins, heaps of straw. Camel dung. Wretched, indifferent dogs. Hens pecking under the camels' noses, and beggars with ruined eyes and trembling hands. Asia.

On the surface it might be Europe— a Europe reflected in funhouse mirrors, Erevan Square, with its red-painted city hall. The main thoroughfare of the city, the pride of the country: Golovinsky Prospect.⁹⁵ On this avenue, all the peoples of the Caucasus, their tribes and clans, in their Sunday best, rubbed shoulders with each other. They came on holiday, for fun and adventure, and to show off.

Tiflis made its living off the hardworking, productive provinces. They purchased at a high price its carefree style, its dancing, wines, girls. In their dull provincial towns they talked of it in superlatives, salivating, voices rising in lilting tones of praise.

In reality Tiflis was a modest half-European, half-Asiatic city. Climbing rows of flat roofs clung to unimpressive hills that the locals, with their tendency to exaggeration, called mountains. A few decent streets. The Kura, a muddy river dragging its lazy way between sheer banks. A handful of bridges adorned with tasteless monuments to the Russian generals who had conquered the country. And at the center, where the veins of the city swelled, a handful of great buildings erected in pompous, various, undefinable styles. Here and there, the musical contours of Armenian churches gave profundity and nobility to the mixture.

Herian had arrived in town the day before in order to present some applications to the Georgian authorities and put an end to the excess problems in transporting his ship that had arisen thanks to the caprices of petty officials.⁹⁶ He was already seeing everything with different eyes.

Could this be Tiflis? Tired, preoccupied, uneasy, he walked through the deserted streets waiting for the offices of the government ministries to open. It was already past nine in the morning, but the city was not yet awake. Nothing moved. The shops and cafés were shut. Skinny nags harnessed to carriages on empty street corners stamped their hooves and the skin under their bellies shivered. Policemen pounded their beats, feeling the chill. It was cold. "You'd think", Herian mused, "it was the morning after a night-long costume ball". He felt sorry he had come: it would have been better to come to some sort of agreement with the local authorities. The hardest part was already over: his ship was loaded onto freight wagons and would have already been en route, had not some wicked men begun to concoct problems. Everybody wanted a bribe, and he had distributed all the funds he had, sold whatever he owned, and given them all that, too. No, the more he gave, the more they wanted.

The life of the city started up in a strange way. Numerous soldiers and policemen poured out of the city hall, separated into squads, and took charge of the corners of the major arteries. Herian stood still and gazed in astonishment. He had witnessed the same spectacle the day before, at the station. Tight knots of policemen had taken up positions at all the exits. They requested passports, interrogated, and searched people— that is, the

⁹⁵ Now Rustaveli, after the national poet of Georgia.

⁹⁶ Herian, an Armenian sea captain from Batumi(), is the hero of the novel: he wants to transport a ship by rail to Armenia from the Black Sea port. The cover of the novel, reproduced here, illustrates the scene.

Russians and Armenians. "How everything is forgotten", Herian thought to himself. "When a storm overwhelms one's life, the memory of whole peoples is darkened. Black currents, like a hurricane, sweep away their very will, their ability to consider and to choose. The threatening breakers of the stormy sea toss away small and unimportant men. So-called leaders⁹⁷ are created. All the values people fought for and swore by for years are forgotten, and they resort to the same means of brute force under whose yoke they were only lately oppressed. The talk of communism, equality, and justice, but scratch them and out pops the desiccated, jealous chauvinist. Out pops the governor⁹⁸ of some backward Turkish province, the constabulary, the secret police, searches, arrests, prison, exile. Is this Tiflis?"

Here are people, at last. A few sleepy, unhurried shopkeepers open their doors for business. A patch of sky clears. It opens and sparkles on a few windows, then hides immediately and retreats back behind the clouds. It's gray and cloudy.

Where was that "Cup of Tea"⁹⁹ where he used to meet his acquaintances? He kept walking, inquired, found it. The Cup of Tea was open. He stopped at its front door and stared in amazement: a detachment of the police had surrounded the passers by and was searching them. A neatly dressed, bespectacled, elderly man protested angrily. One of the cops, with a pinched muzzle and long arms, went up to him, cursed him loudly, and smacked him in the face. The aged gentleman's eyeglasses shattered, his top hat flew off, and blood trickled down his blanched face. Herian was furious. He flushed and ground his teeth. They had seized the old man contemptuously and were dragging him off.

A gentleman standing next to Herian was looking on with disgust. "It's barbarism", he said. "I don't understand what they want of those people". Herian replied, bemused. "What should they want? They're just looking for an excuse to expropriate their homes and property. They deport them to the provinces as enemies and take advantage of their absence to rob them of everything. They call this the nationalization of the country..."

Herian went inside. A lovely, clean café. Young girls and married ladies of good families worked there for a pittance. There were few customers, but even before they brought the tea and pastries he had ordered, the café filled. It was as though everybody had made appointments with each other for a specified hour. He looked on with interest, quickly gathering that most of the patrons were intellectuals and artists who had fled Russia. It was plain from their faces and movements. Sallow, thin faces, crazed and dishevelled hair, hoarse voices and the strangest outfits imaginable.

There characters, at once comical and pitiful, were talking and arguing nonstop. They all knew each other—only he was by himself, lonely, sad, depressed. The scene at the doorway still weighed on his mind. "Could I have another cup of tea, please, Miss?" "Of course". The waitress had a voice that was sweet and resonant, rising from her bosom. Herian liked it, and felt a little calmer.

⁹⁷ The Armenian word is *lekavur*, lit. "helmsman": this is the title Charents was vainly to bestow upon Stalin in late and fevered poems beseeching the tyrant to spare him.

⁹⁸ Turkish *kaimakam*.

⁹⁹ Rus. *Chashka chayu*, a Futurist haunt in Tiflis frequented by Kara Darvil.

It was a pleasant environment; it seemed more a salon for a reception than a coffee house. The intellectuals there had passed through fire, been crushed, exiled, yet they labored to preserve the outward proprieties of life, those exaggerated forms of civility, that hand-kissing of ladies, the delicate sweet nothings that had been typical of pre-Revolutionary high society. He recalled the perfect manners of the French aristocrats sitting in the carts taking them to the guillotine: "If you please, Marquise, may I kiss your hand?" "Ah. My dear Count, allow me to remove my glove..." These waitresses were the same: you would think they were receiving specially invited guests at home. They drifted from one end of the room to the other, shedding smiles and sweet aromas, displaying the rustling silks of the dresses, and their bared, trembling bosoms, and their well cared for white hands.

He automatically looked down at his own hands, and hid them. But at once he withdrew them again, and laid them down on the table. Why should he feel ashamed? They were the hands of a worker. For the past few weeks these hands, these strong and sturdy hands, had been cleaning and oiling and shining the ship's engines, painting the bridge, scrubbing everything to a state of perfection. No, no reason for him to feel the least shame.

"Hey, what are you pounding your fists on the table for? Spoiling for a fight, eh?" It was Peronian. "My good fellow, you look as if you were about to attack these poor, fragile girls. Yes, all right, all right, don't start with the explanations— but here, meet my friends. Hayk Shushan, professional painter; Kara, the Futurist poet;¹⁰⁰ Sultanian, the literary scholar. In a word, you behold all the Muses". "Very pleased to meet you. Very pleased. Hey, you bastard, I wasn't expecting to see you here. Please have a seat, gentlemen. Please sit down". "My friends need no introduction to you. We've talked... The Admiral of Lake Sevan¹⁰¹ — You're a famous man". "How could it be otherwise", interjected Kara. "We've heard a lot of good things about you, your futuristic spirit, your plan, so daring in the present circumstances..." "Good, good, don't praise him too much", Peronian said, cutting him short. "Don't flatter him. He's a modest man, any more and he'll jump up and run away... Tell me this. What brings you here? We were expecting you in Erevan". "It's a long story. You can imagine the matters I'm dealing with". "Such as?" "I've just run into a lot of difficulties... That's all. You know, I took my ship and even loaded it onto the train". "They were talking about it in Erevan". "In Erevan?" Herian was startled. "How did they find out?" "They find out about everything. And, well..." "Well, the railway authorities began to put all kinds of obstacles in my way. They are doing everything they can to prevent the ship from departing. That's what I've come about. I plan to make some representations. But I'm already discouraged". He related everything he had seen in front of the café. "I want nothing to do with these people". Everybody fell silent.

"The frightful thing is", said Hayk Shushan with gloomy emphasis, "The frightful thing is the way people are trading in the diadems of their own thoughts so easily. Everything that only yesterday was the soul-illuminating ideal of all is now darkness and void. It's a seismic shock, a social convulsion, a catastrophe, and it's rolling everything

¹⁰⁰ This is, of course, Kara Darvîš, though the name is a single phrase, not a name and surname.

¹⁰¹ The lake in Armenia where Herian planned to set sail his ship transported by rail from the Black Sea.

down with it into an abyss of barbarity. Man is reverting to his atavistic instincts and becoming a wolf". "Which just proves", interjected Kara, ever prepared to contradict, "that those old values you're talking about do not correspond to the demands of real life". "Everything can be justified that way". "I'm not justifying it. But neither do I fear the changes taking place. Life presents ever-new demands to us as it changes, and we have to be in a position to respond to those demands. To be capable of change, to be able to fashion and forge new weapons— that's what!" "But my dear fellow, you are speaking about something else entirely..." Hayk Shushan stared from behind his glasses at Kara with a mocking smile.

He couldn't stand Kara. Who was he? The semblance of semblance. Something calling itself a literary movement had been born in Europe that was apparently the product of local conditions. Russian artists, who are great slavish imitators, had picked up the outer forms of this movement, exaggerated those, sewed a harlequin costume, and draped it over their shoulders to conceal their spiritual nakedness and unquiet madness... They daubed the tips of their noses, put on necklaces of carrots, and pinned medals made of cabbage leaves to their breasts. They surprised the bourgeoisie and charmed hysterical young girls. Kara swore by their name. He wore long, colorful tunics, an Afghan headdress, and high boots, and considered himself an apostle heralding a new life. But then, apostles are always slightly ridiculous.

"You're talking about something completely different", repeated Shushan, becoming serious. "What we are seeing and criticizing today is nothing new, just contortions of old mask... scarecrows sticking out of the depths of history". "You forget that we are in the midst of a storm. When the earth is shaken, people lose their heads. They run just where they shouldn't go. They do things that would appear ludicrous in normal times". "Well, that's doubtless true..."

The room kept filling with a throng of newcomers who squeezed in around the already crowded tables, clustering together in big groups and blocking the passages. Smoke. Noise. Herian observed attentively. "A remarkable spectacle", he said. "It seems as though danger has swept over the heads of these people. Frenzied looks, twisted mouths..."

"Russia is passing through a titanic sieve. The heavier grains remain; the rest is scattered to the winds..." "Refugees..."

"If a man thinks well", exclaimed Sultanian, "flight is base. A man ought never to abandon his fatherland, even if his life is in danger. An émigré, in the final analysis, is but half a man". "They've fled hunger, repression, deprivation". "Precisely. They fear deprivation. But see, they are already like dead leaves driven by the wind. There is one thing I don't understand. If millions of people are suffering, why should artists flee that suffering?"

"I agree completely", said Kara. "Completely. One must have the courage to accept reality as it comes and then transform that reality into art, however savage it may be. Song can offer a foundation to everything". "That is irrefutable", Herian agreed. "One must remain, strive, survive. We are all responsible for the events taking place, and we have to have the courage to bear their consequences".

"The spirit is the main thing. Every man must cling to his spiritual center. Events are what surround us; they are not our inner selves. They arrive, the storm breaks, and then they pass— and, in the end, they are subject to the spirit, if the latter is great and radiant. We, the Armenians, have known this for centuries..."

"Those refugees present a very interesting spectacle", said Hayk Shushan again after a brief silence. "I've been observing them ever since they came. This crowd is composed not only of artists and poets. There is every kind of element among them. When they came, they were a pitiful sight: poor, thin, emaciated... But they lost no time. A lot of them, characters with calculating eyes and low, intent brows, took stock of local conditions right away, sniffed out their surroundings and got to work. Lots of shops opened. They bought and sold everything. They changed money and amassed gold, silver, and precious stones. Many ladies appeared as well, soon enough. With sonorous, aristocratic names. Baronesses, countesses, princesses. With great airs, with loving smiles. They assumed the patronage of the artists and writers..." "According to tradition..." "Yes. On that pretext, they opened nightclubs where they welcomed you in the noblest form, with compliments befitting the occasion, with self-deprecating smiles; where you met famous names you'd read about once upon a time in the Petersburg or Moscow papers. They would proffer to you the inevitable cup of tea. One of the ladies would sing sotto voce. They served sweets and cakes. They conversed and disputed about art". "Well, so?... It wasn't a bad thing".

"No. It was very nice. The bad part was that afterwards, they would invite you into the room with the roulette wheel— all for a charitable aim. Naturally you were abashed and accepted the proposal. They relieved you of your last kopek, and, with your face frozen, guilty for not having more money, you got outside somehow and fled."

"So that was the deal". "Now Tiflis lives that life. Nightclubs, beautiful Russian princesses, famous artists. It's surprising how much of the higher strata of the nobility have discovered a profit motive in art... They invite you to a soiree where some famous poet is to read his latest work. A full house. A little stage at the very end of the hall. Enthusiastic applause. The poet comes on stage. Wearing a long, outlandish robe woven of Bukharan silk, the tip of his nose painted, his face bedaubed with antimony like a clown, he starts to declaim in the manner of a third-rate actor, in feeble and faraway voice, unique and incomprehensible words".¹⁰²

"Fortunately", said Peronian, "In that respect our country does not attract anybody. We are poor, and have at least the honor to live alone with our accursed questions and our tragedies. We lead a dangerous life: external foes, malaria, typhus, and hunger within, and our exiles are no princesses... That is how I prefer it. One day we will forge new and beautiful things from our misfortunes. Our own beauty, deep and great, of the kind all things born of suffering are..."

They were silent. Everyone felt himself oppressed by a great burden. They returned in their minds to Armenia. They said not a word.

¹⁰² *Esaki ew anhaskamali bayer*, a reference to the *zamm'* ("transrational") language of Futurist poetry; cf. the recitation at the end of this excerpt.

"But haven't you noticed how pretty that tall young lady is, the one who served us our tea?" asked Shushan, as though waking from a dream. "Really". "She's from a very good family. Well bred, educated, with refined tastes". "She caught my attention the minute I came in", said Herian animatedly. "She has real classical lines, like a Greek statue". "But, well, never mind, better I should not puncture your illusion". "Our illusion? What do you mean? Morality?" "No, no, that's not what I meant. All of you, stop looking her way or she'll realize we're talking about her". "All right, tell us what it's all about". "Look, she's got something thrown over her left shoulder to cover her arm". "Yes indeed". "The reason is that one arm is a lot shorter than the other". "Really? What a pity!" "Brother, what were you about to say?"

"You were the ones who insisted. And besides, I wanted to say that every instance of happiness conceals a wound we can't see. We talk about our country, about our misfortune... I thought, you can't create anything out of mutilated beauty, but one can make a life that has been mutilated, shattered, full of suffering into the noblest treasure..."

"Depending", interrupted Sultanian. "It depends... long drawn out physical torment makes one dull and insensitive. Suffering is beautiful when it nurtures creative forces, flights of the spirit, a plenitude of being, all of which seek the means to express themselves. Dante sticks out, right at the peak of his dark age. He is the echo of one of the most savage epochs of Italy's history. An echo, and a judge".

"Yes, because his particular, powerful, spiritual unity was indivisibly joined to his racial unity. He was a wrathful judge, in the name of the supreme traditions of his race", added Shushan.

Kara leapt up from his chair in protest. "Tradition! Tradition! For the love of the gods, let's leave those antiquated, worn out ideas behind, and put a stop to this feeble old talk of yours. Look around us. Life's rushing headlong, speeding like a bullet bursting from a gun, and you make speeches about tradition... Brother, it's high time to understand that if we're stuck in this predicament today, the reason is that we were educated by a bunch of stupid parish priests, and by some celibate ones no less stupid. Always the same talk: our glorious past, our virtues, our Christianity, Sahak-Mesrop,¹⁰³ the invention of our script, the lamp of the Illuminator,¹⁰⁴ the wisdom of our forefathers, that fig tree growing in our native village, the yogurt grandma used to make... And the results? The results are plain to see: our inability to comprehend the awful events that are crushing us; this century, that has taken up arms against us; history, that is forging unknown shapes for us. Why should I hide it? Our writers are more responsible for this incomprehension than anybody else..."

Sultanian responded, "That's it, you're all heated up again, Kara. Of course you're partly right to blame our educators. We're all in agreement there, I think. To talk about tradition the way those gentlemen do is a sign of mental torpor and retardation, of

¹⁰³ Catholicos Sahak and St. Mesrop Maštoc' invented the Armenian alphabet early in the fifth century.

¹⁰⁴ Although he uses for lamp the word *drag*, Kara Derviş probably has in mind the patriotic poem *Lamp of the Illuminator* by Yovhannēs T'umanean. St. Gregory the Illuminator converted the Armenians to Christianity early in the fourth century AD (the date of 301 has gained official, if not scholarly, acceptance), and Armenia has always regarded itself therefore as the first Christian nation.

mediocrity, a hackneyed way of thinking, and so on..." "That's just the way it is..." "They are small men, not always sincere; and they attempt to cover up their mediocrity behind empty formulas. Doubtless, those ideas played a necessary role once upon a time, creating things whose memory is lost—but they don't mean a thing anymore and I find no echo of them in my own thoughts... It's as plain as day". "Bravo!" "That's how it is. But let's not forget another important factor. Progress in the lives of nations, in their history and thought, is nothing if not a renewed return to the native essence of a race, to that pristine and limpid source from which its cardinal virtues sprang, on which its will to exist is founded, those pure and primordial energies that have nurtured and justified its existence. From that point of view, every genuine revolution is a going back, not to something superficially labeled as tradition, but to that which shaped the spiritual nature of the race, the root cause of its birth".

"Primordial nakedness". "I don't know whether I can explain what I mean... The real revolution is accomplished when a race rediscovers its own eyes, shining, illuminated by innocence—the eyes that can discern what is indispensable in the light of eternity and then fashion that necessary thing into human, purely human, values. Reality exists in epochs. It is a juxtaposition of the past and the present. It is that supreme unity of life that we are cultivating anew, the way a sower's grand, simple gesture by its power cultivates a furrowed field".

This talk reminded Herian of Mark, whom he had met in Armenia. If he were here now, he thought, he'd say his piece, too. "I know. In Armenia..." But he was unable to finish.

For everyone had turned their heads to a nearby table. A squat young man with eyes bulging like a frog's and arms flailing like a windmill, was declaiming something at the top of his lungs in an unknown language. His mouth was twisted strangely, and what emerged sounded like the meowing of a cat. He hissed and roared like the wind, then chirped like some songbird in an unknown tropical forest, clucked like a hen, cackled, growled. He was most animated. He clutched his hands to his breast, rolled his eyes, his body contorted, his lips distended like rubber, expressing some inner agitation or grief in their whistle.

"What's all that about?" exclaimed Herian in astonishment. "Is he sick, or what?"

"No", replied Kara gravely, "He's just a poet who belongs to the literary group called 40 Degrees... That fellow, a friend of mine, is the ingenious inventor of an international phonetic language. He is reciting a great poem entitled 'A mother's lament over the grave of her child'. It is a beautiful and impressive lyric. One has to say that it is a genuine revolution in its manner of form and expression".

"Just the thing", cried Shushan, turning to Sultanian, "Precisely the return you were just preaching", "To the age of the wild beasts!" Everybody laughed. "It just shows", replied Sultanian evenly, "That one can make foolishness of every truth... I was talking about the primordial spirit of a race, the spiritual flight of the epoch of its birth, not about crawling around on all fours..."

"Let's not get started on the same argument again", interrupted Peronian. "Time is passing. We have a thousand and one things to do, and anyhow, we need to get something to eat, right? Come on, let's go..."

Excursus on visual language

The "transrational" (Rus. *zaum'*) language of the Futurists represented an attempt to break or transcend the convention whereby a word is just a signifier and relates in a single and linear way to the signified (the word "chair" points straight to a chair and to nothing else). It proposed an array of possible associations— new meanings for a word and new realities in the field of perception. The way it did so was most often by emphasizing the sound of a word rather than its assigned meaning. In some cases the intention was to dispense with any semantic feature— to produce a text of unfamiliar, archaic words, from magical texts or the like; or words of the kind people in religious ecstatic states use when speaking in tongues (glossolalia); or the onomatopoeia of the sounds of the world around us, whether natural or mechanical; or nonsense words. Rimbaud had called for a derangement of the senses, and one way to achieve this on the level of language was to use sound patterns that were felt to be unusual and exotic with respect to the language of the writer. In the case of Armenian, one might find frequent use of the rare sounds *f* (cf. the crypto-Persianate words invented by Kara Darviš with the syllable *far*) and *ō*. One might use of rhyming, singsong patterns with a high proportion of open vowels, in the manner of children's chants. At other times a new word, by virtue of its formal, phonetic relationship to known words in the reader's language, might call up a few or many diverse subliminal associations. These associations were of necessity to a great extent arbitrary, dependent upon the individual reader's perception— his own stock of imaginative associations, aesthetic sensibilities, aural experiences, life background, and so on. It was left to the reader to decide what the author meant, if indeed the latter intended any particular, definable meaning to start with.

Kara Darviš muses in his manifesto *Arewelk'ō ibrew albiwr nor gelaruesti ew stelcagorcut'ean* (*Hin goymērā nor p'ayli tak*) ("The East as a source of new fine art and creativity— Old colors with a new shine"), translated here, that although his invented word *dublaḵh* does not appear in any dictionary, every Armenian, Tatar, and Mongol reading it will intuitively feel it has a meaning. So the author made up his text and assigned its sounds, perhaps with a personal and unexpressed sense of what it all meant to him. But once the text left the presses, that text became entirely dependent for its semantics, though not its sound, upon each individual reader. In that sense, the reader really did become the author. He was no longer the passive recipient of a message, whether a careful reader or a hasty one. He had to make up the message himself. I stress this because the author transferred thereby to his reader the quality of agency, the responsibility to act.

But there is something else a visual text can do that auditory conventional language and *zaum'* cannot: it can alter its shape, pattern, size, and direction. All spoken language is

linear and temporal: a speech act, no matter how musical in pitch or varied in loudness it may be, has a beginning and an end, and takes time. So, does a substantial 19th-century novel, in one standard typeface with conventional punctuation, the lines marching from left to right and descending the page, moving to the next, and so on till after many a summer dies the reader of War and Peace or Bleak House. A Futurist text does not do this; the sizes and fonts of printed letters change, in defiance of the rules of orthography; and sometimes the letters do somersaults or lie down on their sides.¹⁰⁵ They are not sequential; they are synchronous. Lines break rank; and often an illustration, whether it is a Cubist woodcut or a wallpaper pattern in the background of the page, merges with the text. In 1914-1916, Carlo Carrà and Paolo Buzzi produced centrifugal, sunburst-like texts that compel the reader to turn the page around, to arrange the order of the different words and sentences as he pleases (Greene 162-163). You can interpret a picture but you cannot read it out loud; it imposes a silence. The important point to stress here, then, is that this is the point where the text breaks away from sound altogether, and, in a way, from time also. One might arbitrarily interpret large letters as loud sounds and small letters as fainter ones, making of the text a sort of musical score; and Russian Constructivists began in the 1920s to experiment with alternative forms of musical notation. In the west, John Cage and other composers performed similar graphic experiments.

However purely visual elements such as a picture, a leafy pattern from folk art, an unknown graphic symbol, etc., are scarcely susceptible to such a reading. The phonetic signature of the text becomes, then, silence; or the merging of the clamor of many Futurist voices on the page with the large silence of visual composition.

The Russian and Armenian Futurists, returning to what they saw as pure and atavistic springs of sound and feeling unchained by convention, drew upon folk spells, ancient myths, and magical texts. The sound of these is clear enough; but what of their shape, their silent language? One place to start is non-alphabetic signs such as hieroglyphs. Egyptian, Mayan, and Chinese generally have three components: ideographic, phonetic, and determinative. Although the phonetic aspect is important, the observations of William S. Burroughs in his essay "Hieroglyphic Silence" are still of interest: "No matter what the spoken language may be, you can read hieroglyphs, a picture of a chair or what have you; makes no difference what you call it, right? You don't need subvocal speech to register the meaning of hieroglyphs. Learning a hieroglyphic language is excellent practice in the lost art of inner silence... What keeps you from seeing what is in front of you? Words for what is in front of you, which are not what is there". And he presents an Egyptian hieroglyphic text written in multiple directions on a page broken up by floor plan-like drawings into quadrants (Burroughs/Gysin 1978: 186-187),¹⁰⁶ which can be read, but not sounded. Burroughs and his companion Brion Gysin experimented in their paintings with both grids

¹⁰⁵ Schnapp in his essay in Greene (p. 1566), notes that the first writer to use intentional typographical experimentation of a sort of absurdist, proto-Futurist kind was the English writer Lawrence Sterne in his novel *Tristram Shandy* (1760), which the Italian Futurists esteemed.

¹⁰⁶ Figure on p. 188: illustrated here.

and compositions with lines radiating from a center, usually in the four cardinal directions (Gysin 2010: 126).

William S. Burroughs was interested also in Mayan glyphs. These were sometimes written in patterns where "a centrally embedded perspectival view scans simultaneously in multiple radial directions"—a type that, as we shall see presently, is found in Armenian magical manuscripts, even though the Armenian alphabet script as such does not lend itself to this graphic strategy (Urcid (2011: 115)¹⁰⁷ Close to the end of his life, in 1944, Kandinsky started a watercolor of large, variously distributed and vaguely hieroglyphic shapes; in one corner is a "text" (successive horizontal lines of left-to-right characters) of smaller, similar shapes inspired by Rapanui rongorongo script. The latter has an artistic advantage over Egyptian if one's aim is to release the reader from verbal and phonetic patterns, since it has not been deciphered.

The title of Vasilii Kamensky's *Zheleznobetonnaya poema solntse (lubok)* ("Ferroconcrete poem, the Sun (woodcut)", 1917, makes multiple statements: it is Futuristic, with the industrial, urban reference to reinforced concrete; it is a spatial map, since it is overtly related to his other ferroconcrete poem, *Tiflis*; it claims an old Russian folk pedigree as a *lubok*-woodcut; and it declares itself a poem, a verse composition of significant length and high seriousness of theme. The composition has a radiant sun with an eye at the center (called "the face of the GENIUS"), with a planet, Moon, and star around it. The Russian and *zaum* text meanders around and along the lines of the drawings. The sun has four principal rays in cruciform shape that divide the text/picture into quadrants; and with the natural tendency to read Russian from left to right one starts with the large letter *Yu*, expecting it to stand for *Yug*, "South", with the *Z*, *S*, and *V* of *zapad*, *sever*, and *vostok* to follow; but the other "cardinal directions" are marked with vowels, *A*, *O*, and *E*, forcing the reader to make vocalic sounds instead of reading consonantal abbreviations. The chief effect of this division into four implied directions, together with the circular aspect of the central figure in the poem, is to force the reader/viewer to rotate it in order fully to observe it and read it. That is, he must move the object, or move himself, or maybe both. Movement thus becomes part of the act of reading.

Two Armenian magical manuscript texts from Venice, illustrated here, are arranged in the same way as Kamensky's composition, though both are nearly a century older at the least. In both there is a central, circular portion with various incantatory texts and prayers both surrounding and radiating from it. In the first manuscript,¹⁰⁸ the texts are divided into quadrants, which are subdivided into triangles. In order to read the texts, one must rotate it clockwise, which is also the direction of the writing in the central circle. The texts within each quadrant, however, proceed counter-clockwise. So two opposite rotations are required, in four series—rather like the wheels of the divine throne in the chariot vision of Ezekiel! All the texts in this manuscript are in standard Classical Armenian, and the whole is

¹⁰⁷ Discussion of fig. 6.3.

¹⁰⁸ Published by Feydit (1986: 70). The owner was one *Xaspik'an*, probably a form of the Arabo-Turco-Persian name *Xasbēg*, "Noble lord", which is first attested from the mid-14th century (see Ačarean 1972: 500).

evidently a nocturnal talisman: Ch. 12 of the *Narek*, recited as an evening prayer for protection of the home; Ch. 41 of the *Narek*; the credal prayer "I confess in faith" of St. Nersēs Šnorhali; a prayer of Yovhannēs Garneč'i against nocturnal terrors (i.e., nightmares: *arhawirk' gišeroj*); other prayers to ward off demons; a prayer against headaches; etc.¹⁰⁹

In the second manuscript, an undated and uncatalogued magical compendium at S. Lazzaro, Venice, photographed by Rachel Goshgarian, the texts radiate in scythe-like patterns, recalling the "eternity" symbol employed in Armenian Christian art. This manuscript was made, not for purely orthodox prayer, but for magic: it contains voces mysticae, pseudo-magic squares with both Arabic numbers and other symbols, and a variety of esoteric signs. Some of the latter are astrological, while others do not belong to any known writing system. The composition thereby in various ways anticipates the multiple strategies of writing to be employed by the Futurists. And one recalls here Gurdjieff's claim, noted above, to have seen the four-directional text of the mystical Imasturs!

Kara Darviš used to stand outside the Tiflis cinema with his postcard texts. It is intriguing to consider that a postcard is a text intended to move—to be sent through the mails. It is an open text, too, unlike a letter in a sealed envelope or a book between covers. And inside the building, Kara Darviš' fellow citizens of Tiflis were becoming, whether they were fully aware of it or not, readers of a wholly new kind of text, too: the moving picture. It is the modern, urban environment becoming aware of the possibilities of new technologies and dimensions, the human mind and body learning how to bring dream into consciousness, how to fly...

• • •

Excursus: A note on the Beat poets and the Armenians

Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* and William S. Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*, together with Allen Ginsberg's poem *Howl*, are the primary classics of the Beats—the social and artistic rebels of the 1950's whose revolutionary innovations were to lay the foundation for the Counterculture of the 1960's in America and maybe around the world. One of the formative events of the Beat movement was the murder in 1944 of a member of the nucleus of their group, David Kammerer, by another, Lucien Carr, in Riverside Park near the Columbia campus in upper Manhattan.¹¹⁰ Carr was a handsome, pale, delicate-featured boy of nineteen; Kammerer, an older gay man and childhood friend of Burroughs

¹⁰⁹ The *Narek* is the name given by Armenians to the *Matean olbergn'ean* ("Book of Lamentation"), a cycle of 95 mystical prayers by St. Grigor Narekac'i, 10th century. On Ch. 12 see Russell (1997: 42). On the credo, see Russell, (2005: 185-236).

¹¹⁰ This event is the subject of the magnificent and intensely moving film "Kill Your Darlings" (2013), directed by John Krokidas. The fictionalized story in color, with period music from the 1940s, ends contrastively with iconic still photographs in black and white of the actual Beats themselves—Burroughs in trench coat and hat, Ginsberg in Varanasi—and the poignant punk anthem "Don't Look Back Into The Sun" by Peter Doherty and The Libertines. The new song in juxtaposition to the pictures from an already distant past is an affirmation that the great chain of rebel artists and visionaries lives on.

who had for several years been a mentor and lover of the youth. Both Burroughs and Kerouac were arrested as accessories to the crime since they had failed to turn in Carr after he told them about the murder; but they were quickly let off. Although Burroughs was gay; and Kerouac, bisexual—both thought it best to try to save their friend Carr from the hot seat by letting the murder be presented as a typical case of a young straight man defending himself against the advances of a predatory older homosexual. The Ivy League murder made headlines for a while, and the archetypal homophobic set piece was just right for a public that liked its scandals served up with a moralizing sauce. We were to live with this till the Stonewall riot of 1969, when the gays finally understood that freedom is something you have to fight for and take. It is never given. But even revolutionary gays often internalized the stereotypes and prejudices of an oppressive system. So one wonders whether Burroughs' assent to the cover story of innocent youth vs. older gay pursuer was not just a tactic but also a symptom of self-hatred: Burroughs, too, had a taste for adolescent boys that he indulged often for most of his life. The writer was to dissect the theme with the same ruthless clarity he applied to junkies and addiction: his early novel *Queer*, which Burroughs published only in 1986, deals with an older gay man—Burroughs' own persona—consumed by self-loathing in his humiliating desire for an indifferent, younger man. It is, in a way, the same passion play, with Burroughs as Kammerer, though there is no murder.

In the end, Carr didn't beat the rap and did some hard time, but he didn't get the chair either, and went on to a successful career as a literary editor in New York. His son Caleb Carr is a well-known novelist. Lucien and the other principal Beat characters lived to the end of the 20th century or beyond. So even though Kerouac and Burroughs collaborated on this roman à clef about the murder, and the lives in Greenwich Village of the early Beat circle—it is their very first novel, and the title comes from an absurd-sounding phrase in a sensational radio story—publication had to wait till everybody concerned was dead. The book appeared in 2008 (Kerouac/Burroughs 2008), and it's a good one, written in the gritty, hard-bitten, black-and-white style of conventional wartime realism, but with lots of tasty hints of the literary transformations to come. An excellent historical and textual essay by James Grauerholz, Burroughs' life partner and literary executor, is appended to the volume. I seek here to illuminate a small but significant detail Grauerholz failed to address or explain in his indispensable afterword.

All the characters of the drama, naturally, are thinly concealed by fictional names: Lucien Carr, the killer, is called Phillip Tourian and is variously described by the authors as a Turk, or as having Greek relatives, or as hailing from Istanbul. The character in the novel is seventeen (Carr was nineteen at the time of the murder) and is swarthy and handsome (Carr was from a well-to-do Anglo family and was blond and blue-eyed). For whatever reason, the fictional character has a very different background and appearance than the historical Carr, so the choice had to be intentional. It is also likely the two authors knew Tourian was an Armenian surname (Turkish and Greek surnames do not end in -yan, though Iranian ones can). William Saroyan, the American Armenian writer cited elsewhere in this study, is mentioned in passing, though without reference to his ancestry. At the time Saroyan was still widely known as a very famous American writer, of course. (No longer: in

an informal recent poll, none of my students at Harvard had ever heard of or read his book *My Name Is Aram*.) The name Tourian is an obscure one outside the American-Armenian community.

It was, as its use in the novel suggests, not yet an obscure name to the general public in the 1940s, though. Only a decade earlier, on Sunday, 25th December 1933, the Primate of the Armenian Church of North America, Archbishop Leon Tourian (Lewond Durean), a native of Constantinople, was murdered as he was celebrating the Divine Liturgy at the Holy Cross Church of Armenia on West 187th Street and St. Nicholas Avenue, just three miles north of the Columbia campus. Several top officials of the New York branch of the Armenian Revolutionary Federation (Arm. *Hay yelap'oxakan dashnak'ut'wn*—Kara Darviš numbers himself among the Dashnaks in one poem) were apprehended at the scene of the crime, tried, and convicted of premeditated murder in the first degree. (All escaped the death sentence.) The crime was front-page news for weeks in the city; and the trial was one of the more sensational courtroom events of the first Great Depression. No specious moralizing was needed to spice up the story: Tourian was stabbed through his gilded vestments, in the nave of a house of God, with a long kitchen knife. He was a tall, imposing man, and his heavy metal crozier buckled as he fell upon it. There was a sickening irony to this murder by fellow Armenians: when in 1922 Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's army burnt down the port city of Smyrna (present-day Izmir) and drove its Christian majority population into the sea, literally, Bishop Tourian had been one of the survivors picked out of the water. He could scarcely have come from a more illustrious or patriotic family: just a few years before his murder his cousin Yeghishe (Eliše) Tourian, an eminent scholar who had served as the abbot of Armush monastery, and then been elected Armenian Patriarch of Jerusalem, passed away in the Holy Land. When Yeghishe, born Mihran, was a boy, he witnessed the slow, agonizing death from consumption of his own elder brother, Bedros (Petros).

Bedros Tourian, who died at Constantinople at twenty-one, early in 1872, was an inspired, grief-stricken romantic: with his small corpus of brilliant lyric poems it is fair to say he created the standard modern literary idiom of Western Armenian. And in his use of startling images like "black milk" he both paralleled the linguistic experiments of his French contemporary, Arthur Rimbaud, whom I have cited as the progenitor of modern poetry and of Futurism; and anticipated the 20th-century German-language poet Paul Celan, whose most famous poem, "Death Fugue", uses the image of black milk to great effect in evoking the anti-life of imprisonment and extermination in a Nazi concentration camp. It is most unlikely the fathers of the Beat movement ever heard of Bedros or Yeghishe, but it would have been hard for them not to know about Leon Tourian. And surely the only reason for the employment of that obscure name in their very first novel would have been the recent and notorious murder of the Archbishop in New York. It is a reference that would have been immediately understood by many Americans—and more New Yorkers—in 1945. But now that nearly a lifetime has passed, only the eyebrows of Armenian readers will travel upwards. For them, the effects of the murder endure.

The circumstances of Tourian's assassination are complex. In 1917, following the Russian Revolution and the collapse of the Tsarist régime, Lenin withdrew his country from

the war and the Russian army decamped from the Caucasian front. Ottoman Turkey had begun systematically to exterminate its civilian Armenian population in 1915, and refugees were fleeing with the retreating Russians from Van and elsewhere to the east. The Dashnaks established an independent republic in Transcaucasian Armenia—the part of the country that had been since 1828 under Russian control—and fought back Turkish and Azeri invading armies. But they lost power to the Communists in 1920 in a coup and were driven into exile in the Middle East and the U.S. The sacred city of Echmiadzin, seat of the Armenian Church since the fourth century, was to remain in Soviet hands thereafter, until 1991. In 1922, as was mentioned earlier, Atatürk's army destroyed Smyrna on the Aegean coast, where Tourian had served as bishop.

Arriving at his new post in America, Archbishop Tourian, either out of personal conviction or in an effort to placate the Russians and thereby protect his Church from reprisal, refused at several Armenian American community functions to allow the Dashnaks' tricolor flag—the flag of the pre-Soviet (and, now, post-Soviet) republic—to be displayed, allowing only the Stars and Stripes. The party's members were incensed by this offense and branded him a traitor; and his subsequent murder split the American Armenian community down the middle. Many remained loyal to the Catholicos, or supreme patriarch, at Soviet-controlled Echmiadzin; others broke away and eventually came to associate their parishes with a rival, Dashnak-dominated Catholicosate established at Antelias, near Beirut, Lebanon. The English-language US Dashnak press in the first decade of the 21st century ran a series of portraits of the various Armenian parishes in America: the article on Manhattan's Holy Cross Church faithfully mentioned every detail of its history except the only one of any historical importance—Tourian's murder. Though the subject still seems too delicate for the party to address with candor, Terry Phillips' book *Murder at the Altar* provides the a detailed, if at times speculative historical account of the Tourian case to date, albeit in semi-fictionalized form.

The resurrected proto-Beat novel turns out to be another, surprising, corrective to historical amnesia. For the very name Tourian evidently summoned such visceral imaginative force that invoking it was enough to convey the tragedy and horror of bloodshed and the derangement of its aftermath. And that experience of dislocation became itself a strong factor propelling both William S. Burroughs and Jack Kerouac towards their mature style, to the writing that jumpstarted the great Counterculture. The poet and scholar Peter Balakian came to Armenian activism in the wake of youthful encounters with the Beat poet Allen Ginsberg; and in *The Burning Tigris* he has argued that organized support for the Armenians at the time of the Genocide was the beginning of the modern movement for human rights. In that sense, the fate of the Armenians and the response of people of conscience to it was part of the political patrimony of the wider counterculture. I became aware of Armenian culture and the Armenian cause in the context of a youthful involvement with Black civil rights, the Left, opposition to the Vietnam War, and, later, gay liberation. It was the Counterculture, with its consciousness-raising and its activism—its sense-deranging and Futuristic drugs and sex and rock and roll—that despite its shortcomings liberated all of us. And in the very first writings of its very first artists we find an Armenian

name whose farther echoes are replete with tragedy and horror, but also with creativity and love.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ačarian H. (1972), *Hayoc' anjnamunneri baharan*, vol. 2, repr. Beirut.
- Astourian (ed.) (2012), *The Book of the Way (Girk' chanaparhi)' of Yeghishe Charents: An Illuminated Apocalyptic Gospel for Soviet Armenia*, Armenian Studies Program Occasional Paper Series, University of California, Berkeley.
- Ališan L., *Haybusak*, Venice, 1895. p. 499, no. 2373-2374.
- Anikst M./Chernevich E. (1990), *Russian Graphic Design, 1880-1917*, New York.
- Apollonio U. (ed.) (1973) *Futurist Manifestos*, New York: 19-24.
- Bedeian A., *Polyglottic Dictionary of Plant Names*, Cairo, 1936.
- Beledian K. (1992), "Kara Darvish: A Forgotten Futurist", *Raft* 6: 39-53.
- Bowlit J. E. (1995), *The Salon Album of Vera Sudeikin-Stravinsky*, Princeton, NJ.
- Burroughs W. S./Gysin B. (1978), *The Third Mind*, New York: 186-187.
- Č'arenc' E. (1967), *Erker*, Erevan.
- Compton S. (1978), *The World Backwards: Russian Futurist Books 1912-16*, London: 21, 62.
- (1992), *Russian Avant-Garde Books 1917-34*, Cambridge, MA: 44.
- Feydit F. (1986), *Amulettes de l'Arménie Chrétienne*, Venise: (Venice 3064): 70.
- Gabikyan K. (n. d.) *Hay busak'arh* ("The Armenian Plant World").
- Greub S. (ed.) (2011), *Gauguin Polynesia*, Munich.
- Gunn T. (2000), *Boss Cupid*, New York.
- Gysin B. (2010), *Dream Machine*, London.
- Harut'yumyan S. (2006), *Hay hmayakan ev kolovrdakan alot'k'ner* ("Armenian Incantations and Folk Prayers"), Erevan.
- Janecek G. (1984), *The Look of Russian Literature: Avant-Garde Visual Experiments 1900-1930*, Princeton, NJ.
- Jean M. (ed.) (1980), *The Autobiography of Surrealism*, in the series *Documents of 20th-Century Art*, New York.
- Kara-Darvish (1911), *Erwand Göt*, T'iflis.
- Kara-Darvish (1914), *Ind' ē Fur'urizma?*, T'iflis.
- Kara-Darvish (1917), *Keank'i jut'aka*, T'iflis.
- Kerouac J./Burroughs W. S. (2008), *And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks*, New York.
- Marinetti F.T. (2014), *Guerra sola igiene del mondo*, Greene V. (ed.), *Italian Futurism 1909-1944: Reconstructing the Universe*, New York.
- Melik'-P'asayan K./Nazinyan L.A. (1983), intro. to Ervand Lalayan, *Erker*, I, Erevan.
- Mšak (1880), *Hatatir ant'erc'uack' azgayin ew dtar matenagirnerē k'aluač antianeac' ew dproc'ac' hamar* ("Select readings excerpted from national and foreign writers, for families and schools"), Constantinople.
- Morley S. (2003), *Writing on the Wall: Word and Image in Modern Art*, Berkeley and Los Angeles.
- Nichanian M. (2014), *Mourning Philology: Art and Religion at the Margins of the Ottoman Empire*, New York.
- Polstean G. [Beledian K.] (2009), *Haykakan Futurizm*, Erevan.
- Reiss T. (2005), *The Orientalist*, New York.
- Robb G. (2000), *Rimbaud*, New York.
- Rowell M./Wye D. (eds.) (2002), *The Russian Avant-Garde Book 1910-1934*, New York.
- Russell J.R. (1987), *Zoroastrianism in Armenia*, Cambridge.
- (1996), "Armenian šrawlak", *Annual of Armenian Linguistics* 17: 63-71.

- (1996-97 (1999)), "The Armenian Counterculture That Never Was: Reflections on Eghishe Charents", *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 9: 7-35.
- (1997), "Grace from Van", *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies*, 7: 13-59.
- (2000), "Charents the Prophet", *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 11:11-38.
- (2004), "From an Archive of Unpublished Poems of Yeghishe Charents'", in *Armenian and Iranian Studies*, Cambridge, MA: 1365-1432.
- (2005), *Bosphorus Nights: The Complete Lyric Poems of Bedros Tourian*, Cambridge, MA.
- (2005), "The Credal Poem *Hawatov xostovanim* of St. Nerses the Graceful", J.J. van Ginkel et al.(eds.), *Redefining Christian Identity: Cultural Interaction in the Middle East since the Rise of Islam*, Leuven: 185-236.
- (2012), "Armenian Secret and Invented Languages and Argots", *Acta Linguistica Petropolitana*, transactions of the Institute for Linguistic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, vol. VIII, part 3, St. Petersburg: 602-684.
- (2012), "The Bells: From Poe to Sardarapat", *Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies* 21: 127-168.
- (2012-2013), "The Seh-lerai Language", *Journal of Armenian Studies* 10.1-2: 1-85.
- (2014), "Iranians, Armenians, Prince Igor, and the Lightness of Pushkin", *Iran and the Caucasus* 18.4: 345-381.
- Sauer T. (2009), *Notations 21*, New York.
- Taylor J. C. (1962), *Futurism*, New York.
- Temircipalean E. (1879), *Nor keank', A: Azgayin lezu*, A.M. Ashjean & Co. (Constantinople).
- Tēr-Awetik'ean St. (1912), *Patmuack'ner* ["Stories"], Tiflis.
- Urcid J. (2011), "The written surface as a cultural code", in E.H. Boone and G. Urton, eds., *Their Way of Writing: Scripts, Signs, and Pictographics in Pre-Columbian America*, Washington, DC: 111-148.
- Vöynič' E. (1906), *Boť, vëp eresnakan t'weri italakan yelap'oxut'ean örerik', t'rgm. Lewon Šant', Anglierën bnagirö ařajin angam t'pwac ē 1897 t'win Londonum*, Tiflis.
- Weiss P. (1995), *Kandinsky and Old Russia: The Artist as Ethnographer and Shaman*, New Haven.
- Wilson C. (1971), *The Occult: A History*, New York.
- Xardžiev N. (ed.) (1940), *Velimir Klebnikov. Neizdannye proizvedeniya*, Moskva.
- Zachner R.C. (1965), "The latter wrote a Foreword to one", *No Heaven for Gunga Din*, New York.
- Zelinskij K./ Čičerin A. (1924), "Mena vsex: Poety-konstruktivisty", Moskva.

Index

Achaemenian:

I: 3, 31, 43, 132, 212, 254, 323, 324, 329, 333, 336, 343, 475, 679

II: 756, 767, 1056, 1091, 1094, 1425, 1426, 1445, 1457

Ādurbād ī Amahraspandān:

I: 131-132

II: 760

Agathangelos:

I: 12, 29, 30, 42, 143, 145, 343, 353, 404, 456

II: 762, 1132, 1147, 1258, 1273, 1285, 1317, 1318, 1440

Ahura Mazda:

I: 5, 26, 73, 75, 109, 125, 166, 219, 220, 224, 227, 261, 333, 339, 341, 499, 644, 663

II: 752, 789, 792, 958, 1091, 1093, 1103, 1106, 1120, 1144, 1145, 1149, 1177, 1179, 1180, 1201, 1329, 1334, 1335

Alexander:

I: 3, 13-15, 107, 121, 123, 126, 137, 138, 143, 145, 172, 214, 232, 265, 268, 276, 285, 304-307, 314, 333, 343, 363, 371, 478, 492, 538, 574, 579, 603, 606, 609, 654, 659, 661, 667, 668, 677

II: 747, 750, 769, 770, 772, 794, 804, 805, 952,

955, 960, 1052, 1053, 1060, 1063, 1068, 1069, 1073, 1074, 1087, 1091, 1101, 1131- 1133, 1135, 1142, 1158, 1161, 1188, 1211, 1255, 1270, 1278, 1293, 1295, 1299, 1309, 1314, 1315, 1317, 1320, 1323, 1324, 1350, 1352, 1364, 1365, 1390, 1415, 1425, 1438, 1439, 1442, 1444, 1459, 1478, 1483, 1507, 1531

Ammianus Marcellinus:

II: 1092

Anahit:

I: 4, 6, 36, 74, 81, 333, 334, 341, 350, 351, 356, 460, 528, 543, 602, 607

II: 1132, 1145, 1147, 1327

Anahita:

I: 4, 36, 75, 333, 341, 345, 460

II: 782, 1094, 1145

Aramaic:

I: 2, 4, 5, 11, 13, 15, 23, 30, 31, 34, 39, 40, 45, 71, 110, 149, 152, 143, 157, 206, 214, 267, 293, 293-295, 333, 334, 337, 354, 368, 406, 458, 470, 476, 511, 538, 602

II: 755, 800, 1095, 1179, 1187, 1198, 1208, 1217, 1247, 1248, 1250, 1254, 1299, 1331, 1374, 1376, 1377, 1386, 1393, 1398, 1435, 1488, 1498, 1501, 1502, 1510- 1513

Aramazd:

I: 5, 73, 81, 333, 341, 549, 550

II: 1145, 1307

Ararat:

I: 6, 7, 17, 70, 80, 83, 86, 103, 120, 266, 268, 321, 325, 328, 329, 333, 334, 341, 343, 345, 348, 351, 358, 362, 385-387, 391, 403, 454, 471, 476, 493, 494, 538, 546, 578, 582, 590, 591, 594, 606, 608

II: 806, 951, 1057, 1173, 1224, 1253, 1258, 1260, 1262, 1391, 1435, 1436, 1450, 1457, 1478, 1479

Ardašīr:

I: 73

II: 1092, 1093, 1106

Arewordik:

I: 660

II: 749, 756, 1143, 1144, 1146, 1148, 1151, 1152

Argaeus:

I: 3, 5-8

Ariobarzanes:

I: 4

Arsacid:

I: 12, 14, 28, 29, 32, 38, 43, 73, 81, 82, 135, 140, 238, 246, 247, 293, 294, 296, 331, 336, 337, 342-348, 352, 356, 357, 456, 475, 476, 549, 646

II: 759, 764, 1075, 1089, 1091, 1092, 1094, 1095, 1097, 1102, 1105, 1128, 1132, 1143, 1247, 1248, 1257, 1340, 1345, 1347, 1348, 1362- 1364, 1415, 1426, 1427, 1434, 1435, 1440, 1456, 1457

Arsak II :

I: 12, 165, 238, 346

II: 1132, 1248, 1348, 1360, 1446

Artasāt:

I: 26, 36, 73, 333

II: 1056, 1426, 1427

Artashes:

I: 5, 470

Artaxiad:

I: 25, 80, 86, 135, 266, 331, 334, 336, 341, 345, 352, 356, 378

II: 764, 1060, 1154, 1345, 1415, 1416, 1437, 1439, 1443, 1445, 1446

Artaxias:

I: 5, 26, 80, 328, 333, 341, 356, 470

II: 1415, 1427, 1435, 1439, 1447

Asmodeus:

I: 111, 112, 114, 117, 248

II: 790, 1066- 1068, 1155, 1213, 1377

Aštišat:

I: 35, 340, 493

II: 762

Avestan:

I: 4, 9, 15, 26, 28, 35, 68, 73, 74, 80-82, 86, 105, 117, 125, 218, 222, 227, 265, 328, 329, 342, 345, 348, 354, 360, 402, 460, 472, 493, 659, 660, 661, 663, 666, 667

II: 744, 746, 748, 760, 762, 764, 768, 789, 790, 958, 1066, 1067, 1092, 1094, 1102, 1104, 1105, 1121, 1145, 1146, 1151, 1179, 1231, 1328, 1334, 1377, 1423, 1425, 1426, 1428, 1437, 1445, 1478, 1479, 1497

Babylonian Talmud:

I: 11, 13, 14, 164, 349, 663, 677

II: 1175, 1177, 1189, 1192, 1205, 1208, 1329, 1348, 1364

Buddhism:

I: 139, 218, 231, 293

II: 1066, 1260, 1346

Caligula:

I: 1092, 1093, 1216- 1219

Daniel:

I: 2, 9, 11, 13, 36, 60, 126, 157, 158, 171, 348, 375, 387, 388, 401, 430, 434, 435, 456, 481, 493, 511, 520, 577, 583, 674

II: 747, 960, 1121- 1123, 1208, 1220, 1243, 1245, 1249, 1279, 1316, 1379, 1383, 1462, 1478, 1505- 1507, 1529

Darius the Great:

I: 3, 329

II: 1055, 1068, 1110, 1133, 1426

Demetr:

I: 370, 371

II: 762, 1051, 1061, 1062, 1067, 1068, 1085, 1086

Drastamat:

I: 12, 165, 349

Elise:

I: 337, 366, 526, 542, 543, 602, 603,

II: 1073, 1102, 1105, 1134, 1137, 1138, 1142, 1259, 1277, 1279, 1281, 1282, 1317, 1319

Eznik of Kolb:

I: 109

II: 748, 754, 757, 759, 791, 805

Franz Cumont:

I: 4

II: 1097

Gagik Arcruni:

I: 73

II: 1056, 1057

Garnik Asatrian:

I: 17, 32, 434

II: 1427

Geoffrey Herman:

I: 11, 263, 357

II: 1328, 1363, 1364

George:

I: 4, 23, 28, 73, 113, 285, 298, 374, 375, 394, 430, 431, 509, 511, 586, 651, 652, 674

II: 1058, 1064, 1166, 1219, 1271, 1298, 1299, 1362, 1371, 1382, 1394, 1417, 1428, 1433, 1445, 1504, 1505, 1528, 1529

Gilgamesh:

II: 1161, 1421

Gisanē:

II: 762

Gnostic:

I: 106, 113, 115, 228, 275, 291-294, 294, 296-298, 301, 306, 316, 317, 327, 476, 477, 501, 644 to

II: 744, 1312, 1313, 1456, 1458, 1497, 1517

Hārūt and Mārūt:

I: 64, 215, 263, 267

II: 961, 962, 1156, 1196, 1203, 1221

Helios:

I: 8, 32, 73, 75

Herakles:

I: 5, 333, 340, 665, 666

II: 1435

Homer:

I: 105, 106, 135, 274, 280, 282, 290, 336, 347, 644

II: 753, 777, 1104, 1157- 1164, 1166- 1168, 1170, 1171, 1173, 1178, 1180, 1181, 1194, 1212, 1229, 1252, 1270, 1417, 1421, 1422, 1438, 1443, 1452

Isidore of Charax:

II: 1097

Julfa:

I: 124, 142, 144, 368, 385, 386, 390, 396

II: 957, 1057, 1117, 1268, 1325

Kartir:

I: 1, 142, 144, 501

II: 1146, 1328, 1340, 1342, 1343, 1428

Komitas:

I: 532, 536

II: 1259, 1277, 1318

Koriwn:

I: 150, 157, 383, 493

II: 1126, 1139, 1249, 1268, 1294, 1299, 1444, 1478

Manichaeian:

I: 115, 132, 133, 142, 144, 218, 222, 224, 228, 261, 264, 265, 267, 275, 293, 294, 354, 360, 488, 501, 512, 666, 677

II: 748, 749, 757, 758, 768, 771, 792, 806, 1104, 1143, 1249, 1377, 1442, 1472

Marut'a:

I: 86, 100, 458, 460, 462, 464

II: 764

Mashtots:

I: 9, 19, 41, 433, 434, 462, 641

II: 1148, 1156, 1175, 1223- 1325, 1386, 1456, 1507

Matenadaran:

I: 28, 115, 120, 148, 171, 361, 362, 384, 400, 462, 494, 641

II: 951, 1099, 1140, 1258, 1267, 1294, 1296, 1301, 1305, 1311, 1381, 1383, 1480, 1507

Mesopotamia:

I: 2, 8, 13, 15, 32, 110, 127, 208, 212, 267, 293, 296, 323, 326, 328, 331, 349, 549, 653, 654, 663, 677

II: 961, 1054, 1055, 1158, 1161, 1166, 1187,

1192, 1227, 1240, 1241, 1347, 1348, 1363, 1364, 1373, 1376, 1386, 1433

Mher:

I: 4, 7, 8, 69, 70, 72, 76, 78, 80, 82-102, 254, 262, 332, 334, 341, 359, 460, 464, 576, 589, 605

II: 768, 771, 1095, 1096, 1120, 1134, 1143, 1151, 1352, 1356, 1366, 1420, 1421, 1429, 1432, 1436, 1437, 1439, 1451

Mihr:

I: 4, 72, 74, 75, 81, 82, 110, 333, 334, 341

II: 760, 951, 1097, 1102, 1104, 1105, 1113, 1121, 1143, 1144, 1356, 1451

Mihrnarseh:

II: 760, 1102

Mithra:

I: 4, 7, 25, 26, 32, 33, 69-82, 84, 101-103, 110, 254, 262, 332-334, 341, 342, 460, 464, 576, 606

II: 768, 771, 806, 1089, 1090, 1092- 1095, 1097, 1098, 1099- 1102, 1104- 1106, 1108, 1110, 1112, 1113, 1116, 1121- 1123, 1143- 1145, 1170, 1184, 1214, 1243, 1251, 1337, 1338, 1347, 1351, 1352, 1356, 1416, 1429, 1432, 1437, 1451

Mithraic:

I: 7, 8, 71, 72, 77, 78, 80, 81, 84, 102, 332, 341

II: 768, 1095, 1098, 1101, 1104, 1108, 1144, 1170, 1214

Movses Khorenatsi/Movses Xorenac'i:

I: 5, 32, 78, 85, 86, 256, 266, 268, 326, 327, 339, 356, 391, 404, 431, 435, 468, 470, 493, 587, 588, 644, 659, 661

II: 1060, 1091, 1134, 1138, 1139, 1250, 1260, 1285, 1320, 1325, 1362, 1415, 1418, 1425, 1427, 1435, 1437, 1438, 1442, 1446, 1447

Nabokov:

I: 275, 280, 285, 297-301, 311, 355, 510, 511, 585, 603, 680

II: 747, 749, 750, 770-, 780, 794, 803- 805, 1064- 1066, 1072, 1076, 1172, 1205, 1257, 1417, 1418

Nakhichevan:

I: 142, 144, 385, 391

II: 1057, 1117

Narek:

I: 60, 62, 121, 129, 143, 145, 208, 349-351, 357, 384, 409, 433, 454, 460, 462, 464, 466, 470, 472, 473, 476-479, 481-485, 489, 491-494, 526, 539, 540, 542, 549, 550, 552, 564, 583, 604, 644, 645

II: 743- 746, 766, 769, 797, 802, 952, 965, 1128, 1146, 1332, 1342, 1381, 1382, 1385, 1453, 1455- 1481

Narekac'i/Narekats'i:

I: 27, 59-63, 65, 68, 84, 85, 121, 129, 143, 145, 238, 349, 351, 357, 401, 432, 454, 456, 462, 470-473, 476, 477, 479-485, 487, 488, 490-495, 527, 539, 542, 564, 583, 604, 644

II: 744- 746, 769, 797- 801, 805, 807, 952, 965, 1273, 1278, 1321, 1435, 1437, 1453, 1457, 1458, 1461- 1467, 1470- 1472, 1475, 1476, 1478- 1481

Nina Georgievna:

I: 117, 607

II: 1051, 1075

Ormizd:

II: 791, 792, 1106

Ottoman:

I: 23, 31, 50, 58, 107, 109, 118, 121, 123-125, 136, 153, 156, 340, 348, 375, 380, 386, 396, 400, 416, 519, 552, 582, 606, 685

II: 805, 947, 953, 955, 957, 959, 1152, 1203, 1258, 1294, 1351, 1354, 1357, 1369, 1391, 1431, 1489, 1505, 1507

Parthian:

I: 5, 12-14, 17, 26, 73, 75, 77, 132, 135, 142, 144, 150, 220, 222, 228, 246, 267, 269, 293, 296, 323, 324, 328, 331, 333, 336, 337, 340, 342, 343, 345-347, 352, 354, 357, 359, 362, 456, 458, 471, 488, 549, 644, 646, 662, 663, 670

II: 744, 1091, 1093- 1098, 1100, 1103, 1105, 1119, 1121, 1122, 1123, 1127, 1128, 1131, 1141, 1143, 1158, 1173, 1192, 1208, 1213, 1247, 1249, 1257, 1333, 1340, 1342, 1348, 1363- 1367, 1415, 1426, 1428, 1434, 1443, 1471

P'awstos:

I: 12, 148, 165, 238, 345, 348, 356, 394, 462

II: 1103, 1127, 1132, 1248, 1285, 1331, 1348, 1362, 1364, 1437, 1449

Persepolis:

I: 73, 208, 254, 538

II: 767, 1075, 1210

Pushkin:

I: 31, 214, 273-290, 292, 295-307, 311, 315, 318-320, 363, 530, 534, 581, 582, 589, 665

II: 766, 769, 770, 774, 775, 777- 779, 794, 804- 806, 1051- 1087, 1122, 1175, 1188, 1417

Sabuhr:

I: 11, 12, 238, 345

II: 1363

Saint Gregory:

I: 6, 549

II: 1148, 1319

Sasanian:

I: 6, 11-14, 24, 73, 74, 110, 112, 113, 131, 132, 135, 136, 140, 142, 144, 148, 153, 165, 222, 238, 263, 267, 323, 324, 334, 336, 342, 343, 345-349, 352, 354, 355, 357, 360, 394, 434, 445, 456, 458, 462, 468, 471, 536, 549, 579, 593, 641, 646, 651, 662, 663, 668, 669, 671, 672

II: 743, 754- 756, 759, 760, 764, 790, 806, 1060, 1062, 1077, 1092- 1095, 1099, 1100, 1102, 1104, 1106, 1108, 1110, 1113, 1117, 1119, 1120, 1122, 1123, 1126, 1131, 1132, 1134, 1138, 1141, 1146, 1151, 1158, 1192, 1193, 1200, 1208, 1211, 1248, 1249, 1327, 1328, 1331, 1333, 1335- 1337, 1363, 1364, 1386, 1393, 1426, 1428, 1440, 1447, 1510

Scythian:

I: 78, 268, 323, 329, 347, 356, 433, 456, 476, 495, 669

II: 745, 779, 1051- 1056, 1059, 1062, 1064, 1067, 1068, 1072, 1073, 1076, 1078, 1079, 1105, 1362, 1364, 1416, 1420, 1422- 1427, 1430, 1432, 1433, 1457, 1481

Shapur:

I: 1, 11, 13, 32, 148, 345-348, 394

II: 1092, 1095, 1106, 1122, 1131, 1132, 1363, 1364

Shaul Shaked:

I: 11, 112, 152, 433, 434, 676

II: 806, 1328, 1363

Solomon:

I: 40, 41, 108, 110-116, 118, 124-126, 130, 138, 152, 162, 263-267, 413, 425, 478, 486, 487, 489, 665-667, 683, 684, 687-689

II: 751, 754, 761, 807, 957- 960, 1067, 1068, 1136, 1142, 1146, 1175, 1177, 186, 1191, 1195, 1213, 1257, 1296, 1346, 1367, 1381, 1383, 1384, 1387, 1390, 1391, 1398, 1459, 1469, 1470, 1472, 1473, 1510

Strabo:

I: 3, 4, 6

II: 1425

Tigran II the Great:

I: 8, 25, 334, 341

II: 1416, 1445

Tolkien:

I: 107, 108, 359, 372, 373, 383, 385, 431, 434, 651, 677

II: 1224, 1351, 1419- 1422, 1433, 1434, 1443, 1503, 1531

Vahagn:

I: 5, 28, 35, 76, 77, 81, 227, 256, 257, 269, 333, 339-346, 349-352, 356, 403, 456, 460, 493, 527, 540, 558, 644

II: 762, 763, 1121, 1146, 1148, 1252- 1254, 1256, 1257, 1299, 1310, 1478, 1479

Višap:

I: 29, 36, 50, 266, 269, 332, 352, 482, 691

II: 762, 763, 768, 1059, 1080, 1253, 1256, 1358, 1445, 1449

Yaakov Elman:

I: 11

II: 806, 1076, 1077

Yovhannes Mandakuni:

I: 164, 405, 431

II: 757

Zarathustra:

I: 68, 86, 106, 112, 125, 132, 220, 227, 342, 348, 353, 354, 503, 505

II: 745, 752- 754, 763, 780, 788- 790, 792, 804, 958, 1089, 1091- 1123, 1178, 1328, 1331, 1335, 1336, 1338, 1343, 1423, 1429, 1497

Zoroastrian:

I: 1, 3-6, 8, 9, 13-15, 21, 26, 30-32, 35-37, 63, 64, 67, 68, 71-76, 79, 80, 84, 87, 102, 103, 106, 109, 110, 112, 113, 127, 131, 132, 134, 135, 142, 144, 157, 171, 205, 211, 214-216, 218, 220-222, 224, 227, 228, 231, 238, 239, 248, 257, 261-266, 293, 324, 327, 332-334, 336, 337, 339-341, 344, 346-348, 351, 352, 354, 356-360, 370, 395, 402, 404, 424, 430, 433, 445, 456, 460, 464, 472, 475, 493, 494, 499, 501, 503, 536, 579, 593, 644, 646, 653, 659, 660, 663, 671, 672, 692

II: 743, 745- 749, 752, 754- 760, 763, 764,
767- 769, 780, 788- 792, 799, 800, 805, 807,
961, 962, 1054, 1089, 1091, 1092, 1094, 1095,
1099, 1101- 1105, 1108, 1110, 1112, 1113,
1116, 1117, 1121- 1124, 1126, 1128, 1132,
1134, 1137, 1138, 1143- 1146, 1148, 1149,
1151, 1154, 1156, 1158, 1159, 1177, 1179,
1180, 1191, 1192, 1196, 1200, 1201, 1203,
1205, 1210, 1211, 1213, 1219- 1221, 1231,
1243, 1247, 1249, 1257, 1258, 1310, 1327-
1329, 1334- 1340, 1343, 1356, 1364, 1377,
1398, 1423, 1426, 1428, 1434, 1444, 1450,
1456, 1478, 1479, 1497

Zurvanite:

I: 142, 144

II: 755, 757, 759